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Emotional Competence of Women Administrators

Mary Grace B. Lubguban

Abstract

Leadership is a social mechanism where action toward a common goal is affected by any person or community. The organization is in trouble without effective leadership, it has been said. Any educational institution's success hinges greatly on how competent the leaders are. The research's main objective is to assess the emotional competencies of women school administrators at public and private schools in Siquijor, Central Visayas, Philippines. The study focuses on the five (5) dimensions of emotional competence which are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. The study was conducted to fifty-seven (57) school heads or administrators during School Year 2016–2017. The study revealed that the women administrators are all experienced and possess a high degree of emotional competence relative to their performance as leaders and administrators.

Keywords: leadership, emotional competence, women, administration, education

1. Introduction

Leadership study is often seen as a broad and generic discipline that transcends multiple fields, including the academic, political, military, industry, and corporate world, and has become a common subject among both researchers and scientists [1]. Leadership is a process that influences action toward a shared goal by any person or a community. The leaders are the ones in charge of setting the direction, and establishing policies and procedures for the institution to accomplish its objectives [2–4]. Therefore, school leaders and administrators must be proficient and competent in order to be effective and efficient leaders in their organizations. History teaches that in the past, women were treated as inferior beings and second-class people. They were taught to be docile and were taught to work only within the confines of the home. They were marginalized and considered smaller-cost commodities [5].

The teaching profession is known to be the most noble and one of the most challenging and demanding profession compared to other professions in the world. Teachers are more exposed to stress and are involved in multiple responsibilities. The school is a social institution. It is a community of mutual relationship between teachers, students and school administrators. The teachers, students as well as administrators interact as organizational members. In this sense, schools direct their efforts toward the attainment of goals and objectives and contribute to a major function of a more comprehensive system, the society [6].

The successful operation of a school depends on the good leadership and management of its administrators. Principals and school heads provide day-to-day

instructions, manage school programs and activities, provide good academic environment and promote positive growth and development for both teachers and students [7, 8].

1.2 Emotional intelligence or emotional competence: Brief background and literature review

Competence comes in various forms. Leadership in organizations requires competence and skills required in the office and position one has been placed into. Leadership studies conducted for the past decades reveal how significant and vital emotional competence is not only among leaders and administrators but all employees as well in both public and private entities for that matter. Emotional intelligence is perceived as the individual's ability to recognize and understand one's emotions and skills that one utilizes in order to manage his/her relationships with one's self and others. Academic skills and technical proficiency is not enough to achieve success in one's job duties, but it is imperative for a person to exercise self-management, self-control and effective interpersonal relationships that would contribute in achieving the desired goals and objectives. Well-developed emotional intelligence also enables managers and leaders to implement effective leadership skills on their subordinates to encourage them to give their best performance. More so, success in the workplace takes a lot more than education, book knowledge or experience [9, 10].

The concept of emotional intelligence was first introduced almost thirty years ago. Salovey and Mayer asserted that emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action [11]. The term was then popularized by Goleman in his book *Emotional Intelligence- Why is it more important than IQ?* Goleman stated that emotional intelligence entails "the ability to recognize our feelings and those of others, to motivate ourselves and to manage our inner emotions as well as those regarding others". Goleman's book argues that effective business leaders are distinguished not by their education, native intelligence or subject knowledge, but by emotional intelligence, which in the context of the workplace includes characteristics like self-awareness and self-control; the ability to communicate and influence others; and facility at building bonds and creating group synergies [12].

In 1997, Mayer and Salovey revisited the former definition of emotional intelligence and offered a more comprehensive one by stating that "emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotion, the ability to access and/or facilitate emotion, the ability to understand emotion and the ability to regulate emotions to emotional and intellectual growth [13].

Furthermore, emotional intelligence directly is a collection of competencies which allow an individual to: identify one's own emotions and those of others; accurately express one's own emotions and help others express theirs, understand one's own emotions and those of others, manage one's own emotions and adapt to those of others, use one's own emotions and skills peculiar to emotional intelligence in various areas of one's life to be able to better communicate, make good decisions, maintain good interpersonal relations and others [13].

