Women's Work-life Balance in the Academe

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In industrialized nations all over the world, the labor force participation of women has been increasing steadily over the past several decades such that women now constitute the majority of the workforce in the United States, Canada and Australia (Major and Germano 2006). In the Philippines, women with young children and the youth (typically fresh high school and college graduates) make up the fastest growing segment of the workforce. Men have also become more involved in family and home care responsibilities. Workers in the older age group are becoming less viable because of the rapid entry of technology in work processes. The intensity of work has increased with every task carried out with greater speed. This creates greater demand for employees to efficiently produce expected results.

The trend of women becoming more and more involved in paid productive work can be attributed to two major factors–women's increasing educational attainment and the rise of the service industry. Over the years, women have been more successful in earning high school diplomas and college degrees than men. According to the Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics (BLES), within the labor force one out of five women (20%) has completed college or higher education while only one out of 10 men (10%) has (Labstat Updates, 2007). It is worthy to note that in the labor force, women have higher educational attainments than men. This indicates that women are now becoming competitive in the

labor market because of their academic credentials. In fact, 2007 statistics from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) show that more women aged 35 years old and above are employed than men in the same age bracket. Clearly, this trend suggests that women, particularly those who are married, no longer remain confined to domestic tasks; rather, they are becoming active income-earners contributing to the household pot.

With the necessary qualifications and skills, women are able to dominate the increasing demand for labor in the service industry particularly with the expansion of traditional roles for women in the health care service, education and customer service industries. This is intensified by globalization, an economic phenomenon that emerged in the past two decades which ushered rapid movements of goods and services, dissolved national boundaries and required a 24/7 workforce. Organizational development interventions and reengineering have become buzzwords for establishments in their struggle for survival in a highly competitive market. Revolutionary changes in the organization of work have far outpaced our knowledge on the implications of these changes to the quality of work and personal lives of employees (Sauter, et al. 2002)

In this purview, the concept of work-life balance (WLB) was introduced to lessen the impact of pressures at work. Change brings stress to people. The fast-paced economy demands that work organizations adapt swiftly to the vibrant markets and costumer needs. Employees are, thus, required to expect changes and keep up with continuous reengineering in work structures and processes. Without accompanying support systems, changes that affect an employee's personal life can have serious repercussions to his work and family.

Significance of the Study

Labor flexibility due to the fast changing world of work under a globalized economy has led to various forms of organizational structuring and restructuring. This reconfiguration of the workforce has brought about several problems to employees. This research centers on the effects of these changes on the work-life conditions of women employees in the service sector.

It is important to look into women's work-life balance due to its significance to the social and political life of society. Women as active

equal partners in productivity also play a key role in the reproductive sphere. Imbalance in work-life implies dysfunction in one or both of the roles that a woman performs. Studying the effects of organizational changes in a woman's work-life at the enterprise level due to the demands of the economy would reveal gaps that both business organizations and government need to address to mitigate the ill-effects to women, their families, and the larger community.

This study also hopes to contribute significantly to the advancement of industrial relations both in theory and practice. Current theories in the field have yet to tackle work-life balance. Yet, organizational developments indicate the need to balance the demands of work and personal life for both men and women. The need may be greater for women because, as mentioned, they are burdened by both productive and reproductive roles. It should be mentioned however, that currently men are also sharing in family and home responsibilities. These elements need to be captured or integrated in industrial relations theories. On the practical side, being responsive to the demands of work-life can help bring greater productivity and industrial peace in the workplace. Helping workers achieve their work targets in a manner that will not prejudice their personal goals and exigencies will engender stronger commitment to the organization as it attempts to attain strategic goals for sustainability and growth.

Moreover, this study broadens and deepens employee-employer relations by institutionalizing gender perspective in the structural and process realignment of organizations. Issues on life roles will be considered as important as those determining productivity and business growth. The mechanical link between employees and management would become more dynamic and flexible.

