

A Cultural Exposure of the Rizal Technological University's College of Arts and Sciences: A Roadmap for the Best Practices on Leadership and Management Styles

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Abstract— Organization can be interpreted and constructed in many ways. In fact, the role of culture in schools provides cultural values to school members, develops a culture that has been applied, and passes the culture on to teachers and students. (Lubis, F. R., & Hanum, F. (2020). In the Philippines, specifically in the cases of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), which have a diverse and dynamic professional and personal relationship, leadership plays an effective role in knowledge sharing behavior which subsequently enhances the knowledge exchange practices (Fiscal, R. R., 2019).

An example of a SUC located in Metro Manila is Rizal Technological University. Within the organization, College of Arts and Sciences is named as one of the competitive colleges. It has a variety of academic programs being offered such as; Psychology, Political Science, Statistics, Biology, Astronomy and General Education Courses.

This study has been conducted in order to compare the leadership and management styles of the deans of College of Arts and Sciences. The researcher has implied an in-depth interview about the set of questions mentioned above. An informed consent was given to the informants prior to the conduct of interview. The informants have been purposely selected because of the length of their service of not less than 5 years in RTU under the College of Arts and Sciences. Results have shown that the size of the RTU College of Arts and Sciences having 150 faculty members, can be compared to a medium-sized company already. Having said that, one of the keys of the leadership of the deans is the mentor and train the College Secretary who will most likely succeed in the position and power. It supports the findings of Fiscal, R. R., in 2019 that explains that employee motivation greatly influences organizational practices on knowledge generation, storage, sharing, and application.

the deans of the CAS share a common value in terms of professionalism. Also, it was revealed that they treat their faculty members professionally even if it the latter have committed mistakes in relation to their work.

Further, the deans of the college who let faculty members use the equipment freely and let them do their personal stuff in relation to professional and academic growth, are being remembered positively by the latter. It also opens up a door for harmonious working relations between the dean and the faculty members. Also, whoever is the future dean of the college can adopt the best practices of his/her predecessors and win the hearts of his faculty members.

Keywords— *Leadership, Organizational Development, Organizational Culture, Management styles*

I. INTRODUCTION

From birth to adulthood, organization has been taking its place in the lives of many. Starting from the smallest unit of the community—which is the family—climbing up to the corporate level, we always contribute to becoming a part of an entity. By and large, we dedicate most of our time to our respective workplaces. In fact, it is the actuality of the theories being thought by our dear teachers and professors in school. In this regard, we get to interact with different set of people and witness with our naked eyes on how they react to circumstances happening around them. Through the years, human resources are considered as the most important assets in any organization. Human resources are the moving force of an organization and harnessing their capabilities will contribute much in bringing about quality and productivity (Batugal, M. L. C and Tindowen, 2019; Wright & McMahan, 2011; Ployhart & Molterno, 2011).

Since its inception in 1969, the Rizal Technological University has been making its mark in the various academic fields with the help of seven (7) strong colleges. It continuously produces talented and capable professionals in various fields that cater the needs of the society. Behind its success, are the dedicated the professors themselves. Second, its university officials who have done tough decisions and legworks in elevating the success which they have now.

Within the university, College of Arts and Sciences is named as one of its competitive colleges. It has a variety of academic programs being offered such as; Psychology, Political Science, Statistics, Biology, Astronomy and General Education Courses. Faculty members across the said disciplines have been purposely selected in order to gather factual information that compared the leadership and management styles of the deans of the CAS. Also, it aimed to tackle the strategies of the CAS deans which can be replicated by other institutions for the purposes of strategic development. The CAS which produces competitive graduates in the various fields, it is high time to decipher the approaches and strategies of its leaders for it transcends to faculty members down to its students. Being the torchbearers of academic knowledge, it is interesting to know in this study, if these professors are practicing what they preach; and learn how they engage with each other knowing that they also came from different fields.

Methodology

In this study, the researcher has a Qualitative Research Design which focused on the application of a Focus-Group-Discussion (FGD) among the faculty members of the CAS. Purposely, faculty members who qualified with the pre-determined criteria by the researcher have been asked to participate and share their respective professional and personal experiences.

An informed consent was given to the informants prior to the conduct of interview in order to ensure the ethical way of collecting the data. The informants have been purposely selected because of the length of their service of not less than 5 years in RTU under the College of Arts and Sciences. Using the videoconferencing, the informants were gathered together and were interviewed simultaneously. The transcript of the FGD has been meticulously analyzed and saturated in order to address the research questions and objectives.

