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**THE RITES, RITUALS AND ARTIFACTS OF STATE UNIVERSITIES AND
COLLEGES (SUCs)**

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ABSTRACT

This paper profiled and discussed the practice and preservation of organizational culture of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region III, Philippines from the insights of administrators and faculty members. A list to measure the extent of practice of the cultural forms such as rites and rituals and the extent the respondents maintain the artifacts was utilized to gather the data. SPSS 16 was used to produce the mean and the t-Test. The findings revealed that the respondents practiced the rites and rituals mainly the conduct of orientation of new faculty and staff and the conduct of meetings, a way to monitor accomplishments of employees; and highly maintained the Artifacts mostly the manners of disseminating mission and vision statements and appropriately addressing people within the organization. Evidence supporting a no significant difference between the perceptions of the respondents on the extent of practice of Rites and Rituals and preserving Artifacts was found.

KEYWORDS: Organizational Culture, Rites, Rituals, Artifacts, State Universities and Colleges

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is culturally constructed. Anthropologists express this by saying that culture is constituted by means of the cultural systems of thought by which it is apprehended. Tierney (1988) claimed that organizational culture “is the study of particular webs of significance within an organizational setting. That is, we look at an organization as a traditional anthropologist would study a particular village or clan.”

When people from diverse backgrounds are brought together in a work environment, these factors will manifest themselves in an infinite variety of ways. Sadri & Lees (2001) argued that the dominant set of norms will emerge overtime, guiding the way which work is accomplished. Thus, the concept of corporate (organizational) culture arose.

The rites, rituals, artifacts, values and beliefs are the distinct cultural elements and/or forms of educational institutions and organizations (Deal & Peterson, 2009 and Stakes, 2010) They preserve organizational culture and are used by the members of the organization to transmit messages about desirable ways of thinking, behaving and working. Most successful organizations feel that rituals and symbolic actions should be managed (Lunenburg, 2011). Artifacts for Rafaeli & Yavetz (2002) was a formal, one-way communication act of the organization targeted at the public.

The culture of a school can be a positive influence on learning or hold back performance of the school. Deal & Peterson (2009) further point out that a school with a positive school culture is a place with a “shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, and a shared commitment to helping students learn”. The researcher believes that schools with positive culture have maintained rites and rituals that bonds people together and the artifacts or tangible representation of core ideals and assumptions.

Given the above discussions, the researcher asserts further that analysis of culture of college and university cannot be understood unless educational community headed by its administrator looks at the interpretations of the symbols, meanings, and interconnectedness of cultural forms and elements. The clear manifestations of practiced and maintained cultural forms rites, rituals and artifacts of an organization, its specific attributes and



dynamics will help the members of the educational institution to nurture and further the development of common goals and to reduce undesirable relationship. In this way, every staff member plays a role in keeping the school culture productive and help built culture building. The study of organizational culture allows school administrators, educational managers and faculty members to determine the direction and effectiveness of education and the academic community.

The empirical results of the present study will provide critical insight to educational administrators of the attributes of the cultural forms/elements to be considered and to be aligned to their management and leadership approaches, development plans, socialization methods and control mechanism that play a particular and important role in sustaining a culture, thus, considering these as necessary steps towards the institution's effectiveness, survival and success. The preferred and maintained cultural forms of an organization will help the educators (instructors and professors) and other employees of the state universities and colleges to reduce adversarial relationship and to foster the development of shared goals. The lens of culture allows school leaders and faculty members to shape learning experiences with an eye toward the health of the students and the school community, which inevitably determines the direction and effectiveness of education. The community members will better understand what complex systems schools really are. It will encourage synergy and making the community actively engage in the institution's desire to achieve progress and success.

2. FRAMEWORK

Reviewing the literature, Trice & Beyer (1993) distinguished the frequently studied cultural forms such as rites and rituals. They presented Typology of Rites by their manifest, expressive social consequences. Trice & Beyer (1993) have identified six types of organizational rites - rites of passage, rites of degradation, rites of enhancement, rites of renewal, rites of conflict reduction, and rites of integration. Rites merge a number of discrete cultural forms into an integrated, unified public performance. Rituals according to Naicker (2008) are repetitive sequences of activities that express and reinforce the key values of the organization. Rites and Rituals illuminate the cultural messages embedded in campus state universities and colleges in the present study.

