THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL COMPETENCIES AT THE PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN MINDANAO, PHILIPPINES

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Abstract. The purpose of the study was to develop a strategic leadership model for teacher instructional competencies at the private higher education institutions in Mindanao, Philippines. To achieve the six objectives of the study, the researcher employed the exploratory mixed-method research design by collecting substantial qualitative data from sources such as books, journals, online sources, and an interview. While the quantitative research design by collecting data using the survey questionnaire. There were 229 teachers and seven school leaders from private higher education institutions in Mindanao, Philippines, who participated in the study. Frequency counts, Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, and Multiple Regression were used to analyze quantitative data, while a content (thematic) analysis used for qualitative data or interviews. The findings of the current strategic leadership practices of school leaders, as perceived by teachers are interpreted as high. Teachers find the Instructional Practices of the school leaders as high, while school leaders revealed most of their strategic leadership practices focused on Human Resource Management Practice. The current instructional competencies, as perceived by teachers, are interpreted as high. Among the three themes, teachers find their Personal Competence as high. While school leaders give priority to the development of teachers' Professional Competence. The seven factors affecting the strategic leadership practices of school leaders perceived by teachers as high. The top three factors include Organizational Culture, Organizational Values, and Leadership Competence. While, in the interview with school leaders, essential factors affecting strategic leadership practices include Resource Allocation, Teacher Satisfaction, and Teacher Commitment. A substantial positive relationship revealed between

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strategic leadership practices and teachers' instructional competencies of private higher education institutions. The researcher developed the strategic leadership model for teacher instructional competencies and validated by 12 experts. The model comprises of two major levels derived from the Multiple Regression test results as Leadership Competence with a p-value of 0.000 and Organizational Values with a p-value of 0.014 as significant factors.

Keywords: Strategic Leadership; Teacher Instructional Competencies; Private Higher Education Institutions

Introduction

In this competitive world, higher education institutions strive to provide quality education by establishing a high standard of learning that meets the present needs of society. Such requirements should help prepare the students to become responsible and functional members of the community (Malechwanzi, Lei, & Wang, 2016). To realize this, the role of a teacher in an educational setting is found very relevant particularly to student achievement and school improvement (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2011). As described by Sultana, Yousuf, Din, and Rehman (2009), teachers are at the heart of an educational process whose functions are very vital in the whole operation of the institution. To be effective in the profession, teachers need to enrich themselves with a wide array of skills because the day-to-day challenges are enormous, both inside and outside the classroom (Jackson, 1990). In higher education, teachers and their instructional competencies are given importance because of a substantial effect on students' achievement (Sugumar, 2009). This can be best addressed when school leaders respond to the needs of teachers for improving instructional competencies (Alderite, Busquit, Mejica, 2008). A challenge for school leaders of Private Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines is looking into the quality of teachers in the areas of teaching qualifications, skills, and personal attributes. The challenge is relevant, considering that teachers are the molders of students' future and has a strong influence on student achievement (Jorge, 2011). Thus, this study is conducted to extend help to private higher education institutions by introducing a strategic leadership model for teacher instructional competencies at the private higher education institutions in Mindanao, Philippines.

Strategic Leadership Practices

As defined in this study, strategic leadership practices refer to the school leaders' activities in empowering teachers to be more competitive and goal-oriented members of the organization. This investigates Human Resource Management Practices, Organizational Practices, and Instructional Practices.