Results and Discussion

Results have shown that the informants were at least five (5) years in the service in the College of Arts and Sciences of Rizal Technological University. Based on the profile of the informants, their take on the topic will be consider reliable due to the fact that they have been in the service for at least five (5) years. Their accumulated experiences through the years will be the basis of their perception on the leadership and management styles of the deans of the CAS as well as the behavior of the CAS faculty members.

As mentioned in the study of Ng'ang'a M.J., & Wesonga (2012), they found out that usually larger institutions have more formalized structures and cultures. Increased size is likely to result to separate departments and possibly split-site operations. A rapid expansion, or decline, in size and rate of growth, and resultant changes in staffing will influence structure and culture. (Ng'ang'a, M. J., & Wesonga, J. N. (2012). In the case of the RTU CAS, it composed of around 150 faculty members from both campus of Boni and Pasig. Formal structures and cultures have also been established for decades. So, whoever the dean is, he/she formally inherits a set of values and principles which have been bestowed on the position of deanship. Whoever is the dean, he should have been looking for the improvements of the newbies in the college.

The Morning Rituals of the CAS Faculty Members

Based on the data, CAS faculty members start their day with a relaxed pace before going to classes. They also spend and consume their time in chitchatting with each other about random topics. Also, they drink coffee together and or/ share topics over a meal (breakfast). This practice had been repeatedly seen by the informants.

Corollary, this aligns with the findings that Filipinos do this as a coping method in the workplace in order to avoid stress and burnout. Burnout is a phenomenon that can affect mental health. It also occurs due to job-related stress and the work environment. (Waters-Tozier, 2022).

Results have shown that the CAS faculty members consumed their time in chitchatting with each other before classes start. Also, they drink coffee together and or/ share topics over a meal (breakfast). In this aspect, professionalism inside the college had been lowered down. The informants further stated that backstabbing against other faculty members was just a normal thing every morning. It is as if, their breakfast will not be completed without the piece of meat of gossip.

In the study conducted by Kuo, C. C., Chang in 2015, gossip may not necessarily become public information, therefore gossipers can avoid accountability and freely express their views without fear of discovery. Thus, privacy provides a sound place for emotional release without the fear of being culpable or held liable for one's remarks (Rosnow & Georgoudi, 1985).

Hence, once the privacy of speakers is protected, gossip is more likely to occur. In the same study, from a different perspective, McAndrew et al. (2007) suggest that gossip is a necessary function of society because the constant flow of information within a network of human exchange needs to evaluate situations to assist people in making sense of their environment. Therefore, gossip can be interpreted as good or bad depending on the lenses of society on whoever looks at it. However, generally speaking, gossip encourages negative effect on the workplace and thus limit the safe spaces of employees working there.

This problem should be addressed by the dean and a policy of professionalism by not talking about any gossip in the premises of faculty room should have been implemented.

In terms of Economic activities, the deans of the CAS have been lenient as long as the faculty members do this stuff before or after class schedules. In fact, some deans are supportive of it and buy products that these faculty members are selling.

Leadership styles of the CAS deans

The deans of the CAS share a common value in terms of professionalism. They treat their faculty members professionally even if it has committed a mistake in relation to their work. They directly messaged the concerned faculty over an issue that needed to be resolved.

The CAS office is well-organized when it comes to filing of documents. It keeps the files accordingly so the faculty members can easily access it, or the administration asks for it in times of accreditation and other related purposes.

Findings have shown that in terms of the relationship of all the deans of CAS to faculty members, shared a common value in terms of professionalism. They treat their faculty members professionally even if it has committed a mistake in relation to their work. Also, the deans of the CAS yet professional but have a different bond or connection to every faculty member. As the leader of the organization, the dean always takes charge of being a motherly or fatherly figure to its subordinates.

As mentioned by informants, these images created in the minds of the faculty members have been constant and evident. They have had a previous dean whose intellect in numbers is incomparable. They have also had a dean whose personality can be attributed to a mother, a father and a brother. These familial bonds created by these deans shaped and created the success of the said college. Just like any other parents, they always check on their faculty members and they were very hands-on even in things that involved their (faculty members) personal lives.

The dean of the college should conduct activities such as, but not limited to team building and bonding outside the working hours, in order to address the attitude of other faculty members of being distant to the college.

The CAS office is well-organized when it comes to filing of documents. It keeps the files accordingly so the faculty members can easily access it, or the administration asks for it in times of accreditation and other related purposes. However, it should also take priority in the archiving of scanned documents since the accreditation processes finally shifted to various technology platforms. With this, a set of back-up files can now be accessible at all times with no additional cost to the government.