This research also aims to contribute to the advancement of women workers' interest. Recognition of the special and important but demanding roles of women in both workplace and home will enable labor unions to include and negotiate decisively terms and conditions that affect women's work-life balance.

The results can have significant policy implications. Working within the purview of industrial relations as a tripartite system (labor, capital and the state), it is very important to include in this study government policies on work-life balance. In a case study of a private educational institution employing over 80% women and where an actual work-life balance

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program may be designed, the study shows how government regulations measure up in terms of meeting the minimum standards of quality life.

Research Problems

This paper sought to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the work-life balance initiatives of employers?

2. What are the work-life balance programs initiated by employees?

   a. What, if any, is the role of the union in designing work-life balance initiatives?

   b. Are work-life balance programs or efforts among the issues in collective bargaining?

   c. Have they been integrated as provisions in the CBA?

3. For employees, do work-life balance programs initiated by either the organization, the employees or union help them cope with the demands of work and family responsibilities?

4. Are there efforts to get feedback or monitor the effects of these work-life balance efforts on: (a) the firm's performance; (b) the employees' performance?

5. What are the major human resource issues and concerns that should be considered when instituting such programs?

Summary of Trends

Theories on work-life balance have been first introduced in industrial or occupational psychology. Individual needs encompassed the work sphere that may or may not satisfy the path to happiness and fulfillment as explained by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Life roles include career development which encompasses a big portion of a person's life (Super 1980). Engendered theories also developed as a response to the dominant male views on career development as posited by Gilligan (1982). Views were raised on the graver effects of work and life conflicts to women workers. Thereafter, studies began to focus on how women carry out their roles in both reproductive and productive realms (Gutek and Larwood

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1987). Mothering, with all its attendant duties, was directly linked to career, indicating that these two roles interconnect with each other (Devasahayam and Yeoh 2007). Broadly, studies show that the role of women in the household spills over the market economy, providing her jobs similar or directly related to her domestic responsibilities such as care giving and teaching.

The increasing popularity of work-life balance as a concept encouraged further studies which came up with varied findings. Merriam and Clark (1991) assert the need to connect and maintain the interface of both work and family life instead of delineating the two spheres. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) posit that a conflict inevitably exists between work and family as a result of incompatible role pressures and emotional negative spillovers of one sphere to another. The assumption is that in the absence of conflict, there is work-life balance. However, one perspective countervails the conflict framework. The work-family facilitation concept maintains the view that family and work experience contribute to the enhancement of one's performance in the other sphere, as Jones et al. (2006) suggest. This is somewhat connected to the "achievement and enjoyment" definition given by Work-life Balance.com (2003) which considers both spheres as two sides of a coin.

There were also studies based on the management framework, such as those by Work Foundation, which affirmed the importance of employees to the company and how responding to their concerns on work and life issues is sound business practice. Work-life balance is shown to play an important part in recruitment and retention, increased productivity, and improved customer service, which all redound ultimately to higher profits. All these studies point to the need to utilize flexibility for employees in performing tasks. There were practical and doable proposals, such as those given by Rowley (2003).

Changes in the global market as well as in the cultural and household systems have triggered studies on the effects of these transformations to the welfare of employees, such as that conducted by the ILO on working time in 2007. Research have been conducted in private companies, government employees and the outsourcing industry (service providers) such as the one endeavored by Moss, Saizman and Tilly (2004). The actual effects of restructuring, job expansion, and automation were directly related to the general welfare of the working people (LeCraw 1992).

The survey method was used mostly in studies on work-life balance. Questionnaires were sent through email, postal service and direct distribution. These were done in studies conducted in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, the United States and the Philippines. To add to the comparatively rich literature and actual researches made on work-life balance, this paper contributes a measure of the costs of organizational improvement to women workers through an in-depth investigation using a case study of actual women's lives employed in the academe.

