

TEACHER'S QUEST ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY

Victor G. Quiambao Jr.
Maria Regina E. Carlos

ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study determined the experiences of teachers in their quest to attain organizational performance. A total of 10 tertiary teachers have participated for in-depth interview and 7 for the focus group discussion. The narratives obtained during the interview were analyzed using the thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the lived experiences of participants pertaining to organizational performance include themes such as excellence in organizational performance for global standards and competitiveness, and well-defined organizational culture for prestigious school with community relevance and impact. Furthermore, the impact of experiences in the shaping of attitude and commitment in attaining better organizational performance include aspects such as benevolence through innovative leadership and creative and innovative service as expressions of gratitude. In addition both quantitative and qualitative findings manifest converging and parallel results.

Keywords: Teachers' Quest, Organizational Performance, Phenomenology, Region 12, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Organizational performance has been a big concern by educational practitioners and researchers as it reflect to the continued existence of the institutions. As a matter of fact, Lederman (2017) reported that 5.6 percent of academic institutions in the United States are on the verge of major collapse that includes both profit and non-profit institutions. In the Asian regions, it put considerable organizational pressure to attain better performance among higher education systems since many countries were hard-pressed to accommodate the rapidly increasing numbers of students. University budgets did not increase to keep up with enrolment. This led to erosion in faculty salaries, the hiring of less-qualified instructional staff, and a decline in conditions of service (Wan et al., 2017). While enrolments and unit costs have increased, public funding has not kept pace, adding a further financial strain on universities (Johnstone, 2010).

Meanwhile, higher education institutions in the Philippines are mandated to incorporate quality assurance mechanisms to improve its performance. It is stated in CMO No.46 series of 2012 that institutions must establish internal quality management systems to ensure that all programs are well designed and deliver appropriate outcomes. However, the country keeps trailing other South East Asian countries in a variety of education indicators and the government has so far fallen short on a number of its own reform goals. The Philippines' lackluster performance in producing researchers (81 researchers per million population versus 205 in Indonesia and 115 in Vietnam), and knowledge producers (28 out of 777 journals or 3.6 percent are listed under Thomson

Reuters, Scopus, or both) indicates that the country has lagged behind many of its ASEAN neighbors in producing the innovators and solutions providers needed to effectively function in a knowledge economy. On the other hand, Only a minority of HEI's in the Philippines presently seek accreditation of their programs. In the 2016-2017 academic year, there were 671 higher education institutions with accredited programs in the Philippines (about 28 percent of all institutions) (Macha et al., 2018). Typical in provincial areas like Region 12, there are only few schools are accredited by Federation of Accrediting Agencies in the Philippines (FAAP) and most the higher education institutions have poor productivity in research (Vinluan, 2012).

Nevertheless, there is failure of the state in framing an effective precise policy for higher education along with slow industrial development force the private sector to follow the programs influenced by the foreign labor market for immigrants. Quality of higher education graduates does not match the manpower requirements of an industrializing economy (CHED, 2001). There is a mismatch between degrees and employment. Unemployment rate is around 11 percent and in case of educated unemployment the situation is alarming. The Philippine labor force data shows that those with higher levels of education have higher unemployment rates (Leonor, 2018).

Considering the studies that address school performance, most were quantitative studies on the factors that contribute to organizational performance (Yukl, 2009; Dobrev et al., 2003; He & Wong, 2004). Hence, less investigations on the experiences of teachers regarding their quest to attain organizational performance. Moreover, most studies conducted regarding organizational performance are focus on other sectors such as banking (Ma & Karri, 2009), and non-academic firms (Jansen, Vera & Crossan, 2009), but less have been done in the academic setting.

With these scenarios, it is essential for academic institution to determine the experiences of teachers in their desire to attain better organizational performance. Moreover, the results can be used by academic institutions in developing enhancement programs and decision makings to improve school's organizational performance and outputs particularly in Region 12 tertiary institutions.

