A Narrative Inquiry on the Motivational Drives and Support System of Faculty of the University of Makati in the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically transformed the education landscape into a disruptive panorama. With this sudden shift, the compelling urge for motivation is evident in order to remain strong, through the support system being provided by the University of Makati administration, and its faculty in this trying time. This paper treatise the motivational drives, and the best practices in the support system among selected faculty members from the 13 colleges of the University using descriptive-narrative, documentary analysis as research design. The following themes emerged from this study: Sources of strengths are from students, colleagues, and family members; constant communication is an indispensable avenue and an evident support system among participants, Learning Management System (LMS) has been developed and tailored-fit by the University's Information and Technology Center (ITC) to respond to the challenges in facilitating online learning; free-medicines, flu shot vaccines, and online consultations have been crafted by the University clinic to safeguard the health of faculty; and free-shuttle service has been provided for easier mode of transportation. Recommendations were made for the university administration to continue the motivational programs extended to the faculty, to conduct relevant trainings and seminars on mental health and psycho-social awareness for the holistic development of faculty, and students, colleagues, and family members have been significantly impacted as motivational drives and support systems for faculty, thus, constant communication with them improves relations.

Keywords: *COVID-19 pandemic, motivational drives, support system*

INTRODUCTION

A support system, its ideas and best practices combined, once assimilated into one's habit as well as integrated into the organizational culture, could provide favorable impact among faculty specifically on their wellness which could be gleaned from their insights about services that they might or might not perceive to be aiding the university from many aspects. This is in consonance with the study of BJCEAP (2021) that the support system has positive benefits such as higher levels of well-being, better coping skills, longer, and healthier life.
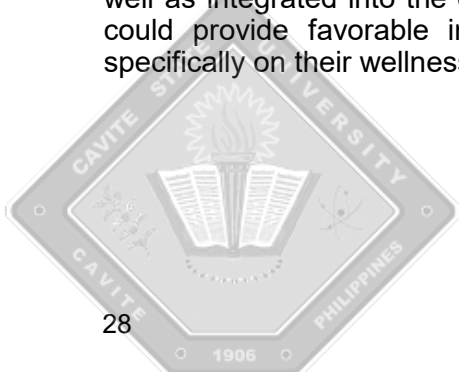
In addition, a support system can help an individual handle difficult situations, find needed resources, and get motivated (Herzing University, 2021).

One of the roles of an educator is to motivate students. Johnson (2017) claimed that encouraging support of students' autonomy, relevance, and relatedness of the materials increases motivation to learn. Likewise, teacher motivation is also vital, since it is closely linked with students' motivation, and teachers who are motivated trigger students' motivation to learn (Kneschke and Shutterstock, 2020), while futurity.org (2018) added that support system trains teachers to better manage students. However, with the global health concern, educators will have to find ways in order to stay motivated as well. Poysa et al. (2021) mentioned that teachers were identified having the highest levels of stress specifically on work engagement, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. With this, the teaching and learning process alone could benefit from an academic institution with much sturdier services offered to its faculty through its support system. The former being the most significant role any institution of higher learning could devise and offer to its clients of diverse socio-economic backgrounds as a result of students' aspirations to become skilled for employment.

Support system of an academe such as that from the University of Makati could offer features that have been ascertained, designed, and appraised in order to determine its impact into every aspect of the teaching services of faculty particularly on three most important aspects of their professional behavior such as achieve personal and work goals of educators primarily positive work values or traits, and even encouragement offered by colleagues, students and the school management which all must have contributed to an empowering network of which practices could be consistently practiced decisively. A purposeful network of backing every teaching endeavors from various academic institutions translates into having faculty who would become more aware about their motivational drives like maximizing their teaching potentials and skills as well as nurturing their positive traits.

In this trying time, the support system in the educational arena should be enhanced and modified if necessary. Meredith University (2021) enumerated the descriptions of a strong college support system and these include personalized academic advising, strong career planning, numerous mentorship programs, involvement in different organizations, supportive disability services, student counseling services, visible and sound student learning center or peer mentoring, and supportive and engaging faculty members. On the other hand, University of Makati (UMak) and its faculty, by common notion, have the backing of the local government of Makati City in terms of infrastructure and budget. Santos (2018) added that the City-run University had been allotted with 3.3 billion pesos in 2020 which included 60.36 million pesos for its Students Development Program, 24.3 pesos for Student Resource Enhancement Program, 6.7 million pesos for Information and Technology (IT) projects, and 2.97 million pesos for the Makati City Training Placement and Livelihood Consortia.