First, in Human resource management the three practices, talent acquisition, talent development and motivation, and talent retention found best practices (Rothwell, Che, & Ooi, 2016). On talent acquisition, the development of practices and policies in attracting and recruiting teachers, the preparation of the tasks and support to teachers are common concerns (Bland, Church, & Luo,2014; Schleicher, 2012; Miles & Frank, 2008; Summers, 2005). On talent development and motivation, the focus centers on the professional development needs of new and experienced teachers, professional learning opportunities and teaching reflection practices (Choy, Wong, Lim, & Chong, 2013; Floden, Richmond, Drake, & Petchauer, 2017; Garcia, Junyent., & Fonolleda, 2017). While on talent retention, the need to investigate the methods or policies for teachers' performance evaluation, incentives, rewards and recognition policies as well as the compensation and remuneration (Han, 2012; Parkes, 2015; Scott & Scott, 2015). Second, Organizational Practices include vision development and implementation, partnership / networking / linkages, and organizational resources. The vision development and implementation serve as one of the most important concerns in the organization since it gives direction to guide the organization to where it wants to go and do the things they want to accomplish (Leithwood, & Riehl 2003; Davies & Davies, 2006; Boal & Schultz, 2007; Pisapia, 2009; Hitt, Haynes, & Serpa, 2010). Consequently, the partnership/ networking and linkages of the organization established inside and outside the institution, either local or international found essential to the organization (Otara, 2015; Palmer, 2015; Zhao, 2010). Then, practices on the use and availability of organizational resources, such as funds/ financial standing, facilities, infrastructure and performance data of the organization need a focus (Day, Gu & Sammons, 2016; Otara, 2015; Claudet, 2014; Day & Sammons, 2013; Schleicher, 2012).

Teacher Instructional Competencies
As defined in the study, teacher instructional competencies refer to the set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes applied in the teaching profession. Teacher instructional competencies comprise of three main elements: professional competence, academic competence, and personal competence (Alqiawi & Ezzeldin, 20015; Azuelo, Sarina & Manual, 2015; Karimi, 2014; Goh, 2011). Professional competence focuses on the skills of the teachers in putting into practice the teaching methods, in designing and implementing diverse learning resources which are appropriate to learners, in incorporating information, technology, and communication into teaching, in planning the curriculum, in monitoring learners' progress, in applying teaching and learning theories appropriate to learners' context and in displaying professionalism and self-development to improve the profession (Alqiawi & Ezzeldin, 2015). Academic competence refers to the skills of the teacher in

putting concepts, generalizations and knowledge on specific teaching fields including research knowledge relevant in one's specialization to cause learners to learn (Alqiawi, & Ezzeldin, 2015, Anitha & Reema, 2014). Personal Competence refers to the positive attributes and character of the teachers displayed with high morals and ethical values (De, Nair, & Dwivedi, 2016; Alqiawi & Ezzeldin, 2015).

Factors Affecting Strategic Leadership
Factors affecting strategic leadership in higher education institutions need to be addressed. First, Leadership Competence is found as one of the critical factors in leading a higher education institution, because of the many challenges and demands that encourage school leaders to achieve a balance in managing people and in leading improvement on the performance of the institution (Shibru, 2017; Bellibas, 2015; Emmanuoil, 2014; Drew, 2010; Taylor & De Lourdes Machado, 2006). Leadership competence includes 1) leadership skills particularly in negotiating, delegating, motivating, mentoring, monitoring, team building and communicating, and 2) leadership values of the leaders which bring an impact in the development and progress of the institution. (McClure & Teitelbaum, 2016; Androniceanu, 2015; Ab Hamid, 2014, Osseo-Asare, 2005). Second, Organizational Culture refers to the philosophies, beliefs, values, expectations, attitudes, and practices shared by members of the organization (Zhu & Engels, 2013). This is an important factor considering that members show collaboration and support to any goals, innovations and even in fostering a harmonious relationship leading to improved organizational performance (Imam, 2013; Zhu & Engels, 2013). Third, Teacher Satisfaction is found very important in leading higher education institutions that include concerns of teachers on teaching workloads, work conditions, and incentives, remuneration, and recognition. (Hassan, 2018; Basari, 2016; Gemeda & Tynjälä, 2015; Mathur & Mehta, 2015; Scott & Scott, 2015; Mahajan, et al., 2014; Pineida, 2011). Fourth, Teacher Commitment refers to the positive attitude toward work and the commitment showed by teachers that lead the organization to a more competitive and improved performance (Hassan, Gallear, & Sivarajah, 2018; Thoonen, et.al., 2011; Machado- Taylor, 2011; Drew, 2010). This includes teacher motivation, teacher effectiveness and efficiency, and work attitude. Fifth, Resource Allocation becomes a great challenge to school leaders since they need to manage and control resources of the institution particularly on the funds and operations, school buildings and facilities, and budget on human resources (Wolhuter, 2016; Bellibas, 2015; Garwe, 2014; Day, 2013; Drew, 2010). Sixth, Human Resource Management encourages school leaders to specifically look into the recruitment and retention policies, teacher educational qualifications, and professional growth and development policies