Another theory related to this study is Schein's (1992 and 2004) Model on Organizational Attributes, one of which is collectively known as artifacts. The facilities, offices, visible awards and recognitions, the way that its members dress, the company slogans, mission statements and operational creeds are examples of artifacts. With the present study, it was perceived and assumed that Artifacts are turned into symbols by organizational members when they are associated with specific meanings. For Snow (2006), with artifacts, people come to understand the beliefs, values, customs, and behaviors of these people. In short, we come to understand their culture.

Schein (1992) argued that an understanding of organizational culture is the key to organizational excellence, in that it makes a difference to performance within the workplace. He asserted that "culture matters because decisions made without awareness of operative cultural forces may have unanticipated and undesirable consequences and because elements of culture determine organizational strategy, goals and operational modes." For Rafaeli & Worline (1999), to understand the cultural system of an organization is to understand the interpretations and actions of organizational members, and how those actions, thoughts, and feelings are shaped by the collectivity.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study appraised the extent of practice and maintaining/preserving organizational culture forms found in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region III, Philippines.

Specifically, this study aimed to determine the extent of practiced of cultural forms – Rites, Rituals and the extent of maintained/preserved Artifacts as perceived by the respondents (administrator/manager and faculty members); and to determine if there is difference on the perceptions of the administrator/manager and faculty member-respondents on the extent of practiced and maintained organization's cultural forms.

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, descriptive research design was used. Descriptive method includes the collection of data to test the hypothesis and to answer the questions concerning the present status of the study. In the case of the present study, the extent of practice and preservation of cultural forms within college or university organizational culture and setting were described and discussed.

The respondents of the study included a total of 304 respondents (combined population of educational administrators/managers and faculty members from eight (8) State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) of Region III, Philippines. A survey questionnaire was the primary instrument for data gathering in this study. After the conduct of reviews of literature and related studies, indicators of the survey questionnaire were identified and finalized. Most of the indicators were patterned from Trice & Beyer (1993) Cultural Forms and Stakes' (2010) Higher Educational Institutions Model. The first part of the survey questionnaire gathered the perceptions of the extent or degree of practiced and maintained organizational culture distinctively on cultural forms in SUCs in Region III. The instrument consisted a total of 30 items/indicators. The cultural forms include: (a) Rites and Rituals in which the respondents answered on a scale ranging from 5 (Highly Practiced), 4 (Practiced), 3 (Moderately Practiced), 2 (Less Practiced) and 1 (Not Practiced); and (b) Artifacts in which the respondents answered on a scale ranging from 5 (Highly Maintained), 4 (Maintained), 3 (Moderately Maintained), 2 (Less Maintained) and 1 (Not Maintained). A pilot test was conducted in a certain College funded by the Local Government of Botolan, Zambales. Having found the instrument valid and reliable, the researcher sought the permission and approval of the eight (8) Presidents of the state universities and colleges in Region III to administer the survey questionnaires to the identified respondents. This was conducted during the first semester of 2015. The data collected were classified according to variables. These were tabulated to determine their frequency distribution and application of appropriate statistical tools such as frequency counts, simple percentage and weighted mean. t-Test was computed using the software SPSS.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perception of the Respondents on Organizational Culture Forms Rites and Rituals

