



EXPLORING THE ROLE OF DEMOGRAPHICS, CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT TO THE MANAGERIAL COMPETENCE OF SUC DEPARTMENT HEADS IN MIMAROPA REGION PHILIPPINES

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Abstract

This study was set out to assess the managerial competence of department heads among the SUCs in the MIMAROPA region, Philippines, and endeavored to understand the role of demographics, career development, and organizational support to their managerial competence. Guided by Henry Fayol's administrative theory of management and Spencer's Iceberg Model of Competence, it sought an answer to the main research question: Do certain variables such as the personal profile, career development, and organizational support significantly determine the managerial competence of SUC department heads? A total of 129 department heads from State Universities and Colleges (SUCS) in the MIMAROPA region participated in the study through the survey method. Findings revealed that Managerial competence of department heads is influenced by their age, educational attainment, length of service, academic position, number of training attended related to management, and a supportive organization. SUC department heads who are involved in career development tend to have better managerial competence. A high level of organizational support can assure better managerial competence among department heads.

Keywords: Managerial Competence, Career Development, Organizational Support, Department Heads



INTRODUCTION

Managing an institution such as a State University is not only tough but at the same time also challenging. This is because higher educational institutions (HEI) in the Philippines perform a unique tri-fold function such as instruction, research, and extension and that any unsatisfactory performance in any of those functions will affect the university's credibility in governance, thereby affecting its overall performance. Also, the higher education subsector is haunted by other issues such as limited and inequitable access to higher education; inequitable financing of public higher education; lack of overall vision, framework, and plan for higher education, resulting in the proliferation of low quality higher education institutions (HEIs) and programs, oversubscribed and undersubscribed programs as well as skills and job mismatch; deteriorating quality of higher education due to inadequate faculty credentials as indicated by the declining performance of graduates in professional licensure exams; crowding out of private provision; and underdeveloped innovation system (Preddey and Nuqui 2001, Tan 2011, and Licuanan (undated).

In an attempt to evaluate the performance of state universities and colleges (SUCs) in the period 2006-2009 using Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA), Cuenca (2011) found out that majority of the 78 SUCs assessed have efficiency score less than one and thus, they are considered inefficient.

The evolvment of new thrusts, legislation, policies, and programs in education causes increased pressures on the part of HEI administrators in the organization and management of their respective SUC. Such demands call upon every SUC president the enhancement of managerial skills toward the attainment of the goals and objectives brought about by emerging development in education.

In the last decade or so, an abundance of evidence has been produced that skillful management—especially those with competence in the management of people in organizations— is *the* critical determinant of organizational success. These studies have been conducted across numerous industry sectors, international settings, and organization types. The research findings now make it almost unquestionable that if organizations want to succeed, they must have competent, skillful managers (Whetten and Cameron, 2011). Every successful and effective manager possesses several competencies that enable him to perform efficiently and effectively at different managerial levels, which are highly needed to be successful in today's competitive world. It is, therefore, crucial for a higher educational institution to identify, develop, and retain talented people, specifically those who are or will be holding managerial positions. For the survival and sustained growth of any individual and institution, just like a State University, the assessment and effective implementation of the competencies of its department

heads come at the core. Managerial competence can be developed and is affected by a variety of factors such as demographics, career development, and organizational support. The role of these factors may be considered to formulate a competency framework that would help develop the middle managers' skills among SUCs in the MIMAROPA region Philippines.

Research Objectives

This study intends to determine the determinants of managerial competencies among department heads of SUCs in the MIMAROPA region.

Specifically, it shed light on the following questions:

1. Is there a significant relationship between the personal profile and the managerial competence of the department heads?
2. Is there a significant relationship between managerial career development and managerial competence?
3. Is there a significant relationship between organizational support and managerial competence?
4. Do certain variables such as the personal profile, career development, and organizational support significantly predict the managerial competence of SUC department heads?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between the personal profile and the managerial competence of SUC department heads.
2. There is no significant relationship between career development and managerial competence of SUC department heads.
3. There is no significant relationship between organizational support and managerial competence of SUC department heads.
4. Variables such as personal profile, career development, and organizational support do not significantly predict managerial competence.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Since this study is descriptive-correlation in nature, the survey method was used. Through the survey, characteristics of the respondents in terms of their profile, managerial competencies, career development, and organizational support were clearly described. The relationship between the variables above and the managerial competencies was likewise determined through the method as mentioned above.

Respondents of the Study

A total of 129 department heads comprising of 49 males and 80 females from among the various State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan (MIMAROPA) region Philippines participated in the study. They were selected using a purposive sampling technique with the respondents' job position as department heads in various units taken into consideration.