The Gender Perspective

Any study on women requires the use of one or a combination of various gender perspectives to support its propositions. For this research, the Social Relations Framework and Feminist Critical Economics provided the bases of how the issues were handled and recommendations reached. The combination of sociology and economics was used to explain how gender roles in society came about, defined and continue to persist in contemporary life and why these conditions bring the consequence of women having a disadvantaged position at work, in the household, the community and society as a whole.

Having an assumption that expectations are increasing on women's role as productive and reproductive agents, work-life balance for them is clearly explained by women's action and interaction with men, the community and within organizations. According to Miller and Razavi (1998), the Social Relations framework presents "an analysis of the social relations within the family, market, state and community that illuminate the ways in which gender and other inequalities are created and produced." It also looks into how social processes and institutions meet human needs and views gender relations as both conflicting and collaborative. As Miller and Razavi aptly state, this relationship is a process of bargaining and negotiation. This very same perspective applies relevantly to workplace relations between employees and management. This analogous framework between women's social interaction and industrial relations aptly enriched the analysis of the research report by clearly presenting a context relevant to the variables.

In addition, this framework also looks at gender roles and differences vis-à-vis access to and control of resources while at the same time investigates the varied network of relationships taking into account class, ethnicity, age, and religion, where gender issues persist. It looks at

women's subordination within the capitalist economic process and posits that women are not excluded from this realm but are actually part of it, though in unequal terms. Thus, it views the necessity to reorganize institutional structures for the process of empowering women to take place (Miller and Razavi 1998)

The goal of measuring how work organizations fulfill the needs of women as stakeholders also falls within the purview of how the social relations framework interconnects gender roles among a vital family member, worker and citizen of the community, and the country as a whole. Thus, an imbalance of women's work-life is caused by the lack or excess of time and responsibilities portrayed in either aspects of life. Expectations of higher educational attainment for those working in the academe, for instance, may motivate women to pursue post-graduate studies which results to self-development. However, this may entail taking leave from work and less working time, and may even entail sacrificing time devoted for the children.

The Feminist Critical Economics theory is another gender perspective framework that is relevant to this study. This theory asserts that unpaid reproductive work should be included in the definition of efficiency as an indicator in the analysis of the macro economy. It argues that women's role in social reproduction is not "natural" but a result of power relations. Without negating the biological functions of women and men in the reproduction of human beings, stereotyped gender roles are products of society mainly dictated by the needs and demands of the market. Market transactions define the relations of gender on how they interact with one another and the community. Similarly, institutions in a free market society inadvertently shape or constrain choices and decisions of women and men which inevitably bring about gender inequalities. From this perspective, the study on women workers would entail an appreciation of how largely they are undervalued for their roles in the maintenance of human resources through the expected care work that they perform.

In advanced countries where women prefer to participate equally in productive work, the reproductive role has diminished. This may be caused by women's dissatisfaction at being "plain housewives." As a result, many welfare states in Europe suffer graying population and are having a hard time coping with the dwindling supply of necessary human resources. Governments are prodded to offer incentives for having children and grant longer parental leave benefits with full pay.

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In developing countries like the Philippines, the need for young women to help in the household or to augment the household income even before graduation may result to shortfalls in knowledge and skills in the labor market. The pressure upon a working mother to miss work in order to tend to a sick child or elderly result directly to zero output, which entails cost to business enterprises. Such a situation is disadvantageous to both women and the company due to the mutual loss in income opportunity. A woman serves as a significant contributor to the household pot as well as the primary actor in domestic production. As such, the modification and fine-tuning of her roles in both the workplace and home should be designed in such as ways as to enable her to reach her maximum potentials while she performs her roles. On top of work and home, in other words, she must be allowed to socialize and nurture her personal development.

This conceptual framework of looking at women in both roles in the market and care economies is most appropriate in understanding her circumstances as a worker in a modern and dynamic work organization. Constant organizational changes in an establishment may affect these circumstances in a negative or positive manner. An understanding of organizational development and reengineering as improvement strategies will clearly pinpoint and explain the convergence of organizational goals and employee welfare.

