PERSONAL-SOCIAL ADJUSTMENTS IN RELATION TO COPING MECHANISMS OF SUC PRESIDENTS IN MINDANAO

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Abstract

The study aimed to determine the correlation between the personal-social adjustments and coping mechanisms of Presidents in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Mindanao within the school year 2008-2009. The descriptive-correlational method of research was used and the main assessment tool was the questionnaire which was prepared by the researcher. Responses drawn from twenty nine Presidents were carefully scrutinized using the mean computation, the t-test, f-test and the Pearson r Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation. The result of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between the SUC Presidents' personal-social adjustments and coping mechanisms. This signifies that their personal-social adjustments influence their abilities to cope with work stress. SUC Presidents' security or well-being in the personal-social aspects is an important factor to be able to cope with things that come along relative to their positions or jobs. It was also revealed that their personal-social adjustments as well as their coping mechanisms were only "high". Thus, for an improved adjustment and coping levels, SUC Presidents need to attend in the personality enhancement trainings, physical fitness programs and other forms of recreational and relaxation activities in order to unload work burdens and to gain new strength and vitality.

Keywords: *Personal-social adjustments, coping mechanisms, stress, leadership, SUC Presidents*

Introduction

Today's educational leaders are faced with more challenges, conflicts and more pressures than other decades in the 20th century. This is largely caused by their wide-range of work and responsibilities. Many factors also have contributed to the broader scope and expanded amount of work that leaders need to fulfill. Among such factors are the remarkable increase in the school population and auxiliary job requirements necessitated by educational innovation. Not only are they anticipated to maintain their traditional duties such as planning and over-all school organization, but they are also asked to give personal leadership and inspiration (Muello, 2007).

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For educational leaders like the Presidents of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), stress incidence is inevitable. SUC Presidents are mandated by law to administer, manage and operate the overall welfare of the educational institutions, in particular, and to largely affect quality and excellence in education. Evidently, they are preoccupied with multiple and huge responsibilities and challenges. Research studies revealed that these responsibilities are usually associated with frequent giving of speeches and lectures, attending board meetings, seminars and conferences, planning, implementing and monitoring of programs and projects along the four areas of instruction, research, extension and production. Challenges, however, are typically caused by political pressures, inadequate budget from the national government, insufficient capital and savings, shortage of buildings and instructional materials and low performance of administrative and academic staff and students.

Taking into account the tasks demanded from the SUC Presidents, it is significantly desirable that they must be adjusted personally and socially. The personality of the leader is an important element in the leading situation and their ability to cope to problems and pressures are necessary for leading effectiveness. If they do not acquire a high level of personal-social adjustments as well as a high level of coping mechanism, SUC Presidents cannot function very effectively in their undertakings. Their incapability to deal with so many stressful activities and pressures may result to tensions and dissatisfactions which may cripple their facility to work well, which may eventually lead to severe chronic stress and burn out - that condition of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual exhaustion. (Solayao, 2006).

Generally, work stress produces negative effects to the organization, its leader and employees. For the organization, the consequences include disorganization, anarchy in normal operations, lower margins of revenues and lowered performance and productivity. On behalf of the leader and employees, the effects are threefold: augmented physical problems, behavioral disarray and psychological distress. Since a person's stress is highly emotional, the individual gets easily irritated and anxious over things no matter how trivial they may be. The consequential modifications in behavior tend to influence both lifestyle outside the workplace and productivity within the company. (Rice, 2004).

Unquestionably, the leader is the utmost single determinant of whether the community program will be practical to the people. Leaders serve as the model of behavior and attitudes to employees. Their personal-social abilities should be favorable to the culture of the workers. According to Hurlock (2002), a good leader surges the minds of his workers with innovative ideas, with aspirations, with visions of the yet unheard of and a fresh light on things in general. Gregorio (2003) asserted likewise that, "the leader who lacks sunshine in his soul and genuine human kindness should never be allowed to lead". Effective leadering is the result of cheerfulness, understanding and love for people and service. Thus, a disagreeable personality and disposition oftentimes affect everything in the workplace. Persons who lack emotional stability, drive and determination are not generally efficient as leaders.

On this premise, this study was conducted. It was deliberated largely to provide a vision of personal and social adjustments level of SUC Presidents and their capacity to cope with work stress. The researcher deemed that it is exceedingly vital for SUC Presidents to be well adjusted and so they can cope with work tensions easily. When they can handle work stress easily, they are able to attain emotional, mental, physical, social and spiritual stability which is needed to be able to face the many necessities of contemporary life, moreover, for them to be able to capably and productively execute their jobs and functions in the academe most importantly.

The researcher categorically affirms that the extent to which educational services become efficient and productive depends chiefly on the leadership quality of the educational leaders. The quality of governance in the state college or university and the attainment of its vision and mission are primarily dependent on the performance of its President. Thus, the assessment of SUC Presidents' personal-social well being and coping abilities is indeed imperative. Hopefully, the result of this study will serve as their guide as they meet the demands of their jobs.