since these concerns affect teachers' and school performance (Johnson, 2017; Androniceanu, 2015; Suhaemi & Aedi, 2015, Gemeda & Tynjälä, 2015; Garwe, 2014, Berdrow, 2010). Last, Organizational Values as an important factor because it deals with the relationships of members and the community, organizational support and climate of trust and confidence (Ab Hamid, 2014; Stensaker, et al., 2014; Jolaee, et al., 2014; Day & Sammons, 2013; Pineida, 2011).

Conceptual Framework
The conceptual framework presents the key variables mentioned in the objectives of the study by following the Input, Process, and Output (IPO). For the Input, the researcher explores the expected instructional competencies of higher education institutions and the strategic leadership practices for improving the instructional competencies of higher education teachers. For the process, after gathering the secondary data, the researcher examines the current strategic leadership practices of school leaders, the current instructional competencies of teachers and the factors affecting the strategic leadership practices at the Private Higher Education Institutions in Mindanao, Philippines. For the output, the researcher develops a strategic leadership model for teacher instructional competencies at the Private Higher Education Institutions in Mindanao, Philippines by incorporating all results of objectives 1 to 5. See Figure 1.for the conceptual framework.
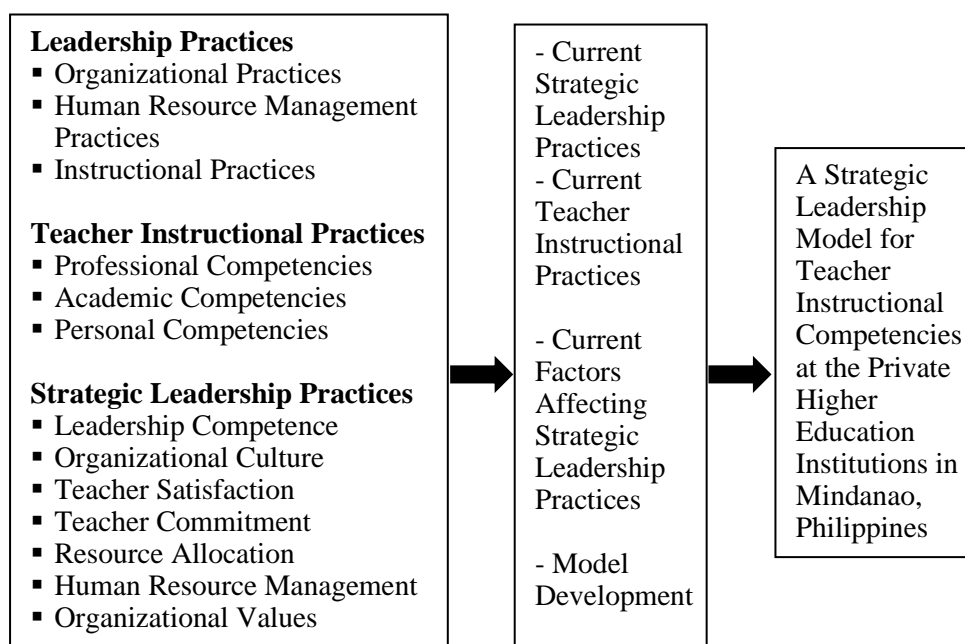

Figure 1. *Conceptual framework*

Research Methodology

In the first objective, the researcher reviewed 209 books, articles both online and offline sources that provide information on strategic leadership practices to improve teacher instructional competencies in higher education by applying the content analysis as a research methodology. In the second, third, and fifth objectives, the source of data was derived from 229 teachers, and seven school leaders of PHEIs in Mindanao, Philippines. In the fourth objective, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to find a linear relationship between strategic leadership practices and teacher instructional competencies. In the sixth objective, the findings from the objectives 1 to 5 were used to develop a strategic leadership model for teacher instructional competencies of PHEIs in Mindanao, Philippines.