Organizational Improvement Strategies as a Tool for Change Management

Organizational improvement is a human resource process comprised of the flow of events, including the necessary strategies, through which the people in the organization improve the organization's effectiveness. In general, the objective of strategies and systems is to increase the level of cooperation, teamwork, and performance throughout the organization. There are basically five types of organizational improvement strategies that can be used: organizational development or simply OD, learning organizations, reengineering, total quality management and kaisen. OD and reengineering are the two strategies we will consider in this study. OD can be defined as the systematic application of behavioral science to planned change to improve individual development and organizational effectiveness.

OD encompasses several concepts. It directly connects and supports an organization's vision and mission through the continuous identification,

allocation, and development of resources in ways that make these resources more available to the mission of the organization. In seeking to improve the organization's ability to cope with change it also introduces planned change usually in the medium and long terms based on the diagnosis shared by members of the organization specifically those concerned with the problem.

There are basically three levels of OD intervention: individual, group and institutional. At the individual level, the intervention is aimed at nurturing the employees' capacities and empowering them. It likewise seeks to motivate individuals to help themselves. Examples of interventions at this level include coaching, counseling, and education and training.

Group level intervention is geared towards improving interpersonal and group processes. It helps work groups learn to diagnose and solve their own problems. Thus, it basically enhances problem-solving and decision-making skills, feedback and listening skills, among others. Examples of interventions at this level are quality circles and team-building workshops.

Institutional level intervention intends to help organizations identify problems and opportunities. It seeks to check the overall health of the organization and intends to look into the processes and systems to see if these could be redesigned to improve by and large the performance of everyone. Examples of intervention at this level are surveys and feedback, organizational structuring and job design.

Reengineering is another organizational improvement strategy that fundamentally involves rethinking and redesigning business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical contemporary measures of performance such as cost, quality, service, and speed.

The desired outcomes and deliverables of reengineering are customer satisfaction, higher productivity, quality products and services, efficiency, effectiveness, job satisfaction and high morale among employees, and reduced cost. This type of organizational improvement strategy develops a culture of change because it encourages a continuous cycle of improvement.

The framework of corporate organizational improvement strategies has been widely used by the primary case work organization to achieve its

long term goals. The concepts involved in these strategies will provide a clearer understanding why the school vigorously undertook changes using these steps.

Research Design

A two-part case design was employed in this study. The first part presents an in-depth analysis of two academic institutions focused on (a) their *workplace restructuring efforts and how they affect the work-life* balance of employees; and (b) work-life balance initiatives being implemented as a result of the efforts of the employer or as a consequence of employees' demands/action. The second part demonstrates an inquiry of 33 women employees of the primary work organization on their actual work-life and personal life situations vis-à-vis organizational development interventions and work-life balance programs of the school. (What are we trying to come up here? Can we please rephrase this in simple terms).

Assumptions

1. Organizational restructuring resulting to any movement of the workforce inevitably will affect not only the conditions at work of women employees but life outside of the workplace. Without appropriate consideration of vital factors necessary to achieve a relative balance in integrating work and life roles and needs of women employees, structural and job design reconfigurations such as OD interventions will produce negative results to both the organization and women employees.

2. Aside from the financial scorecard and the traditional staffing process of job matching and designating, this study posits that any organizational improvement strategy must consider the gender implications of introducing change to the organization particularly in a workplace where women comprise the dominant majority.

3. One highly valuable indicator of a balanced work-life for women employees in academic institutions is growth in terms of skills, knowledge, values and total well-being.

4. Work-life initiatives either by the employer or the union are not introduced consciously or intended to address work-life balance. Most of these benefits are provided in compliance to legal requirements; while a few are introduced to keep up with organizational best practices.

5. Work-life initiatives, specifically in academic institutions, are most effective when real life situations of employees are taken into consideration through an in-depth examination of the circumstances of their work and personal lives. Programs on work-life balance must, therefore, emanate from the varying needs of employees through a consultative and participatory process (bottom up) instead of being a pure management prerogative (top down process).