Research Instrument

The main instrument used in gathering data was the questionnaire, which was constructed based on the statement of the problem and related studies. Part one of the questionnaire deals with the demographic profile of the respondents to gather information about their age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, length of years in service as department heads, academic rank, and the number of training attended related to management. Part two deals with the managerial competencies of the department heads with four subscales, such as administrative, communication, supervisory, and cognitive. These four major competencies are categorized into twelve (12) key competencies such as time management, work planning, goal setting, speaking, writing, listening, delegating, staff development, staff evaluation, problem-solving, decision making, and strategic thinking. Part three of the questionnaire deals with their career development in terms of career goal setting and career planning. Part four deals with the organizational support provided by the organization, which includes management and supervisory. The reliability of the instrument was tested through the use of Cronbach's Alpha, specifically on career development, organizational support, and managerial competency indicators. The reliability threshold is set at .70. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient ranges typically between 0 and 1. The closer Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is at 1.0, the higher the internal consistency of the items in the scale. The result showed that all the major variables were found to be reliable as they garnered a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient ranging from .80 - .90 which are way beyond the threshold set at .70

Data Processing and Analysis

The data gathered in this study were tallied and tabulated for statistical analysis. The descriptive statistical tools used for the analysis of data include frequency count, percentage, and weighted arithmetic mean. For the inferential statistics, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Regression analysis were utilized. The data were analyzed using the SPSS software version 21.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of managerial competencies of department heads in the administrative, communication, supervisory, and cognitive domain

Determining the level of managerial competence of the SUC department heads is one of the main concerns of this study. Based from the result of the overall mean of each managerial competence, communication obtained the highest overall mean, which implies that the department heads are at the proficient level. This is followed by the cognitive competence of which its weighted mean falls under the same level. It is good to know that the unit heads of SUCs in MIMAROPA are proficient in these areas, particularly communication considering that this skill is of primary importance in almost all aspects of man's endeavor, whether looking for a job, developing one's career and performing one's job. Having proficient department heads in the area of communication is an added advantage for the organization, especially for SUCs. This competence is found to be one of the characteristics of an effective manager. (Smart 1998, Hellrieger 2005, Abraham 2001, Bhardwad and Punia 2013).

When asked as to what competence they considered to be necessary, the majority of them chose the communication competence. This suggests that communication competence should be emphasized in the selection and training of department heads. In like manner, Smart (1998), and Abraham (2001) identified the following competencies such as problem-solving, strategic skills, and decision making as characteristics of an effective manager. These skills are all part of the cognitive competence found to have been possessed proficiently by SUC department heads. The two remaining competencies, namely administrative and supervisory, fall under a competent level only. Although this level is acceptable already, there is still a need for SUC top management to develop the said competencies and to raise their level to become proficient since those competencies are also important for organizational success. To be a productive and successful manager, planning and administration competency is required (Hellrieger 2005).

Table 1. Managerial competencies of department heads

Competencies	Mean	Description
Administrative	3.45	Competent
Communication	3.55	Proficient
Supervisory	3.45	Competent
Cognitive	3.51	Proficient

Relationship between the personal profile and the managerial competencies of the department heads in terms of administrative, communication, supervisory, and cognitive

The result of the correlation shows that a relationship exists between the personal profile and managerial competence with exception to sex and civil status. The existence of the relationship does not support the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between a personal profile and managerial competence in terms of administrative, communication, supervisory, and cognitive. The positive correlation between managerial competence and personal profile such as age, educational attainment, length of service, academic position, and the number of training attended implies that these personal characteristics are essential in the enhancement of their managerial competence. Several studies confirm the result of the present investigation. For instance, Tadjadini et al. (2010) found out in their study of Iranian management skills that while gender was only partially supported as a determinative variable, age and management experience were positively related to higher scores on the management skills. This suggests that those who would like to be effective leaders and those who want to climb the ladder of leadership should gain as much management experience as possible. In addition, education also plays a major role in developing management skills. Boyatzis et al. (2000) reported that improvement and developing management skills had been found in both students and managers who have been exposed to the management curriculum.

