SUSTAINING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: ENHANCING SCHOOL CLIMATE, LEADERSHIP, AND FACULTY-EFFICACY

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to analyze school climate, leadership, and faculty-efficacy towards sustaining effectiveness in the private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the City of Meycauayan, Bulacan for the School Year 2015-2016 using descriptive method and questionnaires as specific techniques.The study was geared to describe the school climate of the HEIs as perceived by the faculty and school heads. It investigated the leadership of the heads in terms of School Management Team (SMT) composition, significant responsibility, and involvement in school tasks. It was undertaken to find out the faculty's efficacy level in student engagement, classroom management, and instructional practice. It intended to explore the significant difference between the perceptions of school heads and faculty in school climate as to school staff's relationship, capacity to provide quality instruction, and school climate issues. Major findings revealed that HEIs fostered good relationship status. Heads and the faculty perceived that HEIs' capacity in providing quality instruction is only "moderately good." The findings showed that HEIs utilized SMT composition and a School Governing Board (SGB). Heads' major tasks include determining course content both national and regional curricula, appointing, or hiring teacher, and establishing student disciplinary policies and procedures. Heads allocated most of their time in administrative duties, like curriculum and teaching-related tasks while least of their time was spent on interactions with students, parents, local, regional, and business industries. On faculty-efficacy, the data confirmed that teachers were "highly efficacious" in student engagement and "very highly efficacious" in instructional practice and classroom management. The perceptions of the heads and faculty on school climate as to relationships among school staff do not differ significantly. In contrast, the perceptions of heads and faculty differ significantly on the school climate in terms of school's capacity to provide quality instruction school climate issues.

Keywords: perceptions, climate, efficacy, leadership, school effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are expected to contribute much to the nation's economic venture through the production of employable graduates whose range of education, skills, and trainings are globally accepted. It implies that schools must continue to transform and progress. Unfortunately, two out of the seven private HEIs in the City of Meycauayan, expressed their definite closure. A progressive HEI is the one that meets its Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO) evidently in the increase of their capacity to produce quality graduates. The closure of the HEIs implies ineffectiveness in the delivery of educational outcomes. Due to this, the

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researcher initiated to conduct an informal interview to investigate the general situation of these HEIs and whether their condition could be a viable interest for research exploration. Based on the results from the interview, the researcher explored problems that are found to be common among the schools. These issues are relevant to school's climate, school heads' leadership and faculty-efficacy.

School climate involves its capacity to provide quality instruction. A culinary course requires a certified instructor who could deliver the program effectively, likewise, in other various courses. HEIs cannot expect to produce skilled and productive professionals if schools fail to hire competent faculty. Moreover, instructional resources and a conducive learning environment support students' learning outcome. Thapa (2013) confirmed in school climate review of more than 200 case studies, that positive school climate is recognized as an important target for school reform and improved behavioral, academic, and mental health outcomes for students.

School leadership is fundamental through their influence on teachers' efficacy, commitment, and positive school climate concretely through investment on sufficient instructional resources. Yuson (2013) argued that leadership is at the core of the solution to ensure all learners attain excellent education. Therefore, school leaders must be accorded educational advancements to help them become effective managers.

Undeniably, teachers have crucial role of ensuring that they have strongly aligned instructional focus, employed purposive teaching strategies, managed behavior in the classroom, engaged students in the lesson actively, and monitored students' progress to ascertain educational goals are achieved. These difficult tasks require highly efficacious teachers to accomplish desired results. Gou et al. (2012) posited teachers with a higher sense of efficacy provided more support for student learning and created a more positive classroom environment.

In education, school effectiveness means that the school accomplishes its VMGOs. Edmonds (1979), in his "Theory of School Effectiveness" posited that effective schools possess the following qualities: (1) school heads'

pervasive educational leadership; (2) positive school climate, (3) close relationship between expectations and achievement; (4) clearly aligned instructional focus and (5) consistent monitoring in students' progress to ensure that educational goals are achieved. Edmonds confirmed that leadership is directly related to school effectiveness because leaders have significant responsibility to improve educational programming through their direction and influence in the organization.