Profile of respondents

Table 1. General Comparison of College A and College B

	College A	College B
General description	Catholic school for girls and young women except in the pre-school, graduate school and adult education unit where male students are accepted	Catholic school that is co-educational in the high school and exclusive in the tertiary level*
History	Established in 1926 by religious sisters of New York upon the request of Fr. Michael J. O'Doherty, then Archbishop of Manila; initially put up a teacher training school in Malabon	Established in 1913 by German religious sisters upon the invitation of then Archbishop of Manila, Fr. Jeremias Harty; started as a primary school
Founders	Mary Josephine (Mollie) Rogers or Mother Mary Joseph (MMJ) from Massachusetts, USA.	Fr. Arnold Jannsen, SVD; Helena Stollenwerk known as Mother Maria; and Hendrina Stenmanns known as Mother Josepha; all German nationals
Administration	Managed and operated by a foundation headed by a lay President and administrators in the President's Council	Managed and operated by a religious congregation headed by a President who is a nun together with three other nuns, a religious brother, and one lay administrator in the President Council
Population Students Employees	8,818 804 (9%)	992 183 (18%)
Programs Offered	Offers pre-school, grade school, high school, college with graduate program, adult education (outreach), and a school for the deaf	Offers high school and undergraduate degree programs
Accreditation	CHED Autonomous status PAASCU accredited	CHED Autonomous status PAASCU accredited

*College B turned co-educational in the college level beginning SY 2008-09.

Table 2. College A and College B Comparative Table of Employee Benefits

Employee Benefits	College A	College B
Primary Benefits Leave entitlements	Vacation and sick leaves, maternity, paternity, solo parents, emergency, force majeure, children school needs, professional/study	Vacation and sick leaves, maternity, paternity, solo parents, emergency, force majeure, study or sabbatical leaves
Health Retirement Dependent Educational Scholarship	Health Card CEAP Retirement Plan 60% discount on tuition for children of permanent employees regardless of number	In house health benefits CEAP Retirement Plan 100% for first child, 75% for second child, 50% for third child for regular employees; 30% discount for part time employees
Others	Day Care services with minimal fee	
Employee Relations	Christmas party, summer outing, quarterly birthday celebrations, annual employees day	Christmas party, annual excursion
Wellness Benefits	Series of talks on wellness, employee clubs, recollections, counseling, financial management program	Recollection/retreat
Corporate Citizenship	Service award, teambuilding, tribute to retirees, quarterly dialogue (Kapihan)	Family Day, Founders' Day, Appreciation Day, Merit Award, focus group discussions on burning issues of the day
Training & Development	Educational assistance program, competency-based learning session, lunch and learn	Study grants, On-the-job training, occasional seminars on communication skills and alternative livelihood

Table 3. Individual Employee Respondent Profile

Demographics	ASG	Professional	Faculty
Average Age	42	35	42
and Age Range	32 – 63	30 – 42	30 – 62
Average Length of Service and Range	15; 4 – 40	5; 2-13	14; 4-25
Marital or domestic status			
Single	0	7	1
Married	13	3	7
Separated	0	1	1
Number of Dependents	1-3	1-3	1-5
Educational Attainment			
BS/BA only	9	0	1
MA units	3	10	2
MA/MS/MBA	1	1	4
PhD units			1
PhD			1
With Relevant Training	10 (78%)	9 (82%)	9 (100%)

Summary of Results of Interviews

a. The organizational restructuring of College A resulted to the movement of its women employees which negatively affected them because of the neglect of women employees' work-life conditions, domestic life and socialization needs. Work responsibilities were expanded beyond practical proportion which made them heavy and difficult to accomplish. As a consequence, stress was experienced which led to the decrease in the levels of commitment and job satisfaction of the respondents compared to previous earlier employment years. Time constraints in performing family responsibilities added more stress to them. The pursuit of personal interests and recreational activities with friends likewise decreased.