Support systems, as well as motivational drives, are two (2) key components that allow educators to stay with the right synergy and momentum to carry out their roles as orchestrators of learning, being a good provider for his/her family, and a premise of his/her colleagues. It is for this reason that organizations have been devising a support system which enriches and increases employees' self-worth, and most importantly, not compromising the health among its key players. Therefore, the management should aspire to come up with developmental programs advancing personal and professional capabilities of every member of its team in order to combat adverse influences of social and economic decline. This is for every teaching personnel to

adapt successfully to a lifestyle that would equip professionals becoming an asset sans being a liability to the academe as a research-driven system. It might be accepted that one of the best actions one could achieve best results from a support system would be to motivate the self, however, no less than the National Council for Mental Well-being in the United States has strongly conjectured that any forms of help should not always come from one's initiative but also from others. It has been a wrong perspective that a support system could "problem-proof" people and organizations, rather, the practical and strategic application of its best practices and the additional suggestions for its improvement could bring much-needed reforms even if a dire or life-threatening situation like a pandemic had long gone.

Statement of the Problem

This study is a narrative inquiry on the motivational drives and the best practices in the support system among selected faculty members in the University of Makati (UMak) in the time of pandemic. It endeavoured to answer the following questions:

1. How do selected faculty members describe their motivational drives and best practices in the support system during the pandemic?
2. What insights maybe drawn from the participants' narrations?

Theoretical Framework

This study was chiefly anchored on the principles started by Frederick Herzberg through his Motivational Theory. Thus, the study simply re-interpreted it to three significant processes. First is as an exploratory process that inquiries into the needs of employees that would form several features and practices for the support system of a university. Second would be the developmental process in which the features of the support system for employees of a university should be formulated, implemented, and monitored by the

academic institution, thus, there be must be data-gathering tools made available or adapted that would retrieve valuable information that would help employees grow professionally and contributing significant decisions for the organization. Last is as an organization through its support system must evaluate the prospect of these organizational practices as strategies for them to improve and even innovate on their organizational tasks that would lead to very favorable outcomes (Watkins, Meiers & Visser, 2012). As an organization, its management must be able to welcome ideas, opinions and even suggestions when these matters need to be evaluated and addressed, translating into harmonious work relations and better services for customers (Alfayad & Arif, 2017). It acts as one of the valuable components of a support system that is based on identified needs once these are dealt with efficiently and emphasized Herzberg's Motivational Model which explored several factors influencing employment satisfaction among workers particularly to teaching personnel (Virender, 2017).

This would also be across careers like medical professionals (Alrawahi, Sellgre, Altouby, Alwahaibi & Brommels, 2020), and even hotel employees (Atan, Ozgit, & Zilman, 2021), thus, a support system and the management that has devised or that would be formulating its features should be able to scaffold into its framework the enterprise practices which would identify motivating factors influencing job performance (Koziol & Koziol, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

This study made use of qualitative research and considered narrative inquiry. As mentioned by Deakin University (2021), it is a descriptive-qualitative approach where it reveals unique perspectives and deeper understanding of a situation. Likewise, these "experiences" have to be recorded and chronologically ordered. These "experiences" refer to the motivational drives and best practices in the support system among 13
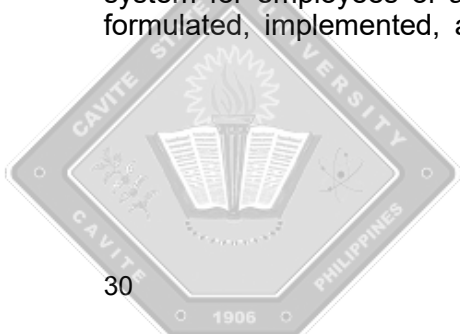
faculty members from the different colleges of the University of Makati (UMak) in the time of pandemic. The minimum requirements for the participants were as follows: casual and regular faculty members who have been in service in the University for more than three years, and had been deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the researchers formulated interview guide questions and underwent face validation from three qualified validators, namely: two university professors and a human resources expert. After the content validation, pilot interviews were conducted among faculty members in Taguig City University, who were not participants of the study. In addition, data generation was utilized using online platforms. Participants were given online meeting rooms and interviews were given 1 to 1 hours to finish. A voice and video recorder was used with the permission from the participants. Follow-up virtual interviews were also scheduled for further clarifications.

Several phases were considered in the data analysis. Colorado State University (CSU, 2021) cited that apart from identifying the phenomenon, choosing the participants, and collecting the data through interviews, "restorying" or re-telling, or the descriptive narrations of the participants' stories, where raw data are being examined. In addition, collaboration means working with the participants to make sure that the answers were accurately portrayed. Highlighting themes based on the narrations and validating the accuracy followed. Ethical considerations were also observed where informed consent containing the nature, restrictions, and freedom to withdraw, if necessary, and recording of the conversations, were discussed. In addition, purposive sampling was considered in the conduct of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Motivational Drives and Best Practices in Support System During Pandemic

Sources of strengths are from students, **colleagues, and family members.**

Participants' accounts had clear manifestations that in this most trying time, people whom they are close with were the sources of strengths and motivations. Faculty members have been surrounded with caring and loving students, colleagues who have uplifted their spirits, and family members, who have earnestly cheered them up when they were hopeless. All of which had provided the participants with a strong belief system. All of the participants mentioned that their source of strengths include students, colleagues, and family members. This finding supported the study of Sumer and Yuner (2020) where they concluded that peer support can be seen as the most prominent type of support in the emergency remote teaching.