Table 2. Pearson's correlation between the personal profile and managerial competencies in terms of administrative, communication, supervisory, and cognitive

<i>Independent variable</i> Personal Profile		<i>Dependent Variable</i> Managerial Competencies			
		Administrative	Communication	Supervisory	Cognitive
Age	Pearson Correlation	.222*	.173	.204*	.173 NS
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011 NS	.050	.020	.050
Sex	Pearson Correlation	.010	.030 NS	.103 NS	-.007 NS
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.909	.735	.244	.939
Civil Status	Pearson Correlation	.121 NS	.117 NS	.104 NS	.137 NS
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.173	.188	.241	.121
Educational Attainment	Pearson Correlation	.415**	.346**	.361**	.272**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.002
Length of Service as Unit Head Present	Pearson Correlation	.211*	.174*	.273**	.201*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.048	.002	.022
Academic/ Admin. Position	Pearson Correlation	.279**	.195*	.308**	.267**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.027	.000	.002
No. of Training/s Attended	Pearson Correlation	.264**	.253**	.284**	.274**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.004	.001	.002

NS = Not Significant, ** = Significant at 1% level (2 tailed), * = Significant at 5% level (2 tailed)

Relationship between career development and managerial competencies

Data analysis on the relationship between organizational support and managerial competencies showed that managerial competencies are not only dependent on some personal profile of the respondents but also linked to the department heads' involvement in career development. The findings tend to suggest that the more involved the department heads in their career development, the better are their managerial competencies. This implies that those who are interested in enhancing their managerial competencies further may continue to get involved in career goal setting and planning. McClelland (1973) explained that managerial qualities get developed in school through formal education systems, which is part of career planning. Moreover, the findings of Wheeler (2008), suggest that competency development is enhanced when one can work on his/ her learning goals, with multiple relationships, and in numerous life spheres. Besides, when considering the career development of employees, it essential that the organization thru its human resource management department must also take an active role. As Hackman (1986) pointed out, organizations need to realize that positive career development for their workforce is a way of helping to attract and retain the best people by recognizing and responding to the needs of individual employees, they will get the best out of them. More effective guidance will assist the development of a knowledge economy and benefit individuals, employers, and society at large

Table 3. Pearson's correlation between career development involvement and managerial competencies

<i>Independent Variable</i>		<i>Dependent Variable</i>			
		Managerial Competencies			
Career Development Involvement		Administrative	Communication	Supervisory	Cognitive
Career Goal Setting	Pearson Correlation	.654**	.665**	.621**	.620**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
Career Planning	Pearson Correlation	.653**	.663**	.638**	.643**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000

** = Significant at 1% level (2 tailed)

Relationship between organizational support and managerial competencies

Getting the best out of the employees can be facilitated by way of recognizing and responding to their needs. As Hackman (1986) pointed out, effective guidance of the employees will benefit individuals, employees, and society in general. This leads to the idea that the more supportive the organization to its employees' needs and career development, the better their performance and skills become. This idea was confirmed in this study, as it reveals that there exists a significant relationship between organizational support and managerial competence. Moreover,

several studies showed that employees who are supported by their organization are satisfied with their job (Buchanan, 1974; Tansky and Cohen; 2001; Riggle et al., 2009). Previous studies also demonstrated that organizational support given to employees by their organization engenders improvement of positive behaviors and attitudes like affective and normative commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Settoon et al., 1996; O'Driscoll and Randall, 1999; Rhodes and Eisenberger, 2002; Yoon and Thye, 2002; Fuller et al., 2003; Aube et al., 2007; Riggle et al., 2009). Similarly, according to Kim et al. (2005), when employees view their organization as supportive, it is likely that they feel a strong desire to maintain membership in their organization.

It also implies that if top management of SUCs would want to enhance the managerial competencies of their department heads, they must strengthen their faculty development program, which reflects their organizations' supportive culture. McClelland (1973) stressed that organizational leadership could be developed through appropriate interventions and rewards education, training, and organizational culture play a significant role.

Table 4. Pearson's correlation between organizational support and managerial competencies

<i>Independent Variable</i>		<i>Dependent Variable</i>			
		Managerial Competencies			
Organizational Support		Administrative	Communication	Supervisory	Cognitive
Management	Pearson Correlation	.550**	.558**	.519**	.461**
Support	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
Supervisory	Pearson Correlation	.628**	.647**	.668**	.607**
Support	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000

** = Significant at 1% level (2 tailed)

Determinants of the managerial competencies of SUC department heads

Correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between managerial competencies and various potential predictors, namely: the demographic profile, career development involvement, and organizational support. Table 5 presents the regression statistics and analyses results. Based from the results, the personal profile of the department heads appears to be not a significant predictor of managerial competencies in terms of administrative, communication, supervisory, and cognitive, although some of these personal characteristics were found to have a significant relationship to managerial competencies. On the other hand, supervisory support was found to be a good predictor of all managerial competencies as it comes out as a consistent predictor in various regression models of managerial competencies; thus, partly contradicting the null hypothesis, which states that certain variables do not determine or predict managerial competencies. This reinforces the

conventional wisdom that organizational support through supervision is a critical element in promoting better employee performance leading to organizational success. This also suggests that if SUCs desire to have a pool of better and competent department heads who could ensure their organizational survival and sustained growth, they must fortify a supportive organizational climate. Perceived organizational support strengthens employees' effort in the organization, resulting in greater efforts to fulfill the organization's goals (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Similarly, according to Kim et al. (2005), when employees view their organization as supportive, it is likely that they feel a strong desire to maintain membership in their organization.