b. Clearly, consciousness to come up with an engendered framework in introducing organizational development interventions and reengineering is absent. The general treatment of employees, whether male or female, indicates that no analysis on the implication of change management to women employees was brought forward and that, consequently, support systems for women who were disadvantaged by the improvement strategies were not established. The de facto perception that work-life balance

programs are geared toward women since most employees are women did not provide remedy to the specific areas where they experienced difficulty and role conflicts. In the words of one of the respondents, *"implicitly some issues were addressed but several remain unresolved."*

c. Generally, employees of College A are qualified individuals in terms of academic background and training. With the school's training and development program, they are able to acquire small amounts of knowledge, skills and attitude relevant to their actual work. However, an observation on the employees' profile shows that most of the professionals have not finished their graduate degrees. Upon further investigation on this observation, most respondents admitted that their work hours demand a lot more time from them which left them no choice but to sacrifice finishing their master's on time or not finishing it at all.

Findings

The main findings of the study are the following:

1. Both organizations provide work-life balance initiatives albeit these were not consciously directed to address work-life balance needs. The following are found to be within the purview of WLB initiatives: (1) general employee benefits; (2) those related to employee relations; (3) wellness programs; (4) those related to corporate citizenship; and (5) training and skills development.

College A offers more training and wellness programs while College B offers higher scholarship privileges to its employees.

2. Though not consciously intended to address women's issues and concerns in their work-life situations, the non-academic personnel's union of College A has initiated several work-life balance programs as follows:

a. Employee Day Care Center

b. Proposed certain trainings for skills development

c. Pushed for the support systems for retirees such as counseling, seminars on financial management, and the establishment of the retirees association.

d. Specific wellness programs

e. Initiated an outreach program in collaboration with the 'advocacy center

f. Yearly outing and Christmas party for the rank-and-file employees

g. Housing loan assistance

h. Increases in tuition discounts for daughters studying in the school and educational assistance for children of employees studying in other schools

i. Birthday leave for the rank-and-file

3. Employees of College A generally perceive the work-life balance programs of the school as effective particularly its Wellness Center but negate its actual use value due to limited opportunities for employees to visit the facility. Too much work constrains employees to find time to enjoy the effectiveness of the center which defeats the purpose of such a facility. This observation leads to the fact that despite having excellent work-life programs, it is imperative to first identify the specific needs of every employee and her concrete work situation in order to appropriately design realistic benefits that respond and remedy critical areas of work and life imbalances.

4. Attempts at gathering feedback and monitoring the effects of College A's efforts at work-life balance remain to be an area for improvement. The school's HRD admits in a report during its midterm strategic plan review workshop in May 2008 that mechanisms have yet to be established to get feedback from employees and measure the effectiveness of a specific wellness benefit. Due to the absence of this mechanism, it is difficult to measure the effects of the school's work-life balance programs to the firm and employees' performance.

Implications

Work-life initiatives, specifically in academic institutions, are most effective when real life situations of employees are taken into consideration through an in-depth examination of the circumstances of their work and personal lives. Programs on work-life balance must thus emanate from the varying needs of employees through a consultative and participatory

process (bottom up) rather than a prerogative exclusive to management (top down process).

Our findings stress the need to take into consideration the following issues and concerns affecting women employees when instituting organizational improvement strategies:

a. Care responsibilities

Most, if not all, women employees of College A have household responsibilities based on varying domestic circumstances. Taking care of the children is the top priority among mothers. Due to the clannish culture of Filipinos, elderly care also requires adult sons and daughters to look after their parents in their senior years. More often than not, it is the daughters who are given this responsibility. Recognition of the care responsibilities of women employees will help managers design their workload and working time in such a way as to enable them to fulfill both duties in the workplace and home without sacrificing their own personal welfare.

b. Work history

A woman's work history is another important element to consider before implementing organizational improvement strategies particularly the movement of the workforce in the structure. A conscious examination of a woman's career growth is essential in job evaluation and redesign. Gender empowerment is providing access and opportunities for women in the corporate ladder and ensuring that she is growing professionally in the organization. Respondents in their mid 30s and 40s experienced stunted growth in their work by doing the same type of job and having the same pay grade for the past ten years or so.

