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Research Article

A MODEL-FRAMEWORK ON ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs) IN THE PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to develop a model-framework drawn from the predominant pattern and generic sequence of ethical decision-making preferences of the middle-level school managers of Higher Education Institutions with Centers of Excellence in Teacher Education (HEIs-COETE) in the Philippines. There were sixteen (16) institutions which were the respondents, one institution per region. These were institutions with "Centers of Excellence in Teacher Education". The respondents included the HEI-COETEs from Region I to Region XII, including CARAGA and NCR. In each of the institutions per region, the middle-level managers or the Deans of the teacher education program were considered as the respondents. The data were gathered through the ethical decision-making instrument (ERAI) of Bautista (2012). The study revealed that in terms of the predominant sequence and pattern among the 16 HEI-COETEs, in the Philippines, the predominant pattern and generic sequence were identical with the current practices. When it comes to ranking the Deans practice, the ethic of profession was topmost as it has the highest average score. When it comes to the pattern categorized with Daft's domain of ethical management the order remains the same. It was revealed that among the 16 institutions, the predominant pattern that the respondents had chosen is the domain of ethics with the ethic of profession and ethic of community embedded in it. Last is the domain of free choice, with the ethic of care and critique. Interviews from the Deans revealed that among them, this domain also came last. Based on the results on the current preferences of the middle level managers, generally, they observed a guide, which are the basic assumptions about beliefs, values and principles used to guide choices. The ethical decision-making framework as the output of the study is inspired by the 3-dimensional pyramid figure. This system enhances the identification of the ethical framework of the managers as they are faced with ethical dilemmas. The system enclosed the five ethics which are founded and anchored based on the existing ethical and moral theories and principles. The ethical decision-making system as guided by the framework included the Daft's domain of ethical management and other ethical theories and principles as well as the five domains of Staratt, Shapiro, Stefkovich and Furman with the five ethic and each domain encloses certain ethic.

Keywords: MODEL-FRAMEWORK, ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING, HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs).

INTRODUCTION

When one chooses the path of resolution, how can one know that the path is the most suitable one? How may one know that it is the best suitable approach and conform to what is veracious? How may one consider which is the most righteous, has the highest goodness and has the supreme moral codes in terms of decision-making?
Considerations of these questions and perspectives regarding what is right and wrong, in the intricate managerial processes must be considered and envisioned(Trevino, 2005).
In reality of the managerial setting, problems by and large affect the decision-making of the managers in the organizations. To highlight these problems on a general perspective are problems on ecological stability; global climate change; economic disturbance; degradation of values and moralities; skyscraping problems on control of population; worsening pollutions; health distresses; professional jealousy, faculty rivalries; students' academic and personal problems (Daft, 2005).
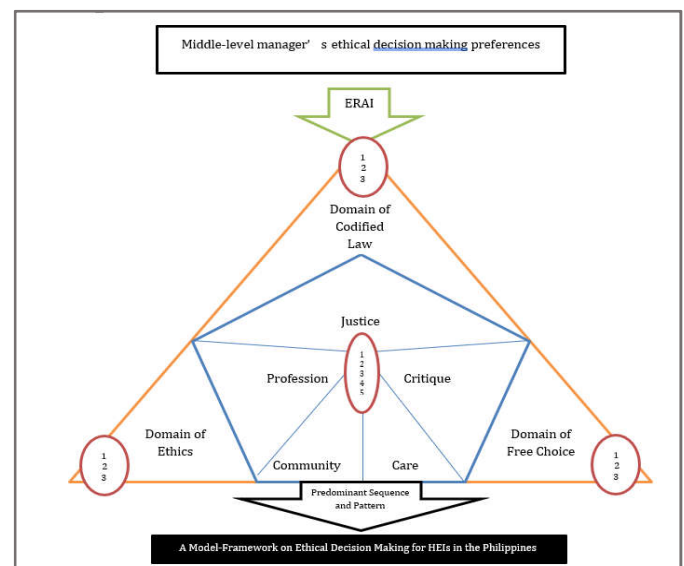
RESEARCH PARADIGM