As stressed earlier in this study, since competencies are behavioral, these can be developed through education, training, and organizational culture. In addition to organizational support, the respondents' involvement in their career development in terms of goal setting was also found to be a good predictor of the level of managerial competence. This means that the development and enhancement of managerial competencies could not only be attributed to the organization's responsibility but also implies that it is an individual's concern. However, once the employee becomes part of the organization, employee career must be of primary concern to organizations and managers in order that human resources can improve the management to meet constantly changing environmental condition (Aplin and Gerster, 1978; Flippo, 1980 as cited Agba et al. 2010). The interest of career development also entails a successful placement of employees in positions that meet their needs as well as the organization's needs. Those who intend to pursue managerial positions may, therefore, put emphasis on the goal-setting endeavor. It can be inferred from the study that the more the employees are involved in their career development, the more they become proficient in their managerial competencies.

This study, in general, found out that the higher level of managerial competencies can be predicted by the department heads' involvement in career development, particularly in career goal setting and through a supportive organization. These department heads who are highly involved in their career development in terms of career goal setting and who belong to a highly supportive organization are expected to have a higher level of managerial competence. SUCs are therefore encouraged to focus on these critical variables in helping their unit heads improve their managerial competencies. The findings of this investigation support the Iceberg Model of Competency proposed by Spencer and Spencer (1993) that knowledge and skills, two of the underlying categories of a competency model, are relatively easily developed and improved through education and training. Further, the result also reinforces the findings of the other studies that competent and skillful managers are needed if organizations want to succeed (Whetten and Cameron, 2011); thus, it must be considered by SUCs in recruitment, selection, and designation of department heads.

Table 5. Regression result for administrative competence and the determinants

Determinants	Managerial Competence							
	Administrative		Communication		Supervisory		Cognitive	
	B	Sig	B	Sig	B	Sig	B	Sig
A. Demographic Profile								
Age	.053	.496	.038	.629	-.019	.805	-.010	.899
Sex	-.057	.362	-.015	.816	.059	.337	-.038	.562
Civil Status	.036	.590	.055	.418	.026	.693	.110	.112
Educational Attainment	.167	.024	.102	.168	.111	.120	.018	.816
Length of Service as Unit Head	.010	.903	-.005	.956	.080	.329	-.043	.621
Present Academic/Admin Position	.098	.205	.014	.860	.124	.099	.125	.118
No. of Training/s Attended	.012	.879	.049	.538	.019	.806	.108	.187
B. Career Development								
Goal Setting	.334	.007	.274	.028	.165	.168	.221	.082
Career Planning	.068	.598	.193	.141	.194	.125	.292	.030
C. Organizational Support								
Management Support	-.052	.647	-.093	.413	-.215	.051	-.294	.012
Supervisory Support	.344	.002	.038	.001	.549	.000	.457	.000

Sig. F = .000, Result = Significant for the ANOVA or F - test

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings derived from the study, it can be concluded that managerial competence of department heads is influenced by their age, educational attainment, length of service, academic position, number of training attended related to management and a supportive organization. SUC department heads who are involved in career development tend to have better managerial competence. A high level of organizational support can assure better administrative ability among department heads of SUCs in MIMAROPA. This study made an implication that there is a need for SUCs to develop a more comprehensive managerial competency-based framework which will serve as a guide in the selection, designation, and training of their academic heads. The framework may include specific personal characteristics found to have a significant influence on their unit heads' managerial competencies. This will also form part of the organization's support to the department heads for their professional development.

This study may have contributed to the body of literature regarding managerial competence and provides valuable insights in understanding the role played by certain personal related variables as well as externally related ones in enhancing those competencies. The investigation, however, may not have captured other competencies required in managing the 21st-century organizations, which is one of its limitations. Future studies may focus on different dimensions of competencies not covered in this investigation since organizations continue to evolve and adjust to the changing of times. Qualitative studies may also be pursued to explore the best practices of department heads that made them competitive.

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