Results

Based on the six research objectives, the researcher presented the results of qualitative and quantitative data. First, the researcher found the key variables, themes, and sub-themes on strategic leadership practices for teachers' instructional competencies in higher education by applying the content analysis as a research method. Second, on current instructional practices, the results show that teachers agree most on the theme Instructional Competencies of school leaders, while the school leaders give focus on the Human Resource Management Practices. Third, on current teacher instructional competencies, the result shows that teachers agree most on their Personal Competence, while school leaders support the Professional Competence of teachers. Fourth, the researcher found a significant relationship between strategic leadership practices and teachers' instructional competencies of private higher education institutions. Fifth, on factors affecting the strategic leadership practices of school leaders, the results show that Organizational Culture, Organizational Values, and Leadership Competence were identified by teachers. While Resource Allocation, Teacher Satisfaction, and Teacher Commitment were cited by school leaders as factors affecting strategic leadership practices. Last, the results of the study helped the researcher to develop a strategic leadership model for teacher instructional competencies which was validated by 12 experts. Level one of the model was based on the result of the study (Multiple Regression). Among the seven factors identified in the study, only two are significant predictors of Strategic Leadership Practices. When tested at 0.05 level of significance, the result shows Leadership Competence with a p-value of 0.000 and Organizational Values with a p-value of 0.014 as significant factors.

Conclusion

The three key variables were found by the method of content analysis: strategic leadership practices, teacher instructional practices, and factors affecting strategic leadership practices. The data which were gathered from various sources were analyzed and found themes and sub-themes under each key variable. The mean scores of the three themes under strategic leadership practices were generally interpreted as high particularly on the Instructional Practices of school leaders which believed as the most important function of school leaders in the educational institution. In the interview, school leaders shared that strategic leadership practices were found best in managing people, particularly in professional development programs. The three themes under teacher instructional competencies were interpreted as high in as far as the means scores are concerned. Yet among the three themes, teachers agree most in their Personal Competence that displayed the positive attributes, character imbued with high morals and ethical values. While school leaders' topmost concern relates to the Professional Competence of teachers. Findings show a substantial positive relationship between strategic leadership practices and teachers' instructional competencies of private higher education institutions. Based on the results, the seven factors affecting the strategic leadership practices of school leaders were high. This means, that all of these factors affect the strategic leadership practices in higher education institutions. The top three factors include Organizational Culture, Organizational Values, and Leadership Competence. On the other hand, school leaders cited three important factors affecting their leadership practices Resource Allocation, Teacher and Teacher Commitment. There was a minor adjustment on the content of the model, however, the suggestions raised by experts on the structure or labeling of the different parts of the model were considered to provide clear explanations on the relationship of each part of the model to achieve the objectives of the study. See figure 2 for the strategic leadership model for teacher instructional competencies.
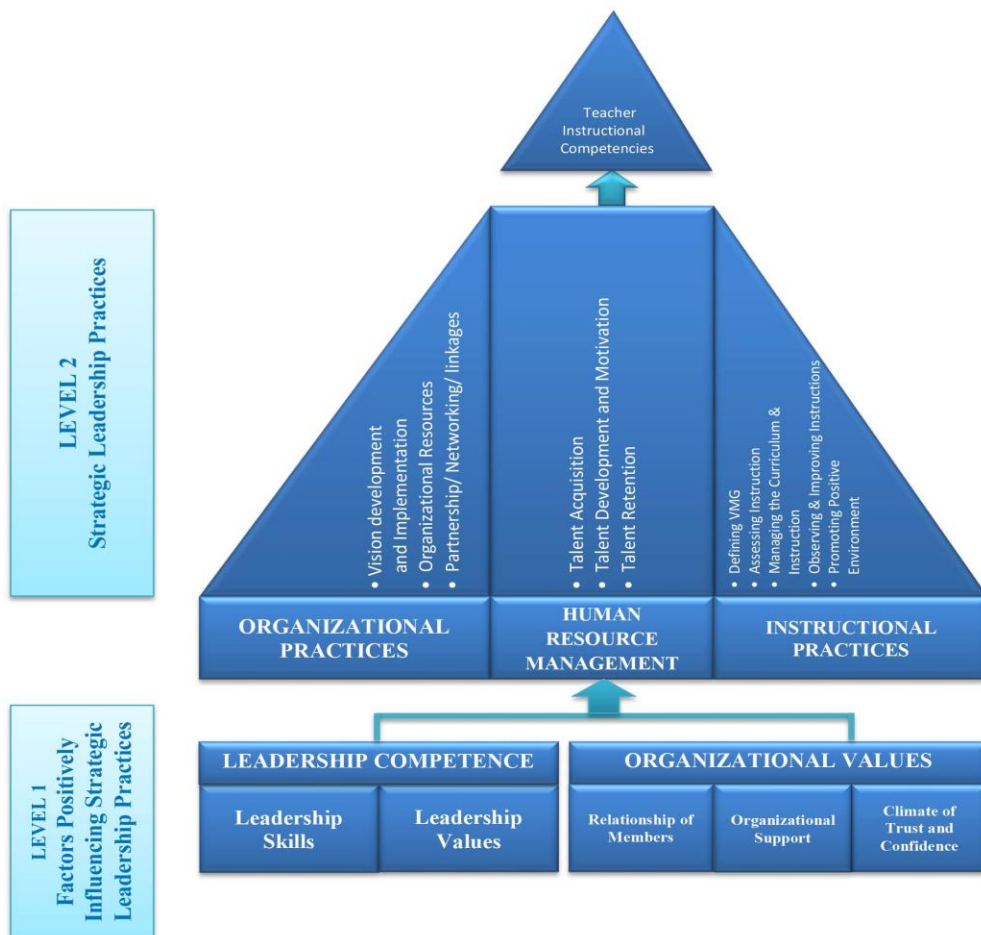
Figure 2. *The strategic leadership model for teacher instructional competencies*