Edmonds likewise confirmed that positive educational climate directly affects students' outputs. Moreover, he verified, that effective schools have clearly aligned instructional focus, expectations are closely related to achievement, and consistency in monitoring of students' progress. This implies the need for efficacious teachers to deliver complex teaching-related tasks effectively.

The present study sought to analyze whether the standards of effective schools are present among the HEIs. The study involved 21 school heads and 156 part-time and full-time faculty members who have at least a year of teaching experience. The research was only limited to the inner inputs of the respondents to collect a more reliable data. Their discernment was deemed to be truthful in their assessment with the variables that were asked in the study relevant to the condition of their learning institutions. The results of the study served as bases for formulation of different programs of improvements in school climate, leadership, and faculty-efficacy towards school effectiveness.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The focus of the study was to analyze the school climate, leadership, and faculty-efficacy of private HEIs in the city of Meycauayan to provide bases for programs of enhancement. Specifically, the study: 1) described the school climate of the respondent institution as perceived by the heads and faculty members as to its relationship among the school staff, capacity to provide quality instruction. and students and faculty-members' school climate issues; 2) evaluate the school heads' leadership in terms of SMT, significant responsibility, and involvement in school tasks; (3)

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determine the faculty-efficacy level as to student engagement, instructional practice, and classroom management; 4) explored the significant difference between school heads' and faculty-members' perception on school climate as to relationships among staff, capacity to provide quality instruction, and school climate issues; and 5) proposed a program of enhancement for the heads and faculty for the benefit of the HEIs.

METHODOLOGY

The statistical techniques used in this study included descriptive statistics like frequency count, relative frequency, and mean. T-test for independent samples was used to test the significant difference in the perceptions of faculty and school heads. An unstructured interview was initiated to obtain raw data to provide bases in the conduct of the study. A researcher made questionnaire was used to obtain the demographic profile. To describe the school heads' leadership as to SMT, significant responsibility, involvement on school tasks, and perceptions on school climate as to relationship among school staff, capacity to provide quality instruction and school climate issues, the modified standard instrument of Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2013) was used. To measure faculty members' level of self-efficacy, the long form of the Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) by Tschannen- Moran and Woolfolk Hoy was employed after the researcher was granted permission by the authors. Statistics was applied to these data to provide data-based analysis and findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Profile of the Respondents

1.1 Profile of the Faculty Members

Age. Majority or 43.60 percent were 20-29 years old, while the oldest and the least or 6.41 percent were 60-69 years old. Majority or 64.70 percent of the respondents were male. Results imply that there were more male teachers in the HEIs.

Educational qualifications. Majority or 42.30 percent obtained bachelor's degree. The least or .60 percent was a holder of MA/MS Degree with Doctoral units. It means that most instructors were fresh graduates.

Employment status. Most respondents or 53.20 percent worked as full-time while least or 46.80 were part-timers. It can be inferred from these results that majority worked as regular employees.

Teaching loads. Mostly or 33.97 percent ranged from having three to nine units while least or 3.21 percent had 33-39 units. Generally, faculty handled 16 units, which suggests that most instructors teach at the maximum of nine units, and majority have short organizational commitment.

Eligibility. Majority or 52.60 percent were professional teachers while least or 21.20 percent were eligible with other licenses like TESDA certificates, licensing examination in law, nursing, accountancy, librarian, and others. Results suggest that most teachers in the HEIs were qualified to teach.

1.2 Profile of the School Heads

Age and gender. Majority or 28.57 percent of the heads were 44-52 years old while least or 9.52 percent were 62 -70 years old. The mean age of the respondents was 45 years old. Dominantly, or 66.70 percent were male. This can be surmised that most heads were capable of managing a school.