In recent years, emotional intelligence has become a major topic of interest in scientific and academic circles. While education and experience are of great importance to success, emotional intelligence is also of great importance. Leaders ought to be able to apply abstract ideas, and bring them into action or action. Studying emotional intelligence provides leaders with the understanding to meet staff needs, maintaining a focus on high achievement for all students, and building

environments of confidence and appreciation for schools in order to develop a community that challenges the status quo and foster excellence [14].

Experts say that emotional intelligence is a very critical skill for leaders as it lets them get a better picture of their strengths and limitations without obstructing them. As a result, they are able to effectively deal with and fix issues [15, 16].

Other experts consider emotional intelligence as socio-emotional competence in the sense that the concept deals with relationship of one's self with other people, thereby calling it socio-emotional competence. It includes the capacity of a person to convey, obtain and control emotions [17, 18] as well as their success in establishing relationships and sustaining them. This also requires the knowledge and skills a person possess to make good decisions and deal critically with problems [19, 20].

In a study conducted by Hourani, Litz & Parkman (2017) results suggested that school leaders need to build and cultivate their skilled emotional intelligence despite the many job constraints and challenges in the field. They emphasized that professional learning opportunities must be recognized and built to improve schools [21]. Furthermore, a recent study was conducted to Harvard graduates of business, law, medicine, and education by Michael Akers and Grove Porter which revealed that one's EQ is more important than one's IQ in achieving success. Akers reiterated that, "As individuals, our profession's success today depends on the ability to interpret and respond appropriately to other people's signals." Both Akers and Porter have argued that EQ is more a predictor of achievement than IQ. Therefore, the study advised that one needs to develop mature EQ skills to better understand, empathize, and compromise with other people as the world becomes global [22].

Results of a study conducted to women school administrators in Siquijor, Central Visayas, Philippines share similar findings and results with the cited literature above. Lubguban (2020) explained in her study that Siquijodnon women school administrators possess high level of emotional competence in the discharge of their duties and functions as leaders. In this study, emotional competence was tested through the five (5) dimensions which are: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer identified these four as: perceiving emotions, reasoning with emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions [11].

2. Results/findings

2.1 On leadership proficiency and emotional competence

The research shows that there is no significant relationship between the leadership proficiency and the emotional competence of the women school administrators. The women administrators possess a "High" level of proficiency in terms of administration, supervision, flexibility, continual learning and communication and community relations. They are "Advanced" and very proficient and most often apply the competency in considerably difficult situations and require little or no guidance. Likewise, the results suggest that the women administrators are compassionate, democratic and accommodating in their approach in treating problems and conflicts in the organization. These women leaders perform very well in their administrative duties and responsibilities. The data however, contradicts some ideas presented in other researches which prove that holding leadership roles and occupying executive Nevertheless, results of the study affirms the idea that without emotional skills, it would be very difficult for leaders to lead, inspire, and manage the complexities of being executives and administrators [23]. In addition, emotionally intelligent leaders realize and therefore build an open contact atmosphere

to participate and engage in the organization's ideal state of the future [24–26]. Likewise, school administrators who create good, trustworthy relationships with teachers and show compassion and motivation, foster positive school environments and academic results for students, and meet the emotional needs of teachers [27].

2.2 On emotional competence of women administrators

There are various problems and challenges that the women executives encounter in the workplace and in the performance of their duties and functions. Among these are family issues and concerns, lack of mentoring, low level of aspiration, negative leadership behavior exhibited by supervisors, organizational discrimination, office politics, and lack of training and development opportunities. The findings explain the significant connection between the emotional maturity of the women leaders and the degree of the severity of the problems experienced by the women administrators. Findings show that women managers have “high” ability levels in terms of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. It means the managers are very motivated and guided in their work, empathetic, rational, and self-regulated individuals, mindful of their own feelings and emotions. This validates on the belief that emotional and social maturity of leaders is a crucial factor in establishing a compassionate and productive atmosphere for teachers and students alike. School heads have important impacts on many facets of their schools, including the school environment and community, the well-being and retention of staff, and the school success of the students. Leaders predominate in the organization's emotional condition. This can lead to low employee participation and low morale if they are unsuccessful. Indeed, even higher educational institutions such as colleges and universities are conscious that academic leaders require emotional intelligence [28, 29].