Objectives

The study aimed to find out the relationship between the personal-social adjustments and coping mechanisms of the SUC Presidents in Mindanao during the school year 2008-2009. Specifically, it determined the level of personal-social adjustments of the SUC Presidents in terms of self-reliance, sense of personal worth, sense of personal freedom, feeling of belongingness, impulse control, social standards, social skills, family relations, work relations and community relations, and their level of coping mechanisms of in terms of emotional, mental, physical, social and spiritual ways. It also determined the difference in the level of personal-social adjustments and coping mechanisms of the SUC Presidents when categorized according to gender, age, civil status, economic status, workplace, location and status of the institution.

Research Method and Design

The descriptive-correlational method of research was employed in this study. The main tool that is utilized was the questionnaire, consisting three parts: the profile, personal-social adjustments, and coping mechanisms. The SUC Presidents in Mindanao were the respondents of this study. The data gathered were treated using the weighted mean, t-test, f-test and the Pearson r Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation.

Results

It was revealed in the study that the SUC Presidents had "very high" level of personal-social adjustments in five (50%) out ten indicators, namely: work relations (M=4.53), social standards (M=4.48), sense of personal worth (M=4.44), sense of personal freedom (M=4.23) and community relations (M=4.21). On the other hand, they only had "high" adjustment level in terms of impulse control (M=4.19), sense of

belongingness (M=4.17), family relations (M=4.07), social skills (M=3.86) and self-reliance (M=3.58). Work relations was the highest and self-reliance was the lowest. Generally, the SUC Presidents' level of personal-social adjustments was "high" (GM=4.18).

In terms of coping mechanisms, the SUC Presidents had "very high" level in the spiritual and mental ways (M=4.43 and M=4.25, respectively); and they only had "high" level of coping mechanisms along the social (M=4.08), physical (M=4.03) and emotional (M=3.86) ways. Spiritual coping ranked as number 1 and emotional ranked as number 5. In general, the level of coping mechanisms of the SUC Presidents was "high" (GM=4.14). It was also revealed that the SUC Presidents' levels of personal-social adjustments differed significantly when categorized according to gender, age, workplace, location and status of the institution. On the other hand, there was no significant difference shown in their level of adjustments when civil status was considered.

Along coping mechanisms, it was discerned that there was a significant difference in the SUC Presidents' level of coping mechanisms when sorted according to civil status and status of the institution. On the other hand, no significant difference was seen when their gender, age, workplace and location of institution were considered. Finally, the study divulged that there was a significant relationship between the level of coping mechanisms and the level of personal-social adjustments of the SUC Presidents in Mindanao.

Discussion and Conclusions

The results showed that SUC Presidents were not always personally and socially well adjusted. There were times when they manifested poor adjustments in some of their activities in life. This signifies that SUC Presidents still need to work hard to carry out the needed adjustments in order to conduct themselves appropriately and efficiently in their particular workplace. They have to reassess themselves to be able to look for areas in which they can become even stronger and productive individuals and leaders. In the midst of the increasing pressures and burdens at hand, they have to acquire an optimal functioning or an exceedingly high sense of well-being personally and socially in all facets.

On the other hand, SUC Presidents were not spared with work stress. This was evident in their level of coping mechanism which was only "high". This implies that there were really times when they experienced unmanaged stress that could cause negative effects to their overall functioning, which thereby, consciously or unconsciously affected their performance in the academe.

In addition, it was perceived that SUC Presidents could in the same way be individually and generally adjusted or maladjusted be they single, married or widowed and they could correspondingly cope or uncope with work stress apart from whether they are male or female, young or old, leader of a university or college, or work in schools located in urban areas or not.

On the whole, SUC Presidents' personal-social adjustments influence their ability to cope with work stress. SUC Presidents' level of personal security in terms of self-reliance, feeling of personal worth, feeling of personal freedom, sense of belongingness, impulse control, as well as their security in their relations to family, work and community is significantly related to their ways of coping. SUC Presidents' personality and social support networks contribute meaningfully in their ability to cope with stressful work-related encounters. Their ways of dealing with their personal lives influence the way they deal with everyday challenges, be it inside or outside the workplace.

Recommendations

It is recommended that SUC Presidents should review their responses in the personal-social adjustment assessment tool used by the researcher to determine the aspects that need more concentrated adjustments, or, they may immediately start working out in improving their personal and social competencies. They need to join in the personality enhancement programs and trainings focused on social skills and self-reliance in order to acquire modern and   more practical techniques and strategies. Likewise, they are encouraged to attend in social gatherings, physical fitness programs and other forms of recreational and relaxation activities to unload work burdens and reload new and more powerful energy supply ready for the next days' encounters. Additionally, each SUC President may build a recreational hub readily accessible for him and his employees and conduct in it different forms of "unloading activities". This helps him minimize emotional deficiency and likewise facilitate in nurturing harmonious relations with his staff and employees.

It is also recommended that the Board of Trustees need to include Emotional Stress Test in the criteria for selection of college or university president.   Finally, SUC Presidents are encouraged to always smile and have fun each day and learn how to take themselves lightly and work seriously.

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