Table 1 Perceptions of the Respondents towards RITES and RITUALS

	Weighted Mean	QI	Rank
RITES and RITUALS			
1. Conducting orientation to new faculty and staff	4.70	HP	1
2. Training new employees associated with their new job	4.49	HP	3
3. Providing recognition to individuals of their accomplishments	4.28	HP	8
4. Giving preferential treatment to long-serving employee	4.21	HP	9
5. Paying tribute to retiring faculty and officials	4.38	HP	5
6. Gossiping that looks for any dirt and can ruin good reputation	1.93	LP	15
7. Perpetuating "spies" (covert forces) who crush reform efforts	2.00	LP	14
8. Keeping "whisperers" assuring that secrets find the leader's ear	2.25	LP	13
9. Managing conflict through collective bargaining and arbitration	3.95	P	10
10. Disciplining official by revocation of designation	2.58	LP	12
11. Reassigning official to lessen the effect of humiliation	3.66	MP	11
12. Attending social gathering and other occasions of the institution	4.37	HP	6
13. Conducting regular meeting to monitor accomplishments	4.54	HP	2
14. Fostering teambuilding that will improve employees' morale	4.45	HP	4
15. Setting measures to address employees' needs and problems	4.34	HP	7
Overall Weighted Mean	3.77 = Practiced (P)		

Table 1 shows the perceptions of the respondents towards the extent of practice of organizational Rites and Rituals. Indicator 1 stated as "Conducting orientation to new faculty and staff" (WM=4.70, Rank 1) was perceived by the respondents as Highly Practiced. The conduct of orientation to new employee is categorized in Trice & Beyer (1993) as rite of passage and for Islam & Zyphur (2009) as transformation stage, in which the workers will fully be immersed with the values of the organization. This particular finding signifies that the rite

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and ritual of the conduct of orientation has vital function in state universities and colleges, hence highly practiced.

Indicator 13 which stated as “Conducting regular meeting to monitor accomplishments” obtained the second highest weighted mean of 4.54, interpreted as Highly Practiced. As perceived by the respondents, their respective organization highly practiced the rite and ritual of meetings aimed at watching over employees work progress and accomplishments. According to Lunenburg (2011) rites and rituals will increase participation and control to one’s action.

Indicator 2 stated as “Training new employees to improve skills associated with their new job” obtained the third highest weighted mean of 4.49, interpreted as Highly Practiced. The training of employees to further enhance their skills was highly practiced in state universities and colleges. According to Lunenburg (2011) the ritual of trainings and professional preparation provides the new employee opportunities to perform well. Moreover, the respondents highly practiced the giving of distinctions on accomplishments of employees (Indicator 3, WM=4.28) and giving tribute to retiring faculty and staff (Indicator 5, WM=4.38). The abovementioned rites and rituals of state universities and colleges are appropriate under Trice & Beyer’s (1993) rites of enhancement. The function of this rite and ritual is to recognize successes and achievements of individuals (Islam & Zypur, 2009 & Naicker, 2008).

Attending social gathering and other occasions of the institution (Indicator 12, WM=4.37), teambuilding efforts directed at improving the morale of the departments (Indicator 14, WM=4.55) and setting measures to ensure that something is being done on members’ concerns (Indicator 15, WM=4.22) were also highly practiced. These practices fall under Trice & Beyer’s (1993) rites of integration. Above results could mean that the management of state universities and colleges valued the custom of bringing different groups together since these rites and rituals are continued and upheld. The highly practiced responses on the mentioned rites and rituals could be ascribed on their encouraging and motivating factors. Rites and rituals will revitalize and restore existing social relations and dealings (Islam & Zypur, 2009), improve members’ commitment and solidify membership in the organization (Deal & Peterson, 2009)

Disciplining officials by removing from the designation (Indicator 10, WM=2.58) was less practiced and reassigning official to other post to lessen the humiliation (Indicator 11, WM=3.66) was moderately practiced respectively. These are rites of degradation of Trice & Beyer’s (1993). These results imply that the state universities and colleges do not perceive these as very necessary, hence less practiced in the organization. The rites of degradation will just create tension of inconsistency between the leader and the group norm (Islam & Zypur, 2009). The state universities and colleges in Region III considered that the role of rite and ritual is facilitating the resolution of problems, creating and sustaining culture which must be appropriately managed if the organization is to survive.