Leadership is a method of social contact with the capacity of the leader to control followers' behaviors. Leaders increase the unity and morale of the community by building mutual emotional interactions and affect the organization's performance. Instructional leadership and emotional ability are essential resources that help leaders create relations among followers to effectively and efficiently lead the schools [25]. School leaders and managers need to improve and cultivate their professional emotional intelligence, as many job-related constraints and challenges require the demonstration of critical emotional intelligence skills and traits, and hence the need for professional learning opportunities to encourage, enhance and promote school performance [21].

In a study conducted [30], they explained that emotional intelligence is always correlated with social competence because both are antecedents to school administrator's success. Knowing that these variables are interrelated, school administrators should be aware and highly informed to their total leadership qualities. They likewise emphasized that emotionally intelligent leaders can better understand and motivate others through the use of their feelings, impulses, and sentiments. In their study, they found out that characteristics such as compassion, feedback, commitment, empowerment, communication, inspiration were the leadership qualities that leaders must possess to be able to motivate, inspire and persuade teachers to be good followers in order to create valuable and positive change in the organization [30].

Results of a study conducted to women school administrators in Siquijor, Central Visayas, Philippines share similar findings and results with the cited literature above. In a study conducted [21] explained in her study that Siquijodnon women school administrators possess high level of emotional competence in the discharge of their duties and functions as leaders. In this study, emotional competence was

tested through the five (5) dimensions which are: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer identified these four as: perceiving emotions, reasoning with emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions [11].

Self-awareness means understanding oneself – knowing one's weaknesses and limitations, strengths, drivers, and values. A self-aware and emotionally intelligent leader would plan properly and get the work done well in advance of any deadlines. It is the ability to control impulsive feelings and behaviors and manage emotions in healthy ways. A self-aware leader pays attention to nonverbal communication and focus on listening to what others have to say and look for ways to solve problems and minimize tensions [27, 31]. The women administrators possess a high level of self-awareness.

Emotionally intelligent people are also good at stepping into another person's shoes and understanding how they feel. The teachers of the public and private schools who were the subordinates of the school administrators attested that their leaders exhibited a caring and uplifting environment in spite of the many challenges and pressures in the teaching profession.

Empathy in the workplace can be done by seeing things from the other person's point of view and paying attention on how to respond to others. Being emphatic means being a good listener, open and sensitive to school and community concerns. The principals and school heads being studied are leaders of learning, open and sensitive to their subordinate's feelings and concerns.

Meanwhile, motivation is another component of emotional competence. In addition, an emotionally competent leader who possesses social skills is somebody who is able to build rapport with colleagues and communicate his/her ideas effectively. The leader shows attention, asks questions and provides feedback, and is a good team player [11].

Leaders with good social skills are able to build rapport with colleagues and are passionate and committed to their work. They have trust and respect not only to their co-equal but to everybody as well. The women executives or administrators being studied have good social skills, friendly and compassionate to their colleagues in the workplace [32, 33].

3. Conclusion

Research has shown that school leaders frequently deal with highly stressful circumstances in ways that jeopardize their ability to establish and maintain healthy relationships with stakeholders, effectively lead, create positive community relationships and support school programs. This research has shown the role and importance of emotional competence for leaders especially school administrators. Equally important is the fact that emotional competence can be cultivated and improved through professional training programs.

Awareness and awareness of one's emotions will encourage efforts by leaders to improve self-understanding and strengthen relationships with others that contribute to growth and communication. Given the challenges facing leaders in the 21st century, educating potential leaders can go a long way toward improving emotional intelligence. The foregoing findings lead to a conclusion that leadership and administration in whatever fields require high leadership proficiency and high emotional competence. Leadership proficiency and emotional competence may not be correlated at all times but emotional competence and the problems experienced by the women administrators are. Handling problems and challenges not only

in the professional duties but also in everyday life require stable emotional well-being. Knowing that these variables are interrelated, school administrators should be aware and highly informed and trained, hence the need for an enhancement program which is the output of the study.

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