Educational qualification. Majority or 42.90 percent were MA holders while least or 4.80 were with bachelor's degree. Results presents these heads were eligible educational managers.

Present position. Dominantly, or 52.14 were "program heads" while least or 19.05 were "assistant deans." Results imply that HEIs have sufficient leaders to help the schools achieve educational goals.

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Eligibility. Majority or 60.90 percent were eligible in different skills or specialization such as in TESDA, professional examinations in law, accountancy, nursing, librarian, and others while least or 14.30 percent have civil service eligibility. It can be inferred that most heads were qualified to lead the academic institutions.

Employment status. Dominantly, or 81 percent worked as "full-time with teaching load" while least or 4.80 percent worked as "part-time with/without teaching load". It can be deduced from results that most heads were not only managers but were also instructors.

Work experience. Most or 57.14 percent have one to five-year experience as head while least or 4.76 percent worked with 21-25 years. Generally, heads have worked as head for seven years. Majority or 85.70 percent had work experience with other school management in one year. Overall, school heads had two years of experience performing other management roles. Results indicate that most heads were young managers.

Deanship training course. Majority or 52.40 percent obtained formal deanship training course after they assumed their position while least or 4.80 percent had never undergone training before and after they took their position. Findings suggest that majority needs enhancement of their leadership training.

Tertiary teaching training. Dominantly or 38.10 percent had formal teacher training after assuming their position, while least or 28.60 percent had formal education in teaching training before and after assuming their position. It can be gathered from results these heads needed sufficient teacher trainings to become effective instructional leaders.

Instructional leadership training. Majority or 38.10 percent took formal instructional leadership training before and after assuming their position while least or 9.5 percent "never" had such training. Result implies that heads had insufficient background in instructional leadership.

2. School Heads and Faculty Members' Perceptions on School Climate

2.1 School heads' perceptions on school climate as to relationship among school staff. Majority perceived that relationship between teachers and students was "good." This means that reciprocally, both respect the physical individual needs and socio-cultural orientation. Meanwhile, providing students with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions was perceived as "good." It can be deduced that students' participation was limited to decisions relevant to school welfare. Overall, heads agreed that there was a "good" working relationship among stakeholders in the private HEIs. Brown and Medway (2007) verified that schools where educators openly communicate with one another tend to have better student academic and behavioral outcomes.

2.2 School heads' perceptions on school climate as to school's capacity to provide quality instruction. Most heads perceived that capacity to provide quality instruction was perceived "moderately good" based on the shortage of qualified teachers. This means that HEIs have inadequacy in hiring competent instructors. Heads least perceived that there was shortage of instructional materials, and the dearth of computer units described as "moderately good." Result infers that students and teacher were provided the necessary learning resources but was insufficient when it was for teaching learning process.

Generally, heads agreed that capacity in providing quality instruction was only "moderately good." Result indicates that HEIs' provision of quality instruction needs improvement. The problems of shortage of qualified teachers and the lack of instructional resources were confirmed from the researcher's interview. Fioriello (2009) postulated that faculty should be well-qualified, and they should deliver the lesson in such a way that the students are able to understand it.

2.3 School heads' perceptions on school climate as to school climate issues. Majority perceived that the students have "never" been

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involved in the use /possession of drugs and/or alcohol, and intimidation or verbal abuse of teachers or staff, described as "outstanding." This suggests that HEIs have not encountered problems regarding these issues. However, respondents least perceived was on students' tardiness, which can be inferred that student were late in their classes sometimes. Overall, heads agreed that there was a "very good" school climate in HEIs.

It is commendable that HEIs foster a favorable school climate. However, HEIs must do something to eliminate students' tardiness, and absenteeism because they are impediments to learning. Gregory et al. (2010) added that schools with positive climates tend to have less student discipline problems, aggressive, and violent behavior.