‘Gossiping’ that can ruin reputation (Indicator 6, WM=1.93, Rank 15), having ‘spies’ or covert forces who crush reform efforts (Indicator 7, WM=2.00, Rank 14) and keeping whisperers who have the boss’s ear (Indicator 8, WM=2.25, Rank 13) were indicators which obtained the lowest weighted mean and were interpreted as Less Practiced. These results imply that the state universities and colleges do not actually practice and perpetuate rites and rituals that send negative culture traits in the organization and play less role in developing and maintaining positive organizational culture for these according to Deal & Peterson (2009) have great potential to build and support toxic culture.

The computed overall weighted mean of the organizational culture form Rites and Rituals was 3.77, interpreted as Practiced. The SUCs in Region III practiced the rites and rituals that bring members together by recognizing one another, resolving conflict, negotiating and addressing interest and needs of members.

Table 2 Perceptions of the Respondents towards ARTIFACTS

ARTIFACTS	Weighted Mean	QI	Rank
1. Disseminating mission and vision statements in various mode	4.72	HM	1
2. Imbedding concrete school identity in logo, badges, and banners	4.51	HM	6
3. Considering school leaders and teachers as “icons”	4.36	HM	9
4. Considering school heads and teachers as “living logos”	4.42	HM	7
5. Keeping history alive by displaying portraits and collections	4.25	HM	13
6. Addressing people and other officials as signs of courtesy	4.65	HM	2
7. Adopting a slogan of school’s purpose and desired behavior	4.13	M	14
8. Adopting a hymn that reflects the institution’s goals and aspirations	4.62	HM	3
9. Investing in IT system which craft message to its target client	4.29	HM	11
10. Maintaining landmark that commemorates and honors founder	4.35	HM	10
11. Displaying athletic and academic successes of students and staff	4.27	HM	12
12. Complying with appropriate organizational dress code	4.53	HM	5
13. Adopting an institutional color that produces a particular image	4.59	HM	4
14. Buildings’ design forms impression of comfort and warmth	3.89	M	15
15. Keeping orderly records, guides people to the work routines	4.39	HM	8
Overall Weighted Mean	4.40	= Highly Maintained (HM)	

Table 2 shows the perceptions of the respondents towards the extent of maintained/preserved Organizational Artifacts.

Indicator 1 stated as “Disseminating mission and vision statements in various ways and mode to understand what the school hopes to realize” obtained the highest weighted mean (4.72, Rank 1) interpreted as Highly Maintained. For the respondents, the use of different modes and strategies to make the community and other stakeholders known what the organization stands for and aspires for was highly maintained and implemented. Sigel (2011) argued that artifacts of the organization serve as a mechanism to attract clients and according to Russell (2007), artifacts’ visible and tangible elements drives and conveys the organization’s purpose.

Respondents reported that “Addressing people as sir or madam or by job title as signs of courtesy” as Highly Maintained (Indicator 6, WM=4.65, Rank 2); strongly considered their school leaders/heads as “icons” (Indicator 3, WM=4.36) and as “living logos” (Indicator 4, WM=4.42). The respondents believed that their leaders (‘father’, ‘mother’ or ‘heroes’ of their institutions) convey important symbolic messages and raise issues through their words, actions, dress and ideas. Lunenburg (2011) stressed that organizations have heroes that provide models of actions.

Other artifacts that were strongly upheld were adopting a hymn that reflects the institution’s goals and aspirations (Indicator 8, WM=4.62); the use of appropriate dress code (Indicator 12, WM=4.53) and having an official color (Indicator 13, WM=4.59). These identified organization’s artifacts belong to Rafaeli & Yavetz’s (2002) aesthetic of artifacts. SUCs in Region III are very much engaged in preserving the school’s exceptionalities. Consistent to this result was Sigel’s (2011) finding emphasizing the awareness and importance of the rites and ritual’s symbolic attributes in making school’s distinctiveness.

