

Exploring the Level of Engagement of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) Leaders Toward Research and Extension

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Abstract: In an era of remarkable speed and dynamism in the knowledge-driven global economy, Philippine higher education is positioned as a major driver of economic competitiveness. Hence, this descriptive-survey study describes the level of engagement of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) leaders in Panay Island as to research and extension. The respondents of the study were the one hundred ninety-six from a total population of three hundred eighty-four (384) State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) leaders in Panay Island. As to the research instrument, this study used a validated and reliability-tested researcher-made survey questionnaire. Mean as the statistical tool was used to describe the SUC leaders' levels of engagement in the areas of research and extension. Findings revealed that State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) leaders are engaged in extension and moderately engaged in research. Therefore, the Commission on Higher Education left caveats of concern in research and had gaps to fill to improve levels of engagement in extension. Since these two mandates are necessary for valuing quality education delivery commitments.

Keywords: Engagement, Extension, Higher education, Leaders, Research

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapidly growing population of older adults presents an unprecedented challenge to societies around the world. A dramatic shift in policies and practices, and an adaptation of societal structures to enable healthy, productive, and purposeful progress have changed the views of life currently defined by education and work. Deeply, employee engagement in action is largely about motivation – in the sense that management strives to create conditions in which employees feel intrinsically motivated. Things like job satisfaction and empowerment derive from the properly directed energies of a motivated workforce, rather than being ends in themselves (Hellevig, 2012).

In an era of remarkable speed and dynamism in the knowledge-driven global economy, Philippine higher education is positioned as a major driver of economic competitiveness. In support of these pursuits, the government advocates for purposive investments that: (a) steer career interest towards science, technology, engineering, agri-fisheries, and mathematics, which are the building blocks of the knowledge economy; (b) foster a healthy and vibrant relationship with industry as well as small- and medium-scale businesses; (c) accelerate local and global inter-university research collaboration; (d) establish institutional scientific technological niches and economic centers; and (e) create an innovation ecosystem. The program is characterized by academic and scholarly rigor; peer interaction and evaluation; production of original research or creative work; and improved research, innovation, and extension services (NEDA, 2017).

While there is a well-developed body of knowledge on the antecedents and consequences of engagement. Higher education institutions' quality education delivery and integrity rely on faculty performances. In SUCs, the Individual Performance and Commitment Review (IPCR) is used to measure faculty performance reflected by their academic ranks. However, complying with the IPCR is not an easy task; many factors affect faculty ratings. In fact, opposing observations compelled the conduct of this descriptive-survey research to determine the level of engagements of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) leaders in Panay Island as to research and extension.

This research was anchored to the theory of engagement postulated by Hellevig (2012) positing that leaders of an organization must ensure that all their staff members are fully engaged and that they are fully switched on at their jobs. The ideal is that the staff is fully committed in the same way entrepreneurs care for their businesses or people in general

look after their own households. Being engaged simply means that one is fully involved and interested in the work so that it really holds one's attention and inspired one to do one's best. Thus, according to the theory, employee engagement is a two-way street: a reciprocal relationship of trust and respect between employer and employee. It requires an organization's executives and managers to communicate their expectations, clearly and extensively, with the employees, empower the employees at the appropriate levels of their competence, and create a working environment and corporate culture in which engagement will thrive. Engagement does not take place in a vacuum. It has to be anchored in a corporate culture that stimulates and sustains engagement. Briefly defined, corporate culture is the totality of all actions of a company, the decisions and behavior of its management and all of its employees, as well as business practices and processes.

II. METHODOLOGY

This descriptive-survey research study, "Engagement of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) Leaders toward Research and Extension," aims to describe the extent of the concerned variables. The respondents of the study were the one hundred ninety-six (196) administrators, satellite directors, directors, deans, chairpersons, and program coordinators from a total population of three hundred eighty-four (384) State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) leaders in Panay Island: Antique, Aklan, Iloilo and Capiz.

As to the research instrument, this study used a validated and reliability-tested researcher-made survey questionnaire, composed of three parts: Part I - Respondent's Profile which determines the respondent's age, sex, highest educational attainment, position as to academic rank and as to designation; Part-II – level of Engagement of SUCs leaders on research; and Part III – level of Engagement of SUCs leaders on extension. Reliability test results showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90, proving that the questionnaire was highly reliable, and thus used in this study. In appreciation of the data relative to this study, variables were scored using the five-point Likert scale in determining the levels of engagement of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) leaders on research and extension.

The research design determined the necessary statistical tools required by specific statements of the problem. Descriptive statistics used mean to describe the SUC leaders' levels of engagement in the areas of research and extension. Underscoring the ethical considerations, permission to conduct the study was sought at the onset of the study. Respondents were assured that all data gathered will be solely used for the purpose of the study and shall be kept with utmost confidentiality. The respondent's name was made optional; thus, it was at the respondent's discretion to disclose it.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Engagement of State Universities and Colleges' Leaders on Research and Extension

In the data presented in table 1, it reveals that the State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) leaders in Panay Island were engaged in extension (mean, 3.63) and moderately engaged in research (mean, 2.98).

TABLE I LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT OF STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES LEADERS ON RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

Mandate	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Research	2.98	Moderately Engaged
Extension	3.63	Engaged

<i>Mean Range</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
4.21 – 5.00	Highly Engaged
3.41 – 4.20	Engaged
2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Engaged
1.81 – 2.60	Less Engaged
1.00 – 1.80	Least Engaged

On Research

The result implies that Leaders of SUCs in Panay Island were moderately engaged in terms of conducting researches between 2015-2018. This implication points toward establishing and conducting collaborative research with other members of the academic community, presenting their research papers in international research forums outside the

Philippines, and underscoring their active participation in attending research activities, particularly in presenting research papers. Generally, results reflect that SUC leaders were not able to give ample importance to research. This poses a concern, as higher education institutions had been identified among the enablers and drivers of development in achieving a Rich ASEAN 2030 and the Philippine Ambisyon 2040.

Studies had shown that citation counts, which capture the popularity of an author; and weighted citation, which captures prestige, Yan and Ding (2010), reported that a little more than 75 percent of the Philippine SUC leaders have not published and thus will never be cited.

In many cases, research outputs are locally published and circulated in their local libraries shutting potential users of the information from around the globe. According to Eysenbach (2016), the inaccessibility of articles affects the chances of being cited by other researchers, this is also the reason why publishing in an online, open-access refereed journal makes a researcher most likely to be cited.

On Extension

In reference to the result presented in table 1 which entails that State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) leaders in Panay Island were “engaged” in the extension program. It implies that SUCs leaders were participating in every extension activity conducted by the college/level, they lag behind in conducting impact studies to determine whether or not the community really benefitted from the extension activities; and in monitoring extension projects to ensure sustainability and continuity. Results further show that State Universities and Colleges leaders’ engagement in extension was slightly above average level, implying oversights in the area of forging partnerships with other campuses and/or institutions in the conduct of extension programs to recipient communities; conducting assessment needs to ensure that appropriate services are extended to the community; and designs and implements extension services that address the needs of the community.

According to Lenares and Deocarís (2018), higher education institutions (HEIs) are concerned with delivering extension programs to reach development goals, it is paramount that academic institutions should also monitor and evaluate the outcomes of their community programs at the grassroots level.

IV. CONCLUSION

State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) leaders are engaged in extension and moderately engaged in research. Therefore, the Commission on Higher Education left caveats of concern in research and had gaps to fill to improve levels of engagement in extension. Since these two mandates are necessary for valuing quality education delivery commitments.

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