

Assessment of Human Resource Management Practises Among State Universities and Colleges in MIMAROPA Region¹

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Abstract - Human resources management is one of the most important areas in the educational system which is directly concerned about the development, capability enhancement of, innovateness and potentials of people in the community in particular and in the country in general.

This paper assessed the extent of the practice of SUCs in MIMAROPA Region on the Civil Service Commission's rules and regulations on recruitment, selection and appointment, promotion and faculty and staff development. The study was anchored on the motivation-hygiene theory which distinguishes job satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work called "motivators" and "hygiene" needs respectively.

This study employed descriptive-developmental research method using Input- Throughput-and-Output (ITO) process in determining the extent of practice on CSC's merit system policies. The process of data gathering employed distribution of questionnaires to administrators, support staff and faculty of members of six state universities and colleges in Region IV-B coupled with guided informal interviews with selected respondents to generate qualitative data that support quantitative figures.

Result of the study revealed that SUCs in MIMAROPA region practice the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) merit system to a moderate extent.

Key Words - faculty and staff development, management practices, merit system

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INTRODUCTION

Management of human resources (HR) constitutes one of the most important areas in the educational system. It is directly concerned about how people in the institution are taken care of, develop their potentials and are recognized for their significant contributions to the overall success of the organization.

HR offices' functions are primarily concerned with promoting and enhancing the development of work effectiveness and the advancement of human resources in the organization through proper planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and control of activities related to selection, development, motivation and compensation to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization (Flippo, 1984; Sison, 2003).

This study is anchored on the motivation-hygiene theory advanced by Frederick Herzberg in 1959 (Chapman, 2001). It distinguishes job satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work called "motivators" and "hygiene" needs, respectively. This theory is essentially concerned with people's well-being and attempts to bring more humanity to the organization and explains how to properly manage people at work.

Accordingly, job satisfaction is temporary. People strive to achieve their 'hygiene' needs as reflected in working environment as follows: working condition, policies, supervision, co-workers, salary, and job security, among others. In Herzberg's research, without these, workers/employees are unhappy but once their hygiene needs are satisfied, the effect soon wears off (Chapman, 2001). It is important to understand that people are not only motivated by addressing the 'hygiene' needs. True motivation of employees is done by enabling them to reach for real motivators, such as achievement, advancement, development, etc. which satisfy a far deeper level of meaning and fulfillment.

Satisfaction in hygiene needs eliminate work restrictions but it does little to motivate superior performance or increased capacity while the enhancement of the motivators permits an individual to grow and to develop often increasing ability (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993). Thus, "hygiene needs" affect an individual's willingness while motivators affect an individual's ability.

Studies showed that the productivity of organization lies on the HR management (Knootz & Weirich, 1993) while the retention of employees depends on the recruiting process, matching of work assignment and skills, developing staff program and achieving opportunity for the de-

velopment of their full potential and the compensation package (Wright & Noe, 1996). It is also important to understand the significance of culture, structure and personnel composition of the organization to obtain competitive advantage through strategic deployment of highly committed and skilled individuals (Armstrong, 1999).

Arndt and Bernstein (2000) affirmed that the commitment to work involves not only the fulfillment of basic needs, such as hygiene needs but also having the sense of belongingness, recognition, development of self-esteem, advancement and self-actualization. Employees are not a commodity subjected to be bought or exchanged (Arndt & Bernstein, 2000). They should not be treated arbitrarily; they need to be supervised and managed very closely but as a collection of human resources and valued investment (Mellow, 2002). They are also the organization's distinctive source of competitive advantage (Corpuz, 2006).

In the world of business and academic institutions, effective HR management ensures continuous provision of appropriately skilled workforce to meet the organizations' challenging requirements (Burach, 1983). In support, the development of a philosophy-based guidelines is a critical tool on how members of the organization should be treated and managed (Armstrong, 1999).

This paper assessed the extent of practice and implementation of the Civil Service Commission's rules and regulations and the SUCs Region IV-B merit system for recruitment, selection and appointment, promotion and faculty and staff development. It also tackled identified strengths and weaknesses of HR management based on the perceptions of administrators, faculty and support staff. A discussion on preliminary concepts to contextualize the analysis is discussed below.

State of Academic System

The State ensures the protection and promotion of "the right of all citizens to affordable quality education at all levels and takes appropriate steps to ensure that education is accessible to all.... The State-supported institutions of higher learning shall gear their programs to national, regional or local development plans and exemplify through their physical and natural surroundings their dignity and beauty, as well as their pride, the intellectual and scholarly life" (Sec. 2, RA 7722).

The SUCs, like any organization need to work together for the achievement of common goals and objectives which facilitate the learning process that will develop a generation of competitive professionals to face the challenges of the modern time. Human resources in academic institutions supersede all other resources because they particularly deal with people (Morphet, 1982) who are indispensable in producing quality graduates and in directing academic programs.

The academic system is composed of three closely knit groups: administrators, faculty and support staff. Though they have distinct roles, their functions and expectations compliment each one for the common goals. They are regarded as the composite agents in effectively achieving the purpose of the educational system.

