

Strategies of HEIs Presidents in Attaining Their Targets and Priorities

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Abstract

The rising demand for quality education is current issues in the New Normal with management, which has to undergo a radical transformation in uplifting it since COVID-19 has adverse effects on education. This offers a challenge to all levels of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) managers. This study attempted to find out the strategies HEIs Presidents in attaining targets and priorities. Specifically, their management styles, their targets and priorities, and other strategies employed to the realization of the institution's targets and priorities. The study adopted a descriptive-analytic approach of quantitative and qualitative methods of research. This methods was used to confirm, validate, or corroborate findings. Information was generated from the responses of the respondents using focus group discussions (FGD) and documentary analysis from the responses of presidents, middle-level managers, selected teaching and non-teaching personnel, or a total of 411 respondents of ten (10) HEIs in Region V.

The groups of respondents differed in their strategies especially on the assessment of the management styles of the Presidents and the majority them used autocratic style; The Presidents common targets and priorities are higher in accreditation level, academic excellence, community services, and attainment of VMGOs; aside from management styles, delegation and/or empowerment, consultations, constant monitoring, and follow-ups as other strategies in achieving the institutional targets and priorities; The management style can contribute to the realization of the institutions' targets and priorities; There is still a need to evaluate and equip future educational managers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to manage an educational institution.

Keywords: Management, Strategies, Targets, Priorities, Presidents.

INTRODUCTION

The rising demand for quality education in most Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) linked with management seems challenging in developing countries. Most especially in the fight against the outbreak of the COVID-19, all countries have replaced traditional or “face-to-face” education with remote or online education as a defensive tool [1]. As online education becomes a necessity due to the increase demand of the new forms of digital media. These trends continue to gain the attention of major stakeholders, academicians,

and society, as a whole mostly in Asian countries developing countries.

Recent researches still have highlighted old management approaches in education, and changing institutional culture as a challenge [2] to the managers. This will show that transformative interventions in education and the need to move beyond [3] in terms of targets and priorities will ensure institutional and cultural [4] success.

In contrast in some parts of the world, managerial decisions in the Philippines are often reached based on feelings[5] Filipino values like “Pakikisama” at “Pakikipagkapwa”

are the reasons why leaders give importance to their relationship with their subordinates.[6] to get support from them in attaining their targets and priorities. Yet, not everyone know how to adopt leadership [7] styles in Filipino Settings. Moreover, institutional targets and priorities in many countries are designed based on the ideals. As a result, education plans often fall short of their targets.

The HEIs in Bicol at present are also confronted with formidable challenges of the global's problems in education especially this new normal. It has to undergo a radical transformation in uplifting its quality of education since COVID-19 has created adverse effects in terms of learning disruptions and access to education [8]. There is a need to shift institutional targets and priorities to realize its vision and directions in response to the demand of the present situation. Is it possible that higher institutions' success depends upon the strategies of the President? Furthermore, servant leadership [9] is essential and successful management strategies could be affected by leader's personality, educational background, experiences, and expertise in dealing with employees as well as the organization as a whole.

Correspondingly, the selected Higher Education Institution (HEIs) Presidents in Region V as the focus of this study. Where Most of them were designated as managers in private and/or public institutions before they assumed the position of school President. They constantly attend various national and international trainings and seminars to enhance their management skill. The results of this study will serve as the basis for educational managers to be aware that their behaviors will influence the performance of the employees and the institution as a whole. This study also may contribute to addressing the issues and problems related to management not only to higher education institutions but also to other organizations.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is to discern presidents' strategies carrying out the institution's targets and priorities. Specifically, assess its management styles how did it contribute to the realization of the institution's targets? And what other strategies used by them may contribute to the realization of it. More importantly, the essential factors that are related to strategies are the springboard to improve the effectiveness of the institution, provide valuable insights to develop programs for effective management, and enhance the relationships between the managers and subordinates.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive-analytic approach of mixed methods was adopted to collect qualitative and quantitative data. In determining the strategies of the selected Presidents of HEIs in Region V in improving institutional as perceived by the respondents. This methods was used to confirm, validate, or corroborate findings. A proportional random sampling for (411) respondents composed of ten (10) presidents, middle managers (126), teaching (180), and non-teaching personnel (95) of selected Higher Educational Institutions in Region V, the academic year 2019-2020. Of the ten (10) selected Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) Presidents in Region V, five (5) come from privately owned institutions and the rest are from the State Universities and Colleges (SUCs. Most of the Presidents are Doctor of Philosophy holders. Most of them were working as managers in private and/or public institutions before they assumed the position as school President. Slovin's formula was used in obtaining the required sample size. A questionnaire checklist was used to measure the management styles. Interview and/or focus group discussions (FGDs), and using documentary analysis were used as a tool to measure the targets and priorities, and strategies of the President in attaining targets and priorities. Other sources of data were such

as the profile of the Presidents, institutional targets, institutional plans, school publications and gazettes, school profiles that helped the researcher analyze the data.