2.4 Faculty members' perceptions on school climate as to relationship among school staff. Majority perceived that relationship between teachers and students were "good" while least perceived on students making important decisions on their own was interpreted as "good." It means teachers do not have the sole responsibility in decision-making regarding school matters.

Generally, faculty agreed that HEIs promote "good" relationship. It entails a favorable practice of harmonious working relationship among them. Millado (2013) confirmed that positive school climate has significant relationship to organizational commitment.

2.5 Faculty members' perceptions on school climate as to school's capacity to provide quality instruction. Most faculty perceived that there was a shortage of specialized teachers described as "moderately good." It shows that most instructors did not obtain specialization. Instead, faculty least recognized that there was shortage of competent teachers described as "moderately good." It means that faculty possess the necessary ability, knowledge, or skill to do something "satisfactorily" but not "outstandingly." Results indicate that instructors need enhancement of their skills and trainings. Overall,

teachers perceived that HEIs capacity in providing quality instruction was just "moderately good."

2.6 Faculty members' perceptions on school climate as to school climate issues. Majority perceived that the students arriving late to school interpreted as "good." This infers that student commit tardiness sometimes; while least recognized that students were involved in the use and/or possession of drugs and/or alcohol described as "moderately good." This confirmed involvement of some students in these issues mentioned in their schools.

Generally, faculty members agreed that students' issues were "moderately good." HEIs must exert effort in eliminating school climate issues. Studies confirmed that a favorable school climate has been linked with higher student academic motivation and engagement and elevated psychological well-being (Ruus et al., 2007; Shochet et al., 2006).

3. School Heads' Leadership

3.1 School management team composition. All school heads or 100 percent confirmed that they utilized SMT. The faculty or 95.20 percent dominated the SMT while least or 19 percent were "vice-deans." Results show that SMT was greatly represented by faculty. Teachers play a very significant role in the educational process and their efficacy, qualifications, and performance play a vital role in the learner's development. Omotayo (2007) agreed that teachers are very important to the success of the school system in achieving its goals and objectives.

3.2 Significant responsibility of school tasks. Most heads' responsibilities include determining course content, including national and regional curricula, appointing/hiring teacher, and establishing student disciplinary policies and procedures. The least involves establishing teachers' starting salaries, including setting pay scale, dismissing or suspending teachers from employment, and determining teachers' salary increases. Results suggest that some of the HEIs do not have Human Resource Department (HRD)

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that specifically cover such functions. Alternatively, dismissing/suspending teachers is not the function of the heads but the SGB. The establishment of SMT is necessary to address specific needs of the organization. Separation of teams would help to have focus in the realization of specific educational goals.

3.3 Involvement in school tasks in time spent. Majority spent 40 percent of their time attending to administrative leadership tasks and meeting. Generally, heads utilized 37 percent for administrative duties. It suggests that heads are more focused on their administrative duties to provide direction to achieve school's goals. Leightwood et al. (2008) claimed that school leaders influence learning primarily by galvanizing effort around ambitious goals and by establishing conditions that support teachers, staff, and other members of SMT to help students succeed.

To add, school heads consumed 20 percent of their time in curriculum, teaching-related tasks, and meetings. Generally, heads used 24 percent for curricular-related obligations. The facts entail that the heads are not just administrators but are also teachers. Due to the dearth of faculty to instruct courses, they suffice the need by apportioning some time to teaching.

In students' interaction, heads allocated 15 percent of their time. They used 9% entertaining concerns of parents/guardians. For local and regional community interaction, and industry, heads devoted 2.5 percent of their time. Overall, heads spent nine percent in these tasks. Moreover, heads allotted 30% in other tasks like hiring employees, marketing, procuring supplies, and others. Majority, heads spent 10% in performing other tasks. Overall, heads utilized seven percent in performing various tasks as required of being administrators. These results infer that school heads did not find these tasks prime because they can delegate these to other members of the SMT.