The CAS deans have been handling the faculty meetings professionally. They listened to the faculty members who have had something to say on the set of agenda. They were not also strict in terms of the use of office equipment. In fact, they ought to say that these came from the hard-earned money of the taxpayers so it should have been used on daily basis. However, faculty members who wish to use it were being reminded to use it with proper caution. This practice can be continued by whosoever dean assumed the position.

Lastly, findings have shown that the deans of the CAS were not strict when it comes to personal stuff of the faculty members especially during office hours. As long as, they made a prior notice as to when and why they need to leave their post for a while. This can also be continued by the future dean of the college knowing that in the faculty members, aside from teaching, the latter needs to devote their time in continuing their graduate education, on top of the personal stuff and or emergencies that may occur.

Strategies of the deans of CAS in terms of motivating the faculty members, in their trifocal functions

As a whole, the deans of the CAS have been very supportive to the faculty members of these areas. Since faculty members are required and expected to deliver their trifocal functions in the university, a consistent encouraging leadership style from the dean is very important. In order to succeed at these areas, existing researches show that best practices are shared during one-on-one interviews with the president, deans, research directors, and Focus Group Discussion with faculty members in respective research settings. (Quitoras, M. C. L., & Abuso, J. E., 2021). Moreover, higher education institutions should enhance and sustain their research culture by adopting and learning from the said best practices.

Execution of the Administrative Functions

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Meanwhile, when it comes to personal stuff of the faculty members especially during office hours. As long as, they made a prior notice as to when and why they need to leave their post for a while.

Due to its medium-sized group, the CAS one of the reasons why the latter is successful is because of the support coming from its College Secretary. The latter being the alter ego of the dean, can supervise in his/her behalf and most of the time do the leg work for documentation and communication.

Historically, the deans of the college who let faculty members use the equipment freely and let them do their personal stuff in relation to professional and academic growth, are being remembered positively by the latter. It also opens-up a door for harmonious working relations between the dean and the faculty members.

Using a clear strict policy about gossiping inside the faculty room can create a vibe of professional atmosphere since the faculty members are the stewards of proper etiquette. Also, to bridge the gap of the distant faculty members in implementing a strict policy on gossiping, activities that promote camaraderie can help the college in addressing the said issue.

Economic Activities in the College

In terms of Economic activities, the deans of the CAS have been lenient as long as the faculty members do this stuff before or after class schedules. In fact, some deans are supportive of it and buy products that these faculty members are selling. Affirming this culture from the CAS is from the study conducted by Schneider (1990) also found that the organizations that focuses clearly on the cultures are more successful. It is because focused cultures provide better financial returns, which include higher return on investment (ROI), higher return on assets (ROA) and higher return on equity (ROE).

With the approval of the deans in the legalization of economic activities in the school premises after office hours does not just improve the culture, but also improve the commitment to the college of those into this activity. This is due to the fact that as a whole, the deans of the CAS have been very supportive to the faculty members in areas such as research, extension and academic and professional growth.

The difference is that some of them were vocal in encouraging faculty members; and some are not too vocal. In the study conducted by Pipan, K. K., & Sokovic, M. (2011), the middle manager's job is to promote improvements, assure resources are available for training and implementation, and become personally involved with more substantial improvements. Leaders should be personally involved in the improvements system to champion it and oversee its performance and to increase their personal effectiveness.

Knowing that faculty members themselves are role models to their students and at the same time mandated by their profession to really develop themselves holistically, deans of the CAS did not need much more effort in bringing his/her subordinates up. The only difference is the motivation these employees have in their minds. That is why, the deans being the middle managers of the university, need to establish and understand the culture of his/her college. It is supported in the study conducted by Deal (2005) referring to organizational culture as “the epicenter of change.”

Also, Harris (2002) believed this so strongly that she asserted that “Successful school improvement can only occur when schools apply those strategies that best fit in their own context and particular developmental needs”. The future dean of the college can adopt this practice by the previous and current dean, of supporting those faculty members who are doing different economic activities outside the office work for as long as it does not create a conflict of interest. With this, the relationship of the dean and those faculty members involve in this set-up will be improved.

Economic activities are not illegal for as long as these do not create conflict of interests. In this regard, a supportive dean will be much appreciated by the faculty members who do these said activities. If these existing strategies and values will be preserved by whoever is the future dean of the college, he can surely win the hearts of his faculty members.

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