The SUCs in the Philippines are operating under their respective charters and are mandated to focus on quadratic functions: instruction, research and extension, and development. They are tasked by the Constitution to develop human potentials for productivity and self-actualization in order to contribute to social development. They are further mandated to develop the morale of its constituents particularly the students and the employees.

SUCs are governed by the Board of Regents/Trustees (BOR/T), the highest decision making body, composed of the following: Chairman of the Commission on Higher Education; President of the University or College; Chairman of the Congressional Committees on Education and Sports; Regional Director of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA); Regional Director of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST); Regional Director of the Department of Agriculture (DA); President of the Faculty Association; President of the Supreme Student Council; President of the Alumni Association and two (2) prominent citizens who have distinguished themselves in their professions or field of specialization (CMO No. 03, series of 2001).

Role of Administrators

Administrators in academic institutions are traditionally in-charge of supervising activities, such as planning, coordinating and guiding employees in formulating achievable goals or purposes (Miranda, 2004) and providing leadership to the teaching and support staff (Hemphill, et al., 1962). But in time, leaders appropriately improve their management strategies from mere transactional to transformative process by “learning together” and “developing learning communities” schemes that provide avenues for sharing of expertise and best practices which

becomes inevitable for 21st century educational system.

In the same manner, highly-motivated faculty members should also establish direct contact with students to propel them to diligently perform varied tasks in the teaching-learning process with the end view of creating competitive professionals who are aggressive to share meaningful contributions to nation building.

Role of Faculty Members

It is the role of the faculty members to be guides and facilitators, to create a climate favourable to the learning process and to provide resources that stimulate students to explore, investigate and seek answer/s to an inquiry (Aquino, 2003). Assurance of quality graduates primarily depends on the ability of faculty members who honed them over time. Thus, it is a prerequisite of the institution to maintain faculty at their competitive advantages in keeping abreast of the fast changing world.

Thus, the administrators need to sustain the faculty's energy and commitment by developing agreed upon standards, policies and programs that would help them grow and enhance knowledge, awareness and practice (Nieto, 2009). In the same manner, the support staff though not equally important as faculty members, is valuable for their contributions to the accomplishment of the academic goals and objectives.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive-developmental research method using Input-Throughput-and-Output (ITO) process in determining the extent of the practice and implementation of policies stipulated in the merit system of the Civil Service Commission. The data were gathered from two sources: first, a set of validated questionnaire separately distributed to administrators and support staff and faculty respondents, respectively; second, guided informal interviews with selected respondents to generate qualitative data that could provide human face to quantitative figures.

For the survey questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate four areas of personnel management using the following scales: 4 - Practiced to a Great Extent; 3 - Practiced to a Moderate Extent; 2 - Practiced to a Little Extent; 1 - Practiced to Very Little Extent.

There were six (6) State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in MIMAROPA/Region IV-B that participated in this study, namely: Marin-

duque State College (MSC), Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology (MinSCAT), Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC), Romblon State University (RSU), Palawan State University (PSU), and Western Philippines University (WPU).

Respondents were selected per SUC using non-random and purposive sampling techniques. The total of 298 individuals drawn from six SUCs was as follows: 78 administrators; 140 faculty members and 80 support staff.

Table 1. Descriptive interpretation of mean rating scales.

Rating Scales	Criteria/Standards in %	Verbal Interpretations
3.26-4.00	75-100 of the time	Practiced to a great extent
2.50-3.25	50-74 of the time	Practiced to a moderate extent
1.74-2.49	25-49 of the time	Practiced to a little extent
1.00 - 1.73	1 - 24 of the time	Practiced to a very little extent

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The overall result of the study on the practice of Civil Service Commission's (CSC) merit system among SUCs in MIMAROPA region on recruitment, selection and appointment, promotion, and faculty and staff development revealed the "practice to a moderate extent." Details on specific areas of personnel management are discussed below.

On Recruitment

In principle, the SUCs' recruitment policies and procedures are based on the CSC merit and fitness system coupled with their respective charters. However, results of the study showed that a number of personnel were not satisfied with the selection procedure, interpretation of fairness and consistency in which vacant positions were reserved to privileged few. This culture permits dissatisfaction, frustration and disillusionment and subsequently employees lose the enthusiasm, excitement and creativity to perform beyond the minimum requirement.

The three groups of respondents perceived the practice of CSC's merit system to a moderate extent. Data showed that there was a gap between the implementation of mandated procedures and practices which justified the recommendation to enhance the recruitment process by developing strategic interventions towards hiring and retention of quality human resources that had the competitive advantage (Payos & Zorilla, 2003).

However, it should be noted that updates of records were regularly conducted to determine current human resource holding, qualified (degree holder) and previous applicants. An HRMO officer explained that "it is imperative to continuously and consistently conduct an inventory of the available labor force and possible sources of applicants to meet the discriminating needs of academic institution."

There are several practices found useful more than in sourcing applicants. These include the use of recruitment agency, internet, referrals and walk-in. Among the different practices, referrals and walk-in were the successful practices in which the applicants personally applied due to their interest in the job while the use of internet was marked the least.