Constant communication has been an indispensable avenue and an evident support system among participants.

COVID-19 pandemic has caused isolation among participants physically, and it had prevented them from seeing students and co-employees, however, with the use of technology nowadays such as short messaging services and other social media platforms, it had created a medium for exchanging thoughts and giving comfort to each other. Ten out 13 participants added that social media platforms have been helpful to communicate with other people. This finding when compared to that of Goodman-Deane et al. (2021) has conjectured that richer communication methods such as non-verbal cues, face to face, and phone and video calls were positively associated with both over-all satisfaction with life and relationships.

Learning management system (LMS) has been developed and tailored-fit by the University's Information and Technology Center (ITC) to respond to the challenges of participants in facilitating online learning.

Because of the onset of the pandemic caused by

the spread of a novel coronavirus in March 2020, participants felt that the traditional classroom would be shifted to digital learning. As resourceful as they could be, they engaged with different available platforms. Nevertheless, Technology-Based Learning (TBL) was introduced among participants, learning delivery was way easier, and a series of webinars was devoted to the new LMS to get familiarized with, an empirical evidence paralleling the study of Pons et al. (2012) where five (5) latent variables defined teachers' wellbeing related to innovative practices in ICT, and these include: values and projects, motivation, competencies, satisfaction, and emotion.

Free-medicines, flu shot vaccines, and online consultations have been crafted by the University clinic to safeguard the health of faculty in this global health crisis.

Participants agreed that health was their primary concern, thus, one way to combat the dreadful virus was to make their immune system stronger. The University clinic has been a dedicated office in assuring that online consultations are done weekly, and free-medicines are distributed. This finding corroborates that of Bukhari et al. (2021) consequentially where factors in the school work environment such as administrative support, working conditions, interpersonal interactions, promotion, co-workers' support, and compensation influenced if not led to increased teacher motivation.

Free-shuttle service has been provided by the University for easier mode of transportation.

Since mobility was disrupted due to the pandemic, the University Management Committee had initiated hassle-free, and identified areas for pick-ups and drop offs for faculty members who had special appointments during the quarantine periods as the university management, like any managing organization or team, must have realized the difficulties if not "harrowing" effect of the mass transit setup on the lives of citizens living around the National

Capital Region specifically its southern district composed of six highly urbanized cities and a municipality as work performance could be adversely affected by stressful or unfavorable public transport triggering feelings of anxiety (Gobind, 2018).
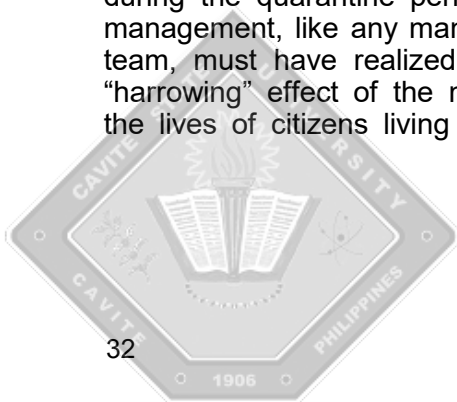
B. Insights on the Narratives of Selected Participants

After careful analysis on the accounts provided by the participants, the researchers highlighted the following reflections and insights:

The faculty support network at the University of Makati (UMak) has shown to be a potent defense against the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. Participants' morale was raised and they felt valued because of the support system provided by the continual communication from students, colleagues, and family members. The creation of a learning management system (LMS), providing faculty members with free medication and consultations, and providing free transportation were examples of the university's intrinsic incentives, which all have somewhat favorable effect on the teaching endeavors of the selected participants.

C. Implication to the Practices of Human Resources Management

Participants' narratives have created implications to the practice of human resources management. These necessitated the intensification of discussing the mental health and psychosocial well-being among faculty members in relation to the provisions of Republic Act No. 11036, under Sections 23-26 (lawphil.net, 2021). This is to guarantee the mental health of the professors. Second is the intensification of the support system and motivational drives provided to the faculty members by the University of Makati (UMak) administration. This is done to raise everyone's spirits at work.