Research Questions

This study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of the participants pertaining to the organizational performance of institutions?
2. How do the experiences shape the attitude and commitment of the participants to contribute to the attainment of better organizational performance?

FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the propositions Škerlavaj and Dimovski (2006) that organizations which invest efforts into the systematic approach and human capital would

likely augment employee trust in the leadership, improved efficiency of work organization, a more committed workforce, decreased costs of work per employee, increased employee satisfaction and increased employee flexibility.

METHOD

Research Design

This qualitative research utilized the phenomenological approach. The purpose of this design is to explore a phenomenon in which this is commonly useful when developing a questionnaire (Plano Clark, 2005). This design explored the experiences of participants regarding their quest to attain better organizational performance.

Place of Study

The study was conducted in private higher education institutions in Region 12 which is officially labeled as "SOCCSKSARGEN". The name is an acronym that stands for the region's four provinces (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Sarangani) and one of its cities (General Santos). The region used to be called Central Mindanao. The regional center is Koronadal located in the province of South Cotabato, and the center of commerce, industry, transportation and the most populous city is General Santos. Soccsksargen encompasses Cotabato City situated within the borders of Maguindanao.

Participants

A total of ten (10) tertiary teachers were invited for an in-depth interview and another seven (7) participants for the focus group discussions. The results of which were used to identify the emerging themes and patterns or responses as based on their lived experiences.

Instruments

The researcher formulated an interview guide that asked questions about their experiences pertaining to organizational performance. The interview provided an insight into how a group of teachers thinks about organizational performance and how they shape their attitude and commitment in the attainment of better organizational performance

Data Analysis

The notes that were obtained from in-depth interview and focus groups were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns (or "themes") within data. Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated to a specific research question (Boyatzis, 1998).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Lived Experiences of the Participants pertaining to the Organizational Performance of Institutions

The thematic analysis revealed two essential themes which have emerged from interviews with the participants, namely: excellence in service for global standards and competitiveness, and well-defined organizational culture for prestigious school with community relevance and impact.

Excellence in Service for Global Standards and Competitiveness. Many of the participants believed that organizational performance needs to be determined and monitored as it indicates the success of the institution. They expressed that there should be success indicators to ascertain the accomplishment of the school. Some teachers shared that it is important to have a measurable index of effective and efficient leadership, structure, policy, process and communication. Hence, many of them believed that it is critical to have an analysis of company's performance as compared to goals and objectives. Thus, evaluating organizational performance is essential as it motivates the entire organization to do better in achieving their goals.

Well-defined Organizational Culture for Prestigious School with Community Relevance and Impact. On the positive outlook, many participants believed that achieving optimum organizational performance can lead to better outcomes like recognition and globalization. Hence, some participants shared that achievements can be attained by performing institutions such as elevating board examination performance and employment capability of students and putting premium on accreditation of academic programs and institution. Moreover, the internationalization has been highlighted as important indicator of performance such as being aware of global trends and innovations, and establishing international linkages.

One of the essential themes that emerged from the interviews with the participants is excellence in service for global standards and competitiveness. This highlighted four important aspects to achieve better organizational performance such as success indicators, guidepost toward organizational progress, stability and sustainability, and customer satisfaction and competitiveness.

This result is supported by Takim and Akintoye (2002) as they stated performance indicators have become dominant in understanding the 'performance' of the schools. On the other hand, Clifford et al (2012) revealed that organizational performance serves as a determinant of organizational progress. Hence, their study further stated that the improvement of institution is based on the combined productivity of the specific departments of the schools. Moreover, Eccles, Loannou, & Serafeim (2014) revealed that the stability and sustainability of the institution is based on how they perform against their

competitors in the academe. Those schools that perform better are those who have better chance of staying longer as an institution. Furthermore, Schulte, Ostroff, Shmulyian, & Kinicki (2009) denote that customer satisfaction and market competitiveness are notable outcomes of performing organizations.