The publication of vacant positions in circulations as a CSC requirement (RA 7041) provides equal access and opportunities to prospective applicants. In contrast, interviews revealed the *hocus pocus* selection of applicants that were "close to power" was practised as posted vacant positions were already reserved prior to publication.

On Selection and Appointment

In selecting faculty, applicants with excellent scholastic standing are the ideal priority, but interviews with deans, revealed their difficulties in hiring faculty for technical courses that require licenses like engineering and technology due to the inability of the State-owned universities and colleges to provide good salary and opportunities which private companies could offer.

In addition, there were instances shared that the practices of discretionary powers among SUC Presidents who favour their "pets" without Master's Degree erode the practice of merit and fitness system. Justification of the selection is given as "enrolled in the graduate program" or with "on-going status." Data also show that sometimes the newly hired "pet" was given a supervisory position which demoralized deserving employees.

The sentiment expressed on the use of discretionary power of appointing authorities had brought discomfort and dissatisfaction among the personnel. This practice prevented the nurturing of healthy competitive culture among aspiring applicants.

On Promotion

Descriptive interpretation of data showed that the practice of promotion based on CSC merit system was conducted to a moderate extent. It was found out that seniority and closeness to power were the dominant practices for promotion.

The interview with different respondents revealed that despite the existence of CSC criteria, the filling of vacant positions for promotion was still made through the discretionary power of the president. Disappointed employees shared that promotion of faculty who were not among his friends or “*ka-horoscope*” was difficult.

In contrast, justification on the use of discretionary power by staff close to the authority was made citing the Omnibus Rules of Executive Order No. 292 stating that “the appointing authority may promote an employee who is not next-in-rank but who possesses superior qualification and competence compared to the next-in-rank employee who merely meets the minimum requirement for the position.”

However, the definition of “superior qualification and competence” has no clear basis for measuring such and it becomes a grey area to employees who are not “in the same boat” or “*kabagang*” of the appointing authority. To non-politically allied employees, “promotion is impossible if they wish not to do it but if they like their favoured one, it is easy to find ways.”

On Faculty and Staff Development

The Civil Service Commission promotes development of faculty and staff and puts premium on employees as important assets of government in the delivery of basic services to the public. It also promotes opportunities to maintain the competence, efficiency and professional workforce in public service (Sec. 1, Rule VIII, CSC). But data in this study show that the practice of SUCs in Region IV-B was perceived to be implemented to a moderate extent.

Among three groups of respondents, the support staff claimed that they are not considered as priority in staff development while faculty members, being the backbone of educational institution, are given several opportunities to pursue higher education through consortia and scholarship programs. That strategy was emphasized by the Accreditation Agency for Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AAC-CUP) to ensure the quality of program offerings with Master's degree as a minimum requirement among faculty handling tertiary courses. In the interview, respondents revealed that middle managers were minimally exposed to executive training that was specifically designed to enhance their analytical and human resource management skills.

Another problems shared by respondents was the concealing of training opportunities from intended employees by officials who subsequently sent favoured employees regardless of the relevance of training design to their job descriptions. It was also noted that attendees were not required to re-echo the information and knowledge learned from the training. As a means of survival, an employee should learn how to be friendly with budget and administrative officers who know the sources and status of funds.

CONCLUSION

The findings revealed the trend in SUCs in Region IV-B that these institutions practice and implement to a moderate extent the Civil Service Commission rules and regulations and merit system on recruitment, selection and appointment, promotion and faculty and staff development. There is also a gap in the implementation of policies between legal procedure and socio-cultural practices. The exercise of discretionary power of high-ranking officials seemed unquestionable that it has influenced the interpretation and implementation of the law.

Technically, SUC Presidents have no absolute power over human resource management. However, the exercise of discretionary power over the CSC rules and regulations were loosely interpreted and practiced with middle-management officials who made legal and social justifications. This practice has prevailed as a consequence of paying back the "ka-horoscope" and "pet" which starts the cyclical relationship between the appointing authority and employees from recruitment to selection and appointment and promotion of allies. This relationship could be viewed as a local version of *utang na loob* and *compadre* syndrome among Filipinos.

Another irrefutable reality of practice is that of concealing training and other enhancement opportunities by higher officials to favour pet

employees. This further strengthens the “loyalty” system of beneficiaries to administration and thereby the give-and-take relationship governs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are suggested:

- a. Review/Revisit the existing institutional policies and procedures on recruitment, selection and appointment, promotion, and faculty and staff development.
- b. Analyze the current and future conditions that surround the practice of these areas and design improved programs through SWOT analysis and appropriate tools.
- c. Develop effective feedback mechanisms to find out the status of any undertaking.
- d. Improve recruitment strategy through linkages with other academic institutions, use of internet and print media.
- e. Strengthen the implementation of institutional criteria for promotion consistent with CSC rules and merit system.
- f. Increase funds for faculty and staff development.
- g. Strictly implement the CSC rules and regulations and merit system in the recruitment, selection and appointment, promotion, and faculty and staff development.

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