It is evident that school managers employ "shared leadership." Senge (2006) confirmed that organization must tap the capacity of all people to work productively toward common goals. A school is a system, composed, and supervised by stakeholders who have certain contribution to the proper functioning of the learning organization.

3.4 Task engagement. Most managers were engaged in the use of student performance and evaluation results to develop school goals and programs for the last 12 months. This means that they plan educational goals and needs based on the results of students' feedback. Professional development programs were necessary for continuous improvement for the faculty and school leaders. It will be best if leaders involve their subordinates in educational planning to come up with more comprehensive and timely plans.

3.5 Frequency of task engagement. For the past 12 months, most heads were "outstanding" in taking actions to ensure that teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching skills and to ensure that teachers feel responsible for their students' learning outcomes. It is commendable that school managers show "outstanding" performance in monitoring if instructors were teaching their students well. It suggests that most heads work closely among its faculty to ensure that they feel responsible with the learning progress of their students.

However, most heads were only "satisfactory" in collaborating with heads from other schools and in providing parents /guardians with feedback on student performance. It indicates that heads deemed these tasks unimportant. Heads and the faculty must work collaboratively to encourage participation of parents/guardians. Stakeholders are partners in the educational process and are considered vital in the learning outcomes of students.

4. Level of Faculty-Efficacy

4.1 Student engagement. Most faculty members were "very highly" efficacious in how much they can do to get students to believe they can do well in school. It means that teachers have "very high" confidence in their students' abilities that they can learn and do better in school. It infers that most teachers were willing to do everything within their power to help students attain progress. In contrast, faculty were only "highly efficacious" in how much they can get through to the most difficult students. It implies that teachers' efficacy can still

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be honed to help them become more effective in managing defiant students in the classroom.

Generally, faculty were "highly" efficacious in student engagement. It implies that highly efficacious teachers engage students in class no matter how stiff the situation. Woolfolk Hoy and Davis (2005) claimed that teachers with higher efficacious beliefs were interested in facilitating learning and believe that students ought to be involved and motivated in the learning environments.

4.2 Instructional practice. Most teachers have "very high" efficacy in providing appropriate challenges for very capable students. This means that faculty were encouraging students to defy their fears. Consequently, faculty were only "highly" efficacious in implementing alternatives strategies in the classroom. Generally, faculty were "very highly" efficacious in their instructional practice. This infers that most instructors strongly believe on their outstanding capacity to help students learn. Slavin (2006) confirmed that teachers who come at class, prepare lessons with intention are much more likely to positively impact student engagement than the ones who take teaching as simply a job to be endured.

4.3 Classroom management. Most teachers were "very highly" efficacious in establishing routines to keep activities running smoothly. It means that faculty manage students in the classroom adequately. Faculty also were "highly efficacious" in responding to defiant students. It means that teachers need to improve their tolerance on difficult students. Generally, teachers were very highly efficacious in classroom management. Gootman (2008) suggested teachers, to establish procedures to consistently enforce at the beginning of class, give students concrete direction to ensure that classroom expectations become a reality.

5. Significant Difference between the Perceptions of the School Heads and Faculty Members on School Climate.

5.1 Relationship among staff. There was no significant difference between the perceptions of school heads and faculty members on school climate as to relationship among staff. This means that both heads and faculty perceived that HEIs promote good relationship among school staff. Cohen (2009) postulated that positive school climate profoundly affects student learning and achievement, job satisfaction, and commitment of administrators and teachers.

5.2 Capacity to provide quality instruction. There was significant difference between school heads and faculty members' perception in terms of capacity to provide quality instruction. Both respondents agreed that there was shortage in certain variables as to school's capacity in providing quality instructions. However, the respondents differed significantly when most heads claimed that there was shortage of qualified teachers while faculty recognized scarcity among specialized teachers. Moreover, heads least perceived that there were shortage of instructional materials and computer units while faculty least claimed that there was shortage of competent teachers. The shortage of specialized instructors, and instructional resources are impediments if HEIs want to achieve institutional effectiveness. Therefore, HEIs should procure relevant learning resources that will suffice the needs of students and the faculty.