The researcher identified the middle-level managers as respondents to determine the Presidents' specific strategies employed in the realization of the institutions' targets considering that they are the ones who have direct contact with HEI's Presidents. Frequency count, and percentage were utilized in describing the management styles and strategies of higher educational institution (HEI's) presidents in attaining targets in region V.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) require leaders to accomplish the desired targets utilizing available resources efficiently and effectively. The agenda for targeted policies or resources under the control of presidents [10] and are the essential ingredient that influences an institution's success. Being the head of the institution, he/she should identify targets that should be evidence-based and selected according to identified needs,

Strategies employed by the President

Modern managers must not rely on his/her charisma to produce change. [11] Generally, managers use strategies by analyzing the organization and designing a realistic plan in achieving the institution's VMGOs. The communicative activity of the leaders on how to achieve the goal is essential. Moreover, the educational institution is based on certain emotional-moral connections with his subordinates [12] this will create a healthy socio-psychological environment for the educational institution. As observed, the presidents' role in achieving the institutional targets will depend on his/her how effective are his/her strategies used in a specific context. It is also important to consider individual trust can develop into institutional trust [13] it should be understood that strategies used by the president

affect the performance of the educational institution.

Table 1. *Management styles of HEIs Presidents*

Leadership Styles	Middle-level Manager		Teaching		Non-Teaching		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Autocratic	46	37	67	37	53	56	166	41
Democratic	50	40	57	32	19	20	126	31
Laissez-faire	30	24	56	31	23	24	109	27
TOTAL	126	100	180	100	95	100	401	100

Management Styles as a Strategy. Management styles in the Philippines tends towards cultural orientation of "pakikisama" or smooth interpersonal relationships types of management. [14] As reflected in Table 1, forty percent of the middle-level managers perceived that the Presidents use democratic management styles since they are the people who have direct contact with the HEI's Presidents. He/She can freely discuss to the middle managers important things about most of the administrative problems and the targets that need to be prioritized and at the same time empower them in decision making. Then they normally delegate their task. However, there is no perfect management style and there are times that we really cannot please everybody with sometimes misunderstood by the middle managers. Quoted from a middle-level manager of school H: "...The burdens are sometimes handed to us and should solve it at our own expense." Even if the workload is heavy or difficult, Filipinos are often happy because of positive co-worker [15] or managers relationships. The President should know how to discern committed employees and learn how to value them and is often more effective than pressure and fear to get the job done.

Since, there are times when autocratic style will be employed with employees to maintain a certain level of discipline in the workplace. Respectively, workforce, as they said is the determinant factor in the success and failure of the institution. Other group of employees (teaching and non-teaching personnel) on the

other hand, categorized the management style of the Presidents in Region V as "autocratic." Since, its advantage misunderstandings are avoided. Thus, decisions are being made faster and more effectively, as the middle-level manager of President J notified: "...Whatever the plans are, it should be followed by the employees. According to some employees, the President should not only rely on authority, instead, he/she should recognize the importance of employees' involvement, recognize their achievements, and encourage open communication, when employees feel that their opinions are valued, and they likely to support Presidents in their undertakings.

These technology and innovations help Presidents in reducing their workload so that they can concentrate on the critical issues of concern such as planning, and legislation. According to a middle manager of School D: "...President D used social media to communicate..." Although there is an increase of office productivity as a result of digitalization [16]; admittedly, it is common that the non-teaching personnel always receive instructions coming from their managers, whether not favorable on their part, they are forced to follow instructions. This is due to the workload of the Presidents, they make decisions quickly, organize, and direct non-teaching personnel on the particular task and sometimes, they forget to reach out and hears employees' sentiments. On the other way around, some Presidents try to acknowledge their accomplishments.

Although the Presidents most of the time employ management styles that are comfortable and attuned to their preferences; this will create different perceptions from the people around them. Employees may find the Presidents strictly set and implement policies in which for them is autocratic. These perceptions may or may not affect the performance of the Presidents in attaining the objectives of the school. Ultimately, people are more concerned with the performance of the institution and good quality service to the clientele.