Figure 1. Middle Level Management Preferences as to Daft's (2005) Domains of Ethical Management with the Five-Point Multidimensional Framework

General Objectives:

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Generally, this study aimed to develop a model-framework drawn from the generic pattern and sequence of ethical decision-making of the middle-level school managers of Higher Education Institutions with Centers of Excellence in Teacher Education (HEIs-COETEs) in the Philippines.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the current ethical decision-making preferences of the middle-level school managers of Higher Education Institutions with Centers of Excellence in Teacher Education (HEIs-COETEs)?
2. How may the middle-level school managers of HEIs-COETEs be described in terms of their ethical-decision making pattern as to Daft's domains of ethical management with the domain of ethics, domain of free choice and domain of codified law?
3. How may the middle-level school managers of HEIs-COETEs be described in terms of their generic sequence on ethical decision-making using the Staratt-Shapiro-Stefkovich-Furman five-point multi-dimensional framework with the ethic of critique, ethic of care, ethic of justice, ethic of profession and ethic of community?
4. What model-framework could be drawn from the current preferences, predominant patterns and generic sequence of ethical decision-making of the middle-level school managers (HEIs-COETEs) when faced with ethical dilemmas?

METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to create a model-framework on ethical decision-making derived from the predominant and generic pattern and sequence on the ethical decision-making preferences of the middle-level managers based on Daft's (2005) domains of ethical management and on the components of the five-point multidimensional framework of Shapiro(2008) - Staratt(2011) - Stefkovich(2011) - Furman (2004). Since the data, used in the analysis of the study covered the quantitative and qualitative, mixed-method was utilized. Creswell and Clark (2007) discuss mixed method which employs aspects of both quantitative methods and qualitative procedures. Furthermore, he defined mixed method as a research which covers an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms. It involves philosophical assumptions, and the mixing of both approaches in the study. It is more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds of data; likewise involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research. Of the mixed method designs, the sequential explanatory design was used, specifically. It is a mixed method design which is usually used if the study has strong quantitative leanings. It is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data in a first phase of research followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data in a second phase that builds on the results of the initial quantitative results. Weight typically is given to the quantitative data, and the mixing of the data occurs when the initial quantitative results *informs* the secondary qualitative data collection. Thus, the two forms of data are separated but connected. A sequential explanatory design is typically used to explain and interpret quantitative results by collecting and analyzing follow-up qualitative data. It can be especially useful when unexpected results arise from a quantitative study (Morse, in Creswell and Clark, 2007). In this case, the qualitative data collection that follows was used to examine surprising results in more detailed form. The study collected the data from the various Deans in the HEIs-COETEs in the Philippines from Region I to Region XII including CARAGA and NCR. To be able to get the data, and to satisfy the quantitative leanings of the study, the instrument also known as ERAI (Ethical Reasoning

Assessment Instrument) of Bautista (2012) was used. The qualitative leaning of the study, was satisfied using the interview with the five guided questions asked of the Deans of the different schools. The discussion was used to supplement answers from the questionnaire. The research questions number 1,2 and 3 with the statements of : "What are the current ethical decision-making preferences of the middle-level school managers of Higher Education Institutions with Centers of Excellence in Teacher Education (HEIs-COETEs)?"; "How may the middle-level school managers of HEIs-COETEs be described in terms of their ethical-decision making pattern as to Daft's (2005) domains of ethical management with the domain of ethics, domain of free choice and domain of codified law?"; and How may the middle-level school managers of HEIs-COETEs be described in terms of their generic sequence on ethical decision-making using the Staratt-Shapiro-Stefkovich-Furman five-point multi-dimensional framework with the ethic of critique, care, justice, profession and community?" answered the quantitative part of the study and elicited quantitative data which was gathered from the middle level managers in the Philippines using the ERAI of Bautista (2012). However these two research questions: "How may the middle-level school managers of HEIs-COETEs be described in terms of their ethical-decision making pattern as to Daft's (2005) domains of ethical management with the domain of ethics, domain of free choice and domain of codified law?"; and How may the middle-level school managers of HEIs-COETEs be described in terms of their generic sequence on ethical decision-making using the Staratt-Shapiro-Stefkovich-Furman five-point multi-dimensional framework with the ethic of critique, care, justice, profession and community?" were also used to highlight the qualitative leanings and data of the study. Interview was used with five questions to assist the researcher in the concretization of the predominant sequence and the general pattern of the middle-level managers in the ethical decision-making preferences.