Displaying athletic and academic awards (Indicator 11, WM=4.27), orderly record keeping (Indicator 15, WM=4.39) and investing in Information Technology (IT) and websites (Indicator 9, WM=4.29) were highly preserved artifacts of state universities and colleges in Region III. These artifacts are symbolic and objects with cultural significance. Rafaeli & Yavetz (2002) stressed that artifacts serve as means to uphold what the organization work on and values

The respondents’ perceptions were highly maintained/preserved on the utilization of institutional logos, badges, and banners (Indicator 2, WM=4.51), the tradition of keeping tangible evidences of school’s history (Indicator 5,

WM=4.25) and the custom of honoring founder and forefathers (Indicator 10, WM=4.35). Above indicators for artifacts fall under Rafaeli & Yavetz's (2002) symbolism of artifacts. The use of school effects (e.g., logos, badges and banners), evidences of school's history and honoring schools' great contributors and forefathers are rites, rituals and customs which are well-kept-up and well-looked-after by the state universities and colleges in Region III. These are actually useful as marketing strategies of the institution to attract clients and other stakeholders and ways of respecting the legacy of the school and revering the pioneers and forerunners of the institution. Artifacts according to Sigel (2011) and Schultz, Hatch & Ciccolella (2004) are being used by the organization's intensions to establish connections (e.g., marketing strategy) with external stakeholders. While the layouts and the architectural designs of building that forms impression of comfort (Indicator 14, WM=3.89) was maintained and least from the rank. These particular artifacts still need attention from the state universities and colleges of Region III. Deal & Peterson (2009) point out that school building should be maintained as a symbol of pride.

The perceptions of the respondents for the culture form Artifacts obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.40 interpreted as Highly Maintained. SUCs in Region III highly preserved the artifacts that have certain symbolic and aesthetic functions within the organization and contributes to a distinct organization identity.

t - Test of Differences on the Perceptions of the Respondents

Table 3 shows that a significant value of 0.8196 was obtained for rites and rituals and for artifacts (0.1548) were higher than the (0.05) alpha level of significance. The null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of the respondents.

Table 3 t – Test of Differences in the Perceptions of the Respondents on the Extent of Practice and Maintaining Organizational Culture Forms

Organizational Culture Forms						
Culture Forms	Stand. Dev.	N	df	t Stat	sig two-tail	Decision/ Interpretation
Rites & Rituals	0.9548	15	28	0.3715	0.8196	Accept
	0.8961	15				Not Significant
Artifacts	0.1872	15	28	1.4081	0.1548	Accept
	0.2554	15				Not Significant
t critical @ 0.05 level of significance df 28 = 2.0213 (two-tail)						

The respondents of SUCs Region III manifest similarity of perceptions on the level of extent of practice of organizational culture forms–rites and rituals. Indication of no significant difference in the perception could mean that the respondents have likeness of beliefs and understanding of what rites and rituals are to be practiced and sustained within the educational institution. Moreover, a no significance of perceptions on what organizational artifacts are maintained and preserved was found. The result signifies that the respondents do have similar orientation of the value of the artifacts (physical and visible evidence) of what motivates and drives the organization.

6. CONCLUSION

This study profiled the cultural forms such as rites, rituals and artifacts of State University and Colleges in Region III, Philippines and determined the extent how these cultural forms are practiced and maintained within the context of an educational institution. The findings revealed that the respondents (faculty and heads/managers) practiced the Rites and Rituals mainly the conduct of orientation of new faculty and staff and the conduct of meetings as a sort to monitor accomplishments of employees; and highly maintained and preserved Artifacts mostly the modes of disseminating mission and vision statements and appropriately addressing people with the organization assigns of courtesy. The computed t-Test revealed an evidence supporting a no significant difference between the perceptions of the two groups of respondents on the extent of practice o organizational Rites and Rituals and preserving organizational Artifacts.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the leadership of the school administrators and managers of the state universities and colleges in Region III and with the help and support of the people from the rank and file would continue appropriate and relevant rites and rituals specifically conflict reduction, recognition and reward system, appointment and other practices that bind/unite members together into one purpose. Conservation and/or appropriate up keep of the organizational artifacts intended for the improvement of school buildings and facilities as well as artifacts that supports the institution's identity and suitable school's physical environment is also suggested. Higher education institutions should continue to read the existing culture or by respecting the shared rites and rituals and built and/or established artifacts that are deeply rooted in the institution. Lastly, a follow-up study on organizational culture as significant indicator for commitment, innovativeness and job satisfaction.

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