On Targets and Priorities and the Strategies employed. Quality education is becoming increasingly important for most HEIs because that becomes its bread and butter. Without it, the trust and confidence in the community will decline. Similarly, the institution's performance is achieved when employees and resources meet on the same degree of effectiveness and efficiency. And the implemented the strategy set by the school [16] can be achieved through in-depth planning for the improvement of its quality and competitiveness both in the short and long term [17] As observed, the President plays an important role in achieving this effective institutional targets and priorities, for they can inspire and motivate employees that can create positive school climate. According to interviews, some presidents use strategies by analyzing the organization, setting targets and priorities. But, the best strategies involves creating clear plans as to how school VMGOs will be achieved, we can't deny that resources are needed to achieve them. And it should be understood strategies used by the Presidents affect the performance of most educational institutions.

According to some of the middle managers, targets and priorities are attained by the presidents doing a lot of strategies such as planning, support to school activities, constant monitoring, and follow-up, and delegation and its implementation is within a holistic approach [18] so that they can arrive at a specific direction. But they should continually evaluate progress and the Presidents are flexible enough for sudden transformation and the new circumstances or situation, just like this the challenges we face because of the pandemic.

Table 2. *Targets and Priorities of the HEIs Presidents*

Targets and Priorities	%
Higher Accreditation Level	91
Academic Excellence	73
Community Services	64
Attainment of VMGOs	55
Improvement of Physical Facilities	45

Internationalization	45
Involvement of Faculty in Research	36
Implementation of CHED Thrust & Policies	36
Established Strong Community Linkages	36

Data revealed in table 2 that the most identified targets of the HEI Presidents were: higher accreditation level (e.g. Centers of Excellence (COEs) and Centers of Development (CODs, ISO, international accreditations and the likes), academic excellence, community services attainment of VMGOs implementation of CHED thrust and policies, improvement of physical facilities, internationalization (be recognized globally) established strong linkages (international collaborations with foreign universities) that will lead to more appropriate and ideal educational institutions. HEIs are aggressive in reaching the level of standards along the areas mentioned. In view of this, complementing strategies and institutional policies in consistent with international standards becomes essential [19] and at the same time challenging to the most of the higher institutions in the country. Moreover, the resource generation and mobilization should complement with the stated above President's targets and priorities for organizational sustainability and stability. As mentioned by a middle-level manager: "...Because of the good leadership of the president, the academic target had been realized."

Thus, the more the President committed and pro-active in the recent challenges encountered by the new technological requirements [20] as mandate by the CHED, relatively gives high productivity in the institution. With the help of the employees, they have to work as a team towards the achievement of specific goals or objectives. There should be thorough follow-up so that employees would be motivated to develop their good working attitude in a workplace.

In all higher educational institutions give their full support & cooperation with school trust, programs, and policies mandated by CHED. On the other hand, management is about carrying out organizational functions and tasks following CHED thrust and policies. As

mentioned by the middle-level manager of President F: If there are problems encountered by the employees, he gives attention to them and solved them.

It is considered that strategic management should be proposed in the schools that human resources are their main inputs and outputs. [21] The President should devise strategies focusing on the changes of administrative procedures and protocols compatible with the culture of the institution.

Moreover, creating a better educational atmosphere through building quality [23] management of an organization is done through strengthening links between schools and communities. This will strengthen partnerships and each will be benefited, this can lead to better educational outcomes. Indeed for many schools, they succeeded in their educational vision if there is support from the community resources such as community members, business groups, religious institutions, and private and public agencies. As stated by the middle-level manager of President F: "...it is easy for him to get the support of the community for school projects and programs."

As always mentioned, one of the barometers to ensure high-quality education is to be recognized by accreditation organizations like PAASCU/AACUP/ISO to conform to specified requirements and standards of accrediting bodies. It is not easy to receive such recognition without undergoing several evaluations and of course comply with the different requirements. Presidents are aggressive in subjecting their institutions to a series of accreditations. It does not only speak to a sense of public trust, professional value, and prestige but also this motivates members of an institution to improve the quality of education. Results would tell that most of the educational institutions recognized by such organizations reached the standards of quality education. According to the middle-level manager of President C: "...The president does some planning. She identifies activities and prioritizes what is the most important." Just like their ways is subjecting their institutions to ISO. These strategies could enhance and

promote quality assurance.[22] its guidelines in evaluating institutions to guarantee the quality of the services offered by an institution to clientele require full commitment and dedication of the President.

Although some say, the success of any educational institution greatly lies in research. However, involvement in this particular activity requires a lot of considerations such as time, effort, and financial obligation. There lie the leadership abilities of a President, he/she must be able to influence and inspire employees to his/her vision. They must be well provided with whatever is needed in gathering data. As mentioned by the middle-level manager of President A: "... she tried to establish a culture of research. That's why employees resorted to 'writing in tandem' as they call it. "Another way, President should use the power, resources, and influence to produce effective/efficient results.