RESULTS

This study aimed to develop a model-framework drawn from the predominant pattern and generic sequence of ethical decision-making preferences of the middle-level school managers of Higher Education Institutions with Centers of Excellence in Teacher Education (HEIs-COETE) in the Philippines. There were sixteen (16) institutions which were the respondents, one institution per region. These were institutions with "Centers of Excellence in Teacher Education". The respondents included the HEI-COETEs from Region I to Region XII, including CARAGA and NCR. In each of the institutions per region, the middle-level managers or the Deans of the teacher education program were considered as the respondents. The data were gathered through the ethical decision-making instrument (ERAI) of Bautista (2012).The study revealed that in terms of the predominant sequence and pattern among the 16 HEI-COETEs, in the Philippines, the predominant pattern and generic sequence were identical with the current practices. When it comes to ranking the Deans practice, the ethic of profession was topmost as it has the highest average score. When it comes to the pattern categorized with Daft's domain of ethical management the order remains the same. It was revealed that among the 16 institutions, the predominant pattern that the respondents had chosen is the domain of ethics with the ethic of profession and ethic of community embedded in it. Last is the domain of free choice, with the ethic of care and critique. Interviews from the Deans revealed that among them, this domain also came last. Based on the results on the current preferences of the middle level managers, generally, they observed a guide, which are the basic assumptions about beliefs, values and principles used to guide choices. The ethical decision-making framework as the output of the study is inspired by the 3-dimensional pyramid figure. This system enhances the identification of the ethical framework of the managers

as they are faced with ethical dilemmas. The system enclosed the five ethics which are founded and anchored based on the existing ethical and moral theories and principles. The ethical decision-making system as guided by the framework included the Daft's domain of ethical management and other ethical theories and principles as well as the five domains of Staratt, Shapiro, Stefkovich and Furman with the five ethic and each domain encloses certain ethic.

Summary of Findings

The following were drawn based on the findings of the study:

1. Based from the ERAI of Bautista the current ethical decision-making preferences of the Deans of HEI-COETEs is that they **highly observed** the five ethic, namely the ethic of profession, ethic of community, ethic of justice, ethic of critique and the ethic of care. It was further revealed that their inclination and preferences lies mostly on the ethic of profession. However, they are considering parts of their decisions to be affected by the other four ethic, but generally the ethic of profession is the most popular and has the highest rank among the five.
2. After the five ethic was categorized into the domains of ethical decision making of Daft, it was revealed that the predominant pattern among the HEIs-COETEs were the domain of ethics, followed by the domain of codified law and lastly the domain of free choice. It simply means that the domain of ethics top the two other domains which means that they are following the code of being professionals.
3. The predominant and generic sequence from the five-point ethic of Staratt, Shapiro, Stefkovich and Furman revealed that the predominant and generic sequence is profession, community, justice, critique and care. The ethic of profession was mostly used by the respondents when faced with ethical dilemma.
4. The ethical decision making framework developed was based on the current preferences, theories, principles, patterns and sequence that resulted from the analysis of the data inspired by the 3-dimensional pyramid emulated figure, highlighting the characteristics and the structures of the figure to equip and enhance the ethical decision making system of the middle level school managers in the Philippines.