5.3 School climate issues. There was a high significant difference between the school heads and faculty-members perception as to school climate issues. In students' school climate issues, most heads perceived students have never been involved in the use/possession of drugs and/or alcohol and intimidation or verbal abuse of teachers or staff interpreted as "outstanding;" while teachers perceived that these issues were sometimes committed by students interpreted as "moderately good." It means that these issues have been committed by students in their schools.

In faculty members' school climate issues, most heads perceived, teachers have never experienced discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, or disability, interpreted as "outstanding" while faculty confirmed that they have experienced "discrimination" interpreted as

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"moderately good." It means that they experienced it occasionally.

Both respondents' perceptions showed highly significant difference because heads involvement in school was typically only within the bird's eye view of the institution. Both heads and faculty must work together towards the attainment of a favorable school climate. (EDCOM, 2010) highlighted the need for dynamic partnership between administrators and teachers to continuously find ways to improve the present situation of HEIs, transformation should not be seen only from students but from the teachers as well.

CONCLUSIONS

The school climate as perceived by the heads and teachers is rated "good," "moderately good," and "very good in terms of relationship among school staff, capacity to provide quality instruction, and school climate issues.

The HEI respondents utilized an SMT and an SGB. The SMT is greatly represented by faculty while least represented by the assistant –deans. The SGB is mostly represented by school administrative personnel while least representations are from the students. Most heads' major tasks are determining course content including national/regional curricula, appointing/hiring teacher, and establishing student disciplinary policies and procedures.

Heads are least involved with tasks like establishing teachers' starting salaries, including setting pay scale, dismissing/suspending teachers from employment, and determining teachers' salary increases. Generally, most of the significant responsibilities are performed by the heads with the help of the SMT.

Most heads are engaged in the use of student performance and evaluation results to develop educational goals and programs for the past 12 months. Heads allocated the biggest portion of their time in administrative duties. School heads' leadership based on the frequency of task engagement is rated "very satisfactory."

Faculty have "high" level of efficacy in student engagement and "very high" in instructional practice and classroom management.

The perceptions of the heads and the faculty on school climate as to relationships among school staff do not differ significantly while their perceptions differ significantly on school climate as to capacity to provide quality instructions, and school climate issues.

There is no significant difference on the perceptions of the school heads and faculty members on school climate as to relationships among school staff. However, there is significant difference on the perceptions of heads and faculty on school climate as to capacity to provide quality instruction, and school climate issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the school climate as to relationship among school staff was rated "good" only, heads may actively involve the academic personnel in decision making and in socio-cultural activities of the institution.

Since the faculty were only "highly efficacious" in student engagement, faculty may further encourage students have more faith on themselves to excel both in curricular and co-curricular activities. Also, teachers may design classroom activities to enhance the critical thinking and creativity of the students.

The proposed enhancement program may be implemented and be incorporated in the existing faculty development training program of the HEIs. However, prior to the implementation of the enhancement program, a review and evaluation of the HEIs' existing faculty development training program may be undertaken to assess the proposal's viability and applicability. Also, after the implementation of the proposed enhancement program, its effectiveness may be evaluated using a standard monitoring instrument.

A copy of the proposed enhancement program may be distributed to the HEI respondents through the administrators and may work together for immediate implementation after review and evaluation.

HEIs may invest on the procurement of adequate learning resources specifically, instructional materials (textbooks, laboratories, computer units for instruction among others), and may implement standard qualifications in hiring

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specialized and qualified teachers to instruct the programs.

Future researchers may monitor whether the proposed enhancement program is indeed implemented and to what extent it helps in the HEIs' pursuit of effectiveness through delivery of quality student outputs.

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