Interlinking Public Schools Organizational Culture Principals Leadership Styles and Performance

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I. INTRODUCTION

In today’s society, organizations are viewed as the employees’ second home to which they seek a sense of collectiveness and belongingness, rather than just a workplace comprising separate individuals. Escalated competition, globalization, networks, linkages and different workforce developments have amplified the necessity for unity and coordination throughout the organizational structure. Organizations are minute versions of societies that have their own discrete cultural patterns. It is apparent how organizational culture evolves as an ethos crafted and maintained by the leaders and the members of the organizations. These integrated or fragmented shared meaning and belief patterns backed by varying rituals and norms may yield a critical influence on the organizations’ overall capacity to cope with the challenges that it faces (Morgan, 2007). It is in this light that in recent years, researches on organizational culture have propagated in the management literature. For instance, in the late1980s and early 1990s, the idea of organizational culture drew a lot of interest as leadership and management scholars investigated the bases behind U.S. firms’ the failure in competing on par with their Japanese rivals (Ojo, 2010). In this sense, the culture of an organization is believed to be a significant aspect affecting organizational success or failure. It is assumed responsible for organizational conflicts and, in instances, lauded for establishing positive traits and results (Shank & Lau, 2008). Cameron and Quinn (2011) argued that organizational culture has a strong connection to the organization’s sense of distinctiveness and differentiation, its vision, mission, values, goals, objectives, and their shared beliefs. Consequently, organizational culture is fairly viewed as one of the distinct qualities that differentiates successful organizations from those which are not. Therefore, discerning the notion of culture is vital for leaders due to its great influence on the various aspects of organizational behavior. Disregarding organizational culture in hopes for any organizational change would result to unanticipated and undesirable consequences. Given that organizational culture is an essential concept that merits exploration, Cameron and Quinn (2011) also affirmed that leading organizations are characterized by certain styles of leadership which shape the culture, and are shaped by the culture. However, in his extensive studies on leadership and management, Yukl (1992-2002) revealed that only a number of studies have focused on leadership in connection to culture. Furthermore, despite the fact that organizations have always had cultures, managing these cultures has been a testing and perplexing undertaking for the leaders. It is then worth noting that leadership in government sectors, such as the Department of Education, is particularly laborious because government-run organizations have the reputation of being or becoming vulnerable to mediocrity and complacency. For instance, management consultant and author Albrecht (2003) reminds leaders in government organizations, stressing: “Organizations that have no natural threats to their existence, such as government agencies, universities, and publicly funded operations, typically grow into cultures of complacency.” These observations are further evidences that public leaders, principals and school heads for example, must be mindful and attentive to the organization’s culture. Public schools, for instance, generally do not go out of business. Without the presence of conscientious leadership, a government organization could struggle for years, depriving stakeholders of quality service, resources, and losing public trust. A school, like any other organization, requires strong leadership and management skills as both pave the way the school would go. The use of various leadership and management practices and principles in school setting complement each other. School leadership and management of operations challenge leaders in exemplifying and encouraging cultured of lifelong teaching and learning. Moreover, as an organization, the school continually evolves, and the necessity for both leadership and management in recent years has grown to become more significant, serious, and arduous. Principals are struck by a plethora of conflicts and pressures and they are expected to address the changing needs of the educational system. In the same manner, schools are expected to instantaneously cope and adapt with the continuously shifting educational environment. However, in an investigation on the school principals’ capacity as instructional leaders, Sindhvad (2009) revealed that in Asia, many school principals were not ready for their new functions and roles in management of a school. Similarly, when she investigated the level of empowerment of secondary principals, Albano (2006) found out that school principals were more empowered in performing their administrative functions than in the supervisory roles. Additionally, Pablo (2010) research on the assessment of functions of school managers postulated that school managers do not practice negative belief system such as asbahalana system, crab mentality, palakasan, personalan, and nepotism. Filipino values make us believe that, evidently, what principals lack is recognizing the critical functions and leadership competencies in performing their roles and responsibilities efficiently and effectively. In connection, this is when and where the leaders’ leadership styles play a crucial role. Extensive reviews of Bass and Avolio (2004) suggest that the leadership styles significantly contribute and influence organizational and individual performances. Principals and school heads are encouraged to practice leadership styles tailored to suit their school’s organizational culture, and ensemble their teachers’ needs and competencies. Subsequently, teachers shall tend to think on a higher level that results to behaviors which have a propensity to maximize their efforts towards shared goals. Consequently, individual interests and preferences are less prioritized which is beneficial for the school and good for the stakeholders, both internal and external. It is in this light that the researcher took the initiative to examine the concepts of organizational culture, leadership styles and performance where there are little scholarly undertakings that needs to be expounded in the local settings. Consequently, the study could greatly contribute in the change of educational management practices in the Philippines.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The dissertation described the interlinking relationship of public secondary schools’ organizational culture, principals’ leadership styles and performance. The descriptive correlation design was used where a total of 84 schools in Region III – Central Luzon
served as main sources of data. Specifically, the randomly selected institutions were from the following Schools Division: Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, and Zambales. Using three questionnaires adopted from the works of Cameron and Quinn (2011), Bass and Avolio (2004), and Juliano (2017), answers to the questions were sought.