Explanation of the Model

The strategic leadership model for teacher instructional competencies at the private higher education institutions in Mindanao, Philippines was validated by 12 experts from the Philippines, ASEAN region and outside ASEAN region.

The model comprises of two major levels. The first level of the model considers the factors influencing strategic leadership practices to build a strong foundation in the organization. These factors include: first, the Leadership Competence of school leaders in achieving balance in terms of managing people and in leading strategic change on the performance of the institution. The leadership competence emphasizes the Leadership Skills and Leadership

Values exhibited by the school leaders in the organization. Second, the Organizational Values defines the Relationship of Members, the Organizational Support and Climate of Trust and Confidence which become necessary to the success of achieving strategic change.

The next level of the model emphasizes the strategic leadership functions of school leaders which are vital to the success of attaining improved teacher instructional competencies. School leaders' functions focus on the three areas of concern. First, in the Organization, school leaders develop strategies to improve the practices on vision development and implementation, organizational resources and partnership/ linkages and networking. Second, on Human Resource Management, school leaders employ strategies to improve practices on Talent Acquisition, Talent Development and Motivation, and Talent Retention. Third, on Instruction, school leaders' various roles center on the Five Domains of Instructional Leadership: Defining the School's Mission, Managing Curriculum and Instruction, Observing and improving instruction, Assessing Instruction and Promoting Positive Environment.

Discussion
On Strategic Leadership, the findings of the content analysis show three themes that emerged include Human Resource Management Practices, Organizational Practices and Instructional Practices (Rothwell, Che, & Ooi,2016; Leithwood, & Riehl 2003; Pisapia, 2009; Hitt, Haynes, & Serpa, 2010; Otara, 2015; Palmer, 2015; Zhao, 2010).