c. Knowledge, skills and attitudes

In relation to work history, it is also important to consider the capacities and capabilities of women employees, vis-à-vis the workload that will be assigned to them. It is imperative for management to conduct consultations to determine their suitability and approval to organizational movement. Likewise, appropriate training and skills development program adequate to their needs and responsive in filling gaps in their competencies for the new job must be designed. Opportunities for lifelong learning to women

employees from different age groups can also create an empowering culture.

d. Socialization and community involvement

The tendency of women employees to participate in socialization activities and community involvement decreases when work responsibilities escalate. Interaction with other people beyond business and family relations is an essential aspect in an individual's social needs. Leisure and other pursuits must thus be recognized by management as a legitimate factor to consider in creating a supportive work-life culture.

Conclusion

In this paper, we laid out the idea that in work organizations—specifically academic institutions—work-life balance issues are neither consciously nor by design recognized as an effective tool in organizational improvement. WLB programs in both schools represent the whole package of benefits provided to employees and not as an HR intervention intentionally directed at arresting problematic issues affecting women employees due to conflicts between work and domestic responsibilities.

A relevant conclusion points to the significant role of the organization's leadership in effecting substantial ground on WLB issues. Organizational work culture, after all, is largely a product of management styles adopted by its key officers. Work ethics and relationships are developed based on policies relevant to work goals and how they can be achieved. Work systems, processes and procedures define the parameters of the actions of employees. As such, a traditional and conservative administration tends to cling on to established norms while progressive and dynamic leaders continuously seek for innovative and new ideas to develop the organization.

Lastly, this study concludes that engendering organizational improvement strategies is not impossible. Using a gender-lens, it is feasible and sound to design changes in the organization that are distinctly friendly to women as well as to men based on their needs and actual professional and personal circumstances. For work organizations employing an overwhelming majority of one type of gender, it is crucial to take into consideration gender roles as a major factor in managing tasks as well as people.

Recommendations

1. School Administration

College A can manage and implement the necessary changes in the organization to reflect the needs of its clientele and maintain a motivated and productive workforce by considering the following elements in designing its work-life balance program:

1. Communication – There is a big difference between listening and hearing. It is not enough for managers to know the problems of the employees but to be able to understand them. First, management should communicate to employees its commitment to work-life balance. This should not be a problem for College A because it recognizes work-life balance and implements actual programs. Second, a mechanism for employees to get through to management and vice-versa must be established. This should be accessible to all employees. Third, a system of soliciting the real sentiments of employees through non-antagonistic approaches should be in place. And lastly, there is need to document all communications and confirm them with the other party to make them official. The best way to deal with employee grievance is to address the issues right away.

2. Knowledge and Modeling – It is very important for employees to be informed of the changes taking place and of future plans. It is pertinent that employees are assured that their welfare is an utmost consideration amidst the changes. Employees should likewise be aware of the different options available to them and have the freedom to take what is most advantageous. Top management should encourage managers and supervisors to be sensitive to an employee's family and personal concerns. Transparency is the operative word in this element.

3. Participation – This highlights management and employees' joint responsibility to discuss workable solutions to the problems confronting both the school and employees. Recognition of the partnership between employees and their supervisors must be encouraged to lessen the hierarchical relation between boss and staff. This element of participation basically aims for the empowerment of employees.

4. Planning and Goal Setting – Employees must be aware of the organization's plans and future endeavors and identify with its targets

and goals, convinced of the objectives and their viability. In doing so, it is essential for management to combat the causes of stress at work using pragmatic work-life initiatives that respond to needs which are not met.