It can be concluded based on the results on the current preferences of the middle level managers, that generally, they observed an ethical framework which is the basic assumption about beliefs, values and principles used to guide choices. However, even with the presence of the ethical decision making guidelines school administrator may rely on their personal values and morals when dealing with ethical dilemmas. It is also better to have a moral guide and principles by which to act and make moral decisions, than to do so without them. By acting on a particular precept, one may make moral decisions more defensible and justifiable. The principles of ethical doctrine also give certain perspectives from which to weigh the results of the decisions against other options and consider whether one is willing to justify these decisions and possible consequences. There were predominant patterns or outlines in terms of the ethical decision making of the middle level managers. It can be therefore generalized that in making ethical decisions, middle level managers consider all components of an ethical framework or principles before actually acting. It can be said that some ethics could weigh heavily as for the ethic of profession for the five ethic and the domain of ethics for the three domains or be considered to a large extent from other ethic. There also existed a sequence in the way middle level managers make ethical decision making which reveals the preferences and inclinations of the managers as they are faced with ethical dilemma.

This means that the managers make certain arrangements or order before they decide and these results to their codes to be followed based on their preferences. It can be pointed out that generally, that arrangement or sequence is necessary to compose sound ethical decision making, in this case the results revealed that sound ethical decision-making may possibly come from the ethic of profession or the domain of ethics. They can be possibly the same as taking several steps on the identification of what is right or wrong, or steps on how to arrive at the right course of action. The resulting framework could be of great help to guide and direct not only middle level administrators but also top management and other managers in the practice of ethical decision making.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings and conclusions, the following are recommended by the researcher:

1. As the middle level-school managers were highly observing the five ethic of the multidimensional framework of Staratt, Shapiro, Stefkovich and Furman, it is recommended therefore that the Deans should maintain and enhance their current established preferences and developed more a system which may be the guide of the organization in pursuing greater organizational goals.
2. It is suggested that HEIs-COETEs identify if the predominant pattern and generic sequence of ethical decision making also exist in other middle level managers such as associate deans, department heads, area coordinators etc. for purposes of alignment as they are dispensed with the same ethic and domains.
3. Likewise, it is suggested that other researchers fill the gap of this research by justifying whether the existence of the patterns and sequence lead to the reason of their being Centers of Excellence on Teacher Education as this study only give possibilities on this assumption as the respondents were chosen, nevertheless the statements were not proven or highlighted in more scientific ways.
4. Further studies on the ethical decision making in the Philippines or local settings might be done to further highlight the study as most of the literature came from foreign sources.
5. It is recommended that other types of managers, leaders and respondents on ethical decision making may be assessed to highlight the predominant sequence and pattern of the managers in terms of ethical decision-making.
6. *Other studies on ethical decision making on ethical dilemmas could be done to see if other model framework beyond the 3-dimensional pyramid mirrored figure could emerge.*
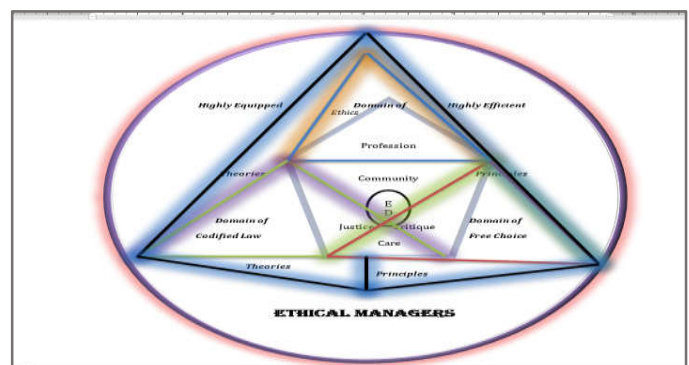
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A Model Framework on Ethical Decision-Making for Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines

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