Another theme that emerged is well-defined organizational culture for prestigious school with community relevance and impact. This put emphasis on recognition and globalization, school effectiveness and community impact, and organizational identity, fraternity and branding. This is supported by several studies in the literature that better performing schools are those who align their curriculum and services with the global standards (Cheese, Craig, & Thomas, 2007). Moreover, Leana & Pil (2006) stated that one of the roles of the school is to conduct community extension activities that will promote their program expertise. Nevertheless, Kowalczyk & Pawlish (2002) revealed that the performance of the organization is based on what they are known or what they specialized.

Impact of Experiences in the Shaping of Attitude and Commitment in attaining Better Organizational Performance

The experiences of the informants pertaining to the impact of experiences in the shaping of attitude and commitment in attaining better organizational performance revealed two essential themes, namely: benevolence through innovative leadership, and creative and innovative service as expressions of gratitude.

Benevolence through Innovative Leadership. In the attitude changing experiences, it highlighted the improved sense of professionalism having a key role to attain better organizational performance. It involves aspects such as commitment being the driving force, management of time and setting priorities, doing more even extending work hours, becoming a team player, becoming a decision maker when it comes to work, and becoming conscious with the standards implemented by the school.

Creative and Innovative Service as Expressions of Gratitude. In the contribution of ambidexterity to organizational performance, the participants believed that it embraces innovative practices of the institution. The teachers developed ability to deeply understand the factors affecting the performance of the organization. There is also maturity in using collective knowledge and accumulation of problem solving strategies that the organization was able to apply to meet client demand and adapt to the changes in the academic landscape. Hence, the people in the organization are learning in terms of processes, and systems. In which, their learning indicates individual development and at the same time their adaptation to the organization.

The first theme that emerged from the interviews with the participants is benevolence through innovative leadership. This theme highlighted important indicators such as improved sense of professionalism, sense of volunteerism and service, developed sense of Leadership, sense of Loyalty, and openness for Creativity and Innovation. This supports the study of Marron and Cunniff (2014) that innovative leaders

are individuals who inspire trust among their fellow workers, they have been effective team members and served well in past leadership roles as a collaborator, and they take the “extra step” to make certain that the team mission is accomplished.

The second theme is creative and innovative service as expressions of gratitude. This forms dimensions like embracing of innovative practices and creation of knowledge and technology for organizational efficiency. This is considered positive change in the participants to become innovative in their activities at work. This supports Serdyukov (2017) as he stated that Innovations in education are regarded, along with the education system, within the context of a societal super system demonstrating their interrelations and interdependencies at all levels. Raising the quality and scale of innovations in education will positively affect education itself and benefit the whole organization. Hence, the existence of modern technological tools has given rise to the use of various innovative practices in the management of work organizations. In order to keep pace with globalization, educational managers have embraced innovative practices arising from the advent of new technologies in the management of schools. Innovation therefore, means a purposeful, organized and risk taking change introduced into any work organization to ensure efficiency and increase productivity (Akpan, 2016).

IMPLICATIONS

The lived experiences of the participants pertaining to the organizational performance have generated two essential themes. The first theme that emerged from the interviews with the participants is excellence in service for global standards and competitiveness. This highlighted four important aspects to achieve better organizational performance such as success indicators, guideposts toward organizational progress, stability and sustainability, and customer satisfaction and competitiveness. On the other hand, the second theme that emerged is well-defined organizational culture for prestigious school with community relevance and impact. This put emphasis on recognition and globalization, school effectiveness and community impact, and organizational identity, fraternity and branding.

The impact of experiences in the shaping of attitude and commitment in attaining better organizational performance produced two dimensions. The first dimension is benevolence through innovative leadership. This theme highlighted important indicators such as improved sense of professionalism, sense of volunteerism and service, developed sense of leadership, sense of loyalty, and openness for creativity and Innovation. The second theme is creative and innovative service as expressions of gratitude. This forms dimensions like embracing of innovative practices and creation of knowledge and technology for organizational efficiency.

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