5. Recognition – Full recognition and affirmation of individual achievements is necessary. Management should reward employees accordingly, not just for accomplishing a task, but for doing it right. College A should do more on professionalizing its work culture while maintaining an egalitarian community. Likewise, it should be supportive of employees who want to switch to less demanding positions or jobs for family reasons without getting the feeling that one's career progress will be seriously hurt or the need to resign from work. This is supportive of a culture that does not penalize women for caring for their family. A clear delineation of where work stops and home life begins should be conveyed as a clear message that the school is concerned about the employee's family responsibilities.

With the above mentioned prescriptions to a supportive work-life balance culture, employees will easily be able to adapt and accept the constant changes needed by the organization in order to be responsive to the demands of the market.

B. To the Union and Employees

The Union of Non-Academic Personal (UNAP) of College A should take on a more active role in crafting an engendered work-life balance program for employees. It must go beyond the traditional labor union where relations with management are perceived as antagonistic. Issues and concerns affecting work and the domestic life of members, who are mostly women, should get more interest and attention in the affairs of the union. The officers of the union should not set aside work-life balance issues as management-initiated prerogatives because women comprise the majority of employees and, hence, are largely to benefit from the gains of the union. Though some existing benefits supportive of women's work-life balance were initiated by the union, there is still plenty of room for improvement.

Heavy workload and incidence of conflict are two issues commonly observed among professional employees. For some, benefits and entitlements are not so clear. There is need, therefore, to clarify ambiguous provisions on terms of employment. It is also imperative to

provide a mechanism for seeking remedy when aggrieved. Management may initially experience difficulty in handling professional employees. However, these glitches should not be at the expense of the employees.

Faculty associations in each academic unit particularly in the basic units are also encouraged to include work-life balance issues in their agendas, including training or workers' education programs that will orient their members on the what, why and how of WLB.

C. Government

The omnibus amendment of the Labor Code is imperative. Several initiatives to revise labor laws have been endeavored in the past by employer and labor groups as well as legislators in both Houses of Congress. These attempts at strengthening and updating labor regulations were always an uphill climb because of oppositions mainly from businessmen and the Executive Branch. Major provisions of the Code have been blatantly violated but without relief for the aggrieved party, the workers. This makes it an inutile law under the global economic conditions.

The concept of work-life balance should be included under the scope of labor laws. This is one concrete step for the government to abate the impact of labor flexibility or contractual employment and the economic crisis on the plight of workers especially women. In lieu of security of tenure which is admittedly becoming less popular in business establishments and acceptable to certain groups of workers, flexible work conditions shall cover adjustable and adaptable working hours and tailor-fit benefits for employees. Standard minimum benefits must be expanded in scope to cover temporary, fixed-term or project based employees to protect them from discrimination. Despite being technically qualified of statutory benefits, it is common practice for business establishments to exclude non-regular employees from these benefits.

Aside from the Labor Code, academic institutions are guided by other laws regulating the employment terms of teachers. The most contentious legal provision for teachers is the length of their probationary employment period. Most faculty members find this period too long to establish their competence in teaching. College A conducts an annual evaluation of both old and new teachers. This may serve as an alternative in qualifying new teachers for permanency in the school. Thus, a review of this regulation deserves merit.

Future Researches

Though the findings and recommendations of this research may be broad enough to be applicable to other sectors or industries, it remains a case study of an academic institution focusing on the effects of organizational improvement strategies to women employees work-life balance. This paper proposes that a study on the strategic actual cost benefit analysis of instituting work-life balance in schools and similar work organizations in the service industry such as coeducational universities and vocational-technical training centers be undertaken.

The scope of further research may be focused on the managerial employees or those occupying administrative positives. These employees are also much affected by the increasing demand of producing more for less ergo carrying the burden of work overload. Other variables may be used in measuring women's work-life balance such as role differentiation with male employees.

In line with cost-benefit analysis, improvement in research design can be undertaken. Thus, quantitative methods such as surveys can be utilized to include more organizational and worker respondents. Data gathering instruments and techniques that will capture appropriately the real work-life situation of workers and the dynamics of introducing or initiating work-life balance programs in the workplace may also be looked into. These measures will help validate or negate the suppositions posed in this research.

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