Similarly, 93% of the most of the presidents-respondents delegate and empower employees, consult (71%) constantly monitor and follow-up (57%) plans and outputs of/her subordinates among the strategies used in attaining the institution's targets. Additionally, Presidents plan, support activities, give incentives to the subordinates' performances, transparent and output-oriented.

TABLE 3. *Other Strategies Employed by the Presidents in Attaining Targets and Priorities*

Other Strategies made by the Presidents	%
Delegation and/or Empowerment	93
Consultation	71
Constant Monitoring and Follow-up	57
Support School Activities	43
Giving Incentive to Employees	36
Planning	29
Give Due Recognition to Deserving Employees	29
Encourage Collaboration	29
Transparent	21
Performance Appraisal of Employees	21

Since community agencies can do their job better by working closely with schools. Appropriate and effective collaboration and teamwork is a key facet of addressing the

development, learning, and socialization of the learner's yield quality education.

Basically, empowering employees gives them a chance to be more productive because they could be able to do the tasks effectively and efficiently [25].The reason why most Presidents delegate their workload is that it enables them to focus on other tasks and responsibilities. When delegation is effective, the employees get the support that they need, brings out better performances from individual members of the institution. As one of the middle-manager of school D stated "My philosophy is to produce more leaders not followers."

Usually, most Presidents do not make decisions on their own but they involve the middle managers and subordinates in planning and decision making. Consultation, constant monitoring, and follow-up are the some common responses given by the respondents. As President H stated: "The style that worked well is monitoring then I make follow-up about the progress of the plan. The process consultation has a great advantage to the educational institution. Because the idea of sharing of diagnosis and resolution of issues and problems leads to the shared vision of employees as a whole. This will also ensure that a commendable solution is obtained, fix the situation, and create a better organization. As middle manager of school B articulated: "Whenever there are concerns, she calls for a dialogue and gives attention to it. " School Officials should skillfully create the culture of consultation and collaboration [24] this can build healthy school environment because employees are empowered to assess institutional plans and it also promotes good decision making to the interest of the school as a whole. This maintains well-motivated, committed, and satisfied employees. As one of the middle managers of school B, expressed: "The president always visits the colleges every quarter for a consultative meeting.

Further, it was found that attitude; incentives, and workload affect delegation of duties and responsibilities in the administration of schools. [26]. If a President is afraid to trust

their subordinates, his performance will suffer. Since, managers who fail to delegate, deprive subordinates of opportunities to explore, improve their professional skills and to assume responsibility about the task. Although, in delegation there is some unavoidable error and misjudgment that might have happened. One middle manager from School B affirmed: "...there are delegated authorities..whenever there are concerns, it calls for a dialog and gives attention to it. Without proper delegation, the pressures of work and responsibility on the President will burden him/her to the point where he/she becomes ineffective.

In the end, Presidents allow the employees to establish their own goals, solve their problems and make decisions on their own. If they seldom used delegation and/or empowerment, planning, and transparency. These made them authoritative. There are, however, presidents are more focused on the output and performances of their employees. This practice becomes their strategy in achieving the school's targets and priorities.

CONCLUSION

Academic revolution with its strategic implications in management is gaining issue of concern for Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs). And human resource is increasingly seen as an asset of every institution. And strategic management is essential for them to be more competitive, and effective organizations. That is why, it can be deduced that the realization of the school's targets and priorities does not lie alone on the President but it is a collaborative efforts among employees in working for a common goal. Likewise, open communications should be encouraged among employees to voice out their views, and suggest improvements. It creates clarity on the roles and responsibilities of every employee on what the management expects from them. Thus, this will lead to the smooth attainment of VMGOs.

Similarly, the education and experience of the President play a great part in their management styles, since their varied usage of

management styles on the employees would show that most of them are flexible and are willing to adjust themselves depending on the situation and when the need arises.

Documentary analysis would prove that most of the president-respondents just rely on their trainings, and experiences during the assumptions of office. Although it is an issue for a President to become authoritative if it calls for it. In spite of the fact that most of the time employees depends on their ideas and suggestions towards smooth sailing relationship.

In pursuit of continuing quality education, one of the main focuses of the CHED is to evaluate the qualifications of the future educational managers or the President per se, who should have finished educational management to run or lead certain educational institutions? HEI's Presidents should be flexible enough to use combinations of two or more styles to effectively deal with a variety of situations and provide for more relevant direction in their governance. Lastly, the school's targets and priorities should be designed following the vision of the institution and in consultation with the employees.

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