On the current strategic leadership practices of school leaders, teachers find the Instructional Practices of the school leaders as high. They believed that attending the needs of teachers related to instruction brings improvement to their teaching and school performance (Elmore, 1999). In like manner, Brazer and Bauer (2013) stressed the same idea that school leaders' day-to-day work centers on the improvement of the academic life of the institution by introducing strategic leadership actions. While on the interview with school leaders revealed that most of the strategic leadership practices focused on Human Resource Management Practices. This concept affirmed by Ireland and Hitt (2005) and Leithwood (2003) who considered human resources as the essential components of strategic leadership.

On the current teacher instructional competencies, teachers find their Personal Competence as high. Among the three themes under teacher instructional competencies, teachers find their Personal Competence as high. Personal Competence of teachers which include displaying a healthy relationship with students brings a positive effect on the performance of students. Also,

Lammers and Murphy (2002) find teachers' personal competence very important in higher education, considering that most students like teachers with enthusiasm in teaching the subject, establish a good rapport, and facilitative in the classroom activities. Findings in the interview with the school leaders reveal that the development of teachers' Professional Competencies given priority. Basco (2017) showed similar results by pointing out that teachers need to be competent in assessing data to design and improve teaching plans as well as integrating assessment procedures in teaching. Likewise, in the study of Alderite, Busquit and Mejica (2008) revealed, that teachers' instructional competencies need to be improved, particularly in making the curriculum, in planning, assessing and reporting, and in establishing community linkages. Such skills need to be developed to deliver better instructional services.

Based on the results of the study, the top three factors as perceived by teachers include Organizational Culture, Organizational Values, and Leadership Competence. The ideas presented by Latham (2013), Kowalezyk and Pawlish, (2002) and Taylor (2003) supports this study that Organizational Culture is found very important in the organization because it influences leaders' attitude and defines the culture of the organization evident in communication, decision- making systems and procedures, productivity as well as leadership skills. Organizational Values found as another factor crucial in leading the organization. As mentioned by Schwartz (1992) and VandenBos (2007), organizational values are a belief that is found essential in assisting the organization to what it hopes to achieve through the involvement and concerted efforts of the members. Then, the last factor found important is Leadership Competence. Osseo-Asare (2005) and Bitterová (2014) pointed out the significance of Leadership Competence especially in higher education considering that quality performance, teachers' programs even the external relations of the institutions rely on the leadership competency of the school leaders. Also, teachers believed that high performance in teaching and learning depend on the drive of the school leaders and the competence to bring in change (Day, Gu & Sammons, 2013). School leaders' top three factors affecting strategic leadership include Resource Allocation, Teacher Satisfaction, and Teacher Commitment. Brimhall (2014) advised school leaders to manage the resources effectively to avoid problems that may occur. In private higher education institutions, the source of funds or income derived from the tuition of students, other fees of students and donations. As such, Drugus and Landoy (2014) advised school leaders to be strategic in managing resources and ensure that school improvement is top of the list. Next, on Teacher Satisfaction, school leaders believed that it is important to address concerns that bring teacher satisfaction because of its effects on teachers' work

and students' performance (Bernuus, Wilson, & Gardner, 2009; Verhaegen, 2005). Last, on Teacher Commitment, school leaders consider it as vital in achieving success both in the teaching and learning process. Darling-Hammond (2003) stressed that teacher commitment brings a positive effect on student achievement. School leaders must identify some strategies that build and strengthen teacher commitment by giving support to teachers. Watson and Hatton (2002) and Nir (2002) posited that teachers' commitment increases if freedom in performing duties is enjoyed by teachers in their workplace.

Based on the results of the research objectives, the researcher developed the model. The model comprises of two major levels. The first level of the factors influencing strategic leadership practices was emphasized to build a strong foundation in the organization. The second level of the model emphasizes the strategic leadership functions of school leaders which are vital to the success of attaining improved teacher instructional competencies. The model was validated by 12 experts who positively confirmed the significance of elements identified in each part of the model.

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