III. SCHOOLS’ ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

As mentioned, the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), which was used in this investigation, is anchored on the Competing Values Framework (CVF). The four culture types of the CVF – Clan, Adhocracy, Market, and Hierarchy – are each rooted in a model of organizational theory research. It is worth noting that the respondents were asked to answer questions of people’s actual and preferred culture. On one hand, actual (now) refers to the culture as it is to date; on the other hand, preferred refers to their desired culture five years from now (Cameron and Quinn, 2011). Furthermore, the schools were described along the following six key dimensions - dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, management of employees, organization glue, strategic emphasis, and criteria for success – to describe the fundamental manifestations of organizational culture. While not completely comprehensive, the six dimensions do cover the major components of the culture. With the assistance of Cameron and Quinn through OCAI online (2017), it was reported that there was a mix of the four culture archetypes where emphasis was on a people - friendly work environment, a clear manifestation of the dominant culture, clan. It is also worth stressing that in four (4) of the key dimensions, clan was the strongest culture. In clan culture the leaders or the principals of the schools are considered to be mentors and maybe even parent figures. The schools are held together by loyalty or tradition, next to structure and procedures in this case. Moreover, commitment is high among the teachers. The schools emphasize a long term benefit of human resource development and attaches great importance to cohesion and morale. Further still, success is defined in terms of sensitivity to clientele and concern for people. Lastly, the schools place a premium on teamwork, participation and consensus (OCAI Report, 2017). Closely succeeding clan was hierarchy, another internally-focused culture which also showed strong manifestations. In this sense, it was inferred that the schools were characterized by a formalized and structured place of work. The findings of this study were congruent to Cameron and Quinn’s (2011) as they explained that large organizations and government agencies, the public secondary schools for instance, are generally dominated by this type of organizational culture. It is also worth noting that hierarchy culture was rated highest in the dimension organizational glue, and was evaluated second strongest culture in four other dimensions. Hence, it was deduced that the schools are bonded together by rules and structure and highlight efficiency. In addition, the organizational environment of the schools is stable and simple; if changes are to be made they should be kept to a bare minimum (OCAI Report, 2017). Meanwhile, the values that postulate market: result-orientation and competitiveness, and adhocracy: dynamism, creativity and discretion are less manifested as both of these externally-focused cultures scored lower points than the two previously discussed. The dominant culture in the preferred situation remained clan culture followed by adhocracy, hierarchy, and market. Vividly, the teachers showed highest preference to the schools becoming more people-centered. It was further deduced that a decrease in control, formality, and high demanding competitiveness is favored. Moreover, it is important to highlight that adhocracy scored second highest. Consequently, organizational charts and formal structure should not be overly - emphasized, instead, the schools should encourage more originality, creativity and risk taking among their members. Cameron and Quinn (2011) stick to the principle that urgent action is required if the difference is higher than or equal to 10 points. Based from the results, this is not the case. None of the measured issues exceed a point difference of 5 when compared to the average culture. After closely studying all six key dimensions, it could be postulated that the current working culture of schools is congruent. This means that the strategy, style of leadership, reward system, management of employees, and organizational characteristics are based on the same values, and fall into the same culture quadrant. These results are relatively good since Cameron and Quinn’s extensive studies show that successful organizations which experience lesser inner conflicts and contradictions often have a congruent culture. In conclusion, there is no obvious necessity to introduce a new mix of culture to the public secondary schools in Region III.