A Narrative Inquiry on the Motivational Drives and Supports
System of Faculty of the University of Makati in the Time of
COVID-19 Pandemic

Conceptual Paradigm on the Motivational Drives In the Support System for the Faculty

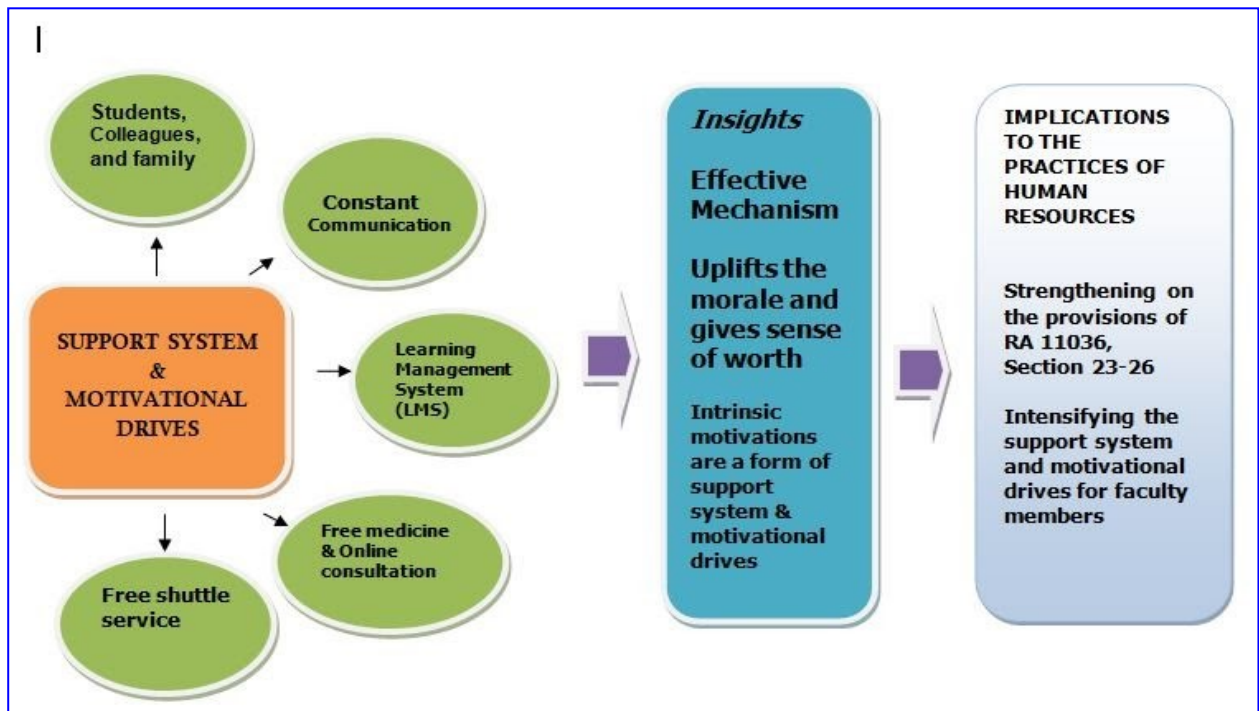**in the time of Pandemic**

Figure 1. Conceptual Paradigm

Participants' accounts provide the intervening variables as discussed in the Conceptual Paradigm. The support system and motivational drives among UMak faculty members have dominant themes as represented in circles. These themes defined the subject of the study such as the encouragement that they are getting from students, colleagues, and family members, constant communication, the development of Learning Management System (LMS), free medicine and online consultation, and free shuttle service. The insights from the study which include support system and motivational drives as effective mechanism, uplifts the morale and gives sense of worth, and the intrinsic motivations in the form of free medicine and online consultation, development of LMS, and free shuttle services among faculty members reflect its implication to the practices of human resources management such as strengthening the provisions of RA 11036, Section 23 to 26, or the Mental Health Act, and intensifying the support system and motivational drives among UMak faculty members.

Insights

Based on the findings generated from this study, the researchers came up with the following insights: In this hard time of the COVID-19 Pandemic, motivational drives and support networks are a crucial part of faculty members' mental health and psychosocial wellness. The creation of a learning management system (LMS), the provision of free medicine and consultations, and the provision of free shuttle services

are examples of the motivational tools and support systems offered to faculty members by the UMak administration. It is advised to spend and extend more quality time with them because constant communication with students, collegues, and even family members, gives participants self-worth and a strong self-belief system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following are hereby recommended in the intensification and improvement of motivation drives and support system for UMak faculty members:

The accounts of the participants show how appreciative they are of the management's strategies for providing them with incentive and support. It is advised that the UMak administration could keep the faculty-focused motivational initiatives.

Human Management Resources Management Office (HRMO) of UMak could give necessary training and seminars focusing on mental health and psycho-social awareness for the faculty's overall growth as these concerns have been affected by the pandemic inimically.

Based on the participant's narratives, students, coworkers, and family members have a big impact on faculty motivation and support systems. As a result, regular communication with them would enhance professional relationships in the workplace.

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