IV. PRINCIPALS’ LEADERSHIP STYLES

A leadership style is a leader’s relatively consistent pattern of behaviors when directing, motivating, guiding, and managing subordinates. It represents the way the leader sets the way the school organization will operate and management. Both set the way the school organization will operate and management. Bass and Avolio’s (2004) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 6S, this study also examined the principals’ leadership styles. The instrument contains three leadership styles: transformational, transactional, and laissez faire. Findings postulated that most of the principals had fairly often or highly practiced transformational and transactional leadership while sometimes or moderately exhibited laissez faire style. Moreover, it was revealed that there were more principals who practice transformational leadership than the two latter styles. Bass (2004) asserted that the principals who were characterized as transformational leaders motivate the members of their schools to do more than the expected by raising followers’ level of consciousness about the importance and value of specific and idealized goals, getting them to transcend their own self interest for the sake of the team or organization, and moving them to address higher level needs. Furthermore, according to Pierce &Newstrom (2003), transformational leadership style produces trust and satisfaction among members of the school. Working for transformational principals can be a wonderful and uplifting experience for teachers as those kinds of leaders put passion and energy into everything, care about their subordinates, and want them to succeed. On the other hand, Bass and Avolio (2004) clarified that transactional leadership departs from transformational as the transactional leader does not individualize the needs of subordinates nor focus on their personal development. The principals who were classified as transactional leaders exchange things of value with their subordinates to advance their own as well as their subordinate’s agenda. In this sense, transactional principals are influential because it is in the best interest of teachers to do what the head wants. Moreover, transactional leaders display behavior associated with constructive and corrective transaction. They define expectations and promote performance to achieve higher levels. In summary, transactional principals are supplemented by working with individuals or groups, setting up and defining agreements or contracts to achieve specific work objective, discovering individual’s capabilities, and specifying the compensation and rewards that can be expected upon successful completion of the tasks. Lastly, as opposed to transformational and transactional leadership, laissez-faire represents a non-transformation and non-transaction. Meaning, the principals who characterized a laissez faire leader would not make necessary decisions for their schools. Actions are delayed and their responsibilities as school heads are ignored. Implication being, their authority remains unused which results to low motivation and productivity among their employees (Bass and Avolio, 2004). In this sense, the results of the study are relatively positive as most of the principals in Region III are either transformational or transactional. In any case, both leadership styles are closely related to individual, group and organizational performance (Bass and Avolio, 2004).

V. PRINCIPALS’ LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE

A school, like any other organization, needs strong leadership and management. Both set the way the school organization will go. The application of different management and leadership principles and practices in school setting complement each other. School leadership and management of activities challenge everyone in the field in promoting the culture of lifelong learning.
learning and teaching. Using an adopted questionnaire based on the Office Performance Commitment and Review Form, the study further described the principals’ performance on school leadership, management, and operation as evaluated by the teachers. The principals were rated very satisfactory in their performance on school leadership, management, and operations. These findings are relatively good as Cruz, Villena, Navarro, Belecina and Garvida (2016) asserted that the school principals as managers and leaders set the direction the schools are going. They are basically responsible in the overall operation of the school. The tremendous changes in scope, variety of competencies, and necessary skills of managing the school make their functions more complex, diverse, and challenging. In this sense, the call full range of leadership and management knowledge, skills, competencies, and standards are needed. Furthermore, the principals must understand the changes in school environment, but the application of proven fundamentals of school leadership, management, and operations remain unchanged. They are as relevant as they were years ago but their form continuously evolves.

**Interlinking Relationships among Organizational Culture, Leadership Styles, and Performance**

Ultimately, it was proven in this dissertation that significant interlinking relationships do exist among the public secondary schools’ organizational culture, the principals’ leadership styles and their performance. In terms of the relationship between organizational culture and leadership styles, it was found that all six key dimensions of organizational culture have tested a significant positive relationship with transformational leadership. Since clan is the dominant culture of the schools, it was also inferred that it has the closest link to the said leadership style. Subsequently, dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, and organizational glue have significant positive relationship with transactional leadership, while management of employees has a significant negative relationship with laissez faire leadership style. Similarly, it was concluded that the six key dimensions of organizational culture have significant positive relationship to the principals’ performance on school leadership, management and operations. Moreover, since the schools’ organizational culture is dominated by clan, it was also concluded that it has the strongest positive relationship to the principals’ performance. This means that an increased manifestation of clan culture results to a higher leadership performance of the principals. Further still, it was affirmed that the principals’ leadership styles are all significantly related to their performance. Interestingly, while transformational and transactional leadership have significant positive relationship on the principals’ performance, the former suggested a stronger relationship to the latter. Meaning, transformational principals had higher performance than transactional principals. In any case, both styles are closely related to individual, group and organizational success. On the other hand, laissez faire leadership style has tested a significant negative relationship. As the principals practice more laissez faire style, their performance decreases. Consequently, implications to Educational Management were drawn based on the salient findings of the study. Principals, as educational leaders, have the ultimate responsibility to shape the cultures and be shaped by the cultures of their schools. They set the directions of the schools, and are basically responsible in the overall management operations of their schools. This implies that the principals should be mindful that no single best leadership style applies in every situation. Thus, it is critical for them to have a thorough understanding of the leadership style behaviors that are most appropriate in different circumstances in order to create or shape a positive school culture, thus, achieve optimum performance.

**VI. REFERENCES**

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