

GOVERNMENT WOMEN EXECUTIVES IN THE CENTRAL PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

The research study is a case analysis on women executives in the different government organizations in the province of Siquijor, Central Visayas, Philippines. Specifically, it elaborated on the personal, professional, and family background of the women executives, their successes and failures, and the facilitating factors and characteristics that led to their success. The research is a qualitative descriptive research using the case study method. In this type of research, the data were gathered through observations, questionnaires, and interviews and focused group discussion. A narrative was developed, integrated, and summarized focusing on issues and concerns about the women respondents. The subjects of the study were the six women executives and administrators in the six government offices or agencies in the province of Siquijor. The researcher personally identified these women respondents whose success stories gave inspirations to many women in the community. The researcher employed the use of questionnaire, interview schedule, focused interview with the aid of a recorder, observations to document life histories of the respondents, and focused-group discussion. The study revealed that 83% or five out of six respondents are married having one to four children. It also showed that 60% or four out of six respondents are second-born children coming from small families and all of them are licensed professionals and passers of government examinations. Furthermore, the study revealed that the women's self-concept and perception evolved from the various positive and negative personal and professional experiences. All of them showed a positive self-concept despite frustrating and humiliating episodes at some point in their lives. All the women executives share similar facilitating factors and characteristics such as intelligence, hard work, patience, honesty, and faith in God and possess positive personal qualities and attitudes which are vital driving forces which led them to be successful in life.

Keywords: Leadership, Public administration, Gender study.

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INTRODUCTION

The government of the Republic of the Philippines recognizes the essence of democracy that is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. In this context, men and women are expected to be treated equal in whatever opportunities available to them. The 1987 Philippine Constitution Article II, sec. 4 adheres to this principle as stated that "the State shall recognize the role of women in nation building and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men" (The 1987 Philippine Constitution).

History teaches that women in the past were regarded as inferior beings and second-class citizens. They were taught to view themselves primarily in terms of familial relationships, especially as wives and mothers rather than as workers. Women were socialized to be docile and obedient to authority and were taught to work only within the confines of the home. They were marginalized and regarded as commodities of lesser cost (Nikolaou, 2017).

The ranks of women who are making their work in the front lines have swelled in recent years. Examples of these are media star Oprah Winfrey, HP Chief Executive Carly Fiorina, eBay Inc CEO Margaret Whitman etc. These women have managed to get to the top and have proven in their chosen field of work despite the "glass-ceiling" experience. Despite modest improvements, women remain underrepresented at every level of the corporate pipeline, academe, and politics (Akpınar-Sposito, 2013). In fact, the Global Gender Gap Report estimates that it will be another 217 years before gender parity can be achieved in the world (Duke, 2017; Silverstone, 2019; WEF, 2017).

Women leadership in the national and local level in the Philippines is not a rare case in the Philippines. Although in the past, women in Siquijor were confined in the home, they took important roles such as taking care of the children and assisting their husbands who worked for the family's income. Some women were "hilots" or "mananabang" or

rural midwives. Some women who managed to get a college degree have become teachers or worked in the government agencies in the province, although only few have become executives, much more political leaders in the community.

At present, more and more women have become professionals. They are working in the various government organizations in the province. Many of them are working abroad and have migrated to foreign countries. There are already a number who have entered into politics and become executives in their own right.

The researcher believes in the principle that the Filipino woman can be a dynamic force in nation-building and can truly become a partner in progress. It is on this note that the researcher, being a native of Siquijor, felt that there is a need to investigate and conduct a gender analysis on some women executives in the province, taking into account their personal, professional, and family background, the facilitating qualities and factors that led to their success and the forms of subordination and discriminations experienced by these women executives.

METHODS

This research study is a qualitative and descriptive research using case study method. A case study is a detailed study of a single or group of individual's behavior. The data were gathered through observations, questionnaires, interviews, and focused group discussion. The subjects of the study were the six women executives and administrators in the six government offices or agencies in the province of Siquijor. The researcher personally identified these women respondents whose success stories gave inspirations to most women in the area. The researcher personally identified and sent letters to the six women respondents. An informed consent document was given to each executive and proper ethics protocol was observed in the data gathering procedure. Responses on the interview were recorded and documented through the aid of a tape recorder. After which responses

were analyzed and coded through the aid of an expert. The researcher also employed the use of questionnaire for the needed research data; personal, professional and family background, successes and failures, and facilitating factors and characteristics that led to their success.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal, professional, and family background of the women executives

The study revealed that 83% or five out of six respondents are married having only one to four children. These particular data signify that despite the dual role and the time conflict of managing the family and work, having fewer children gave them more time to travel, attend trainings and pursue graduate studies compared to married women having many children. All the women executives attained the highest position when their children were already grown-up and responsible enough to be left at home with the guidance of house helpers and other family members. The difficulty of raising kids at the same time moving up in the professional ladder is really a struggle for most working women. In many countries, many women start to gravitate toward different jobs after the birth of a child, with fewer hours and lesser wages (Kiff, 2018; Rabia, 2019).

The study showed that 60% or four out of six respondents are second-born children. This result gave a positive tone on the theory of Alfred Adler which favors second-born children than first and lastborn. Majority also of the women executives came from small families. Their families particularly their parents had enough time for their needs. However, two women executives are middle and lastborn children. The women respondents were all licensed professionals and passers of government examinations. They have at least 15–35 years of working experience in the government. Furthermore, they possessed adequate trainings and seminars making them more qualified and competent in their profession.

Filipinos place a high value on education. Earning a college degree is seen as the best means to move up the social ladder and achieve material prosperity. A lot of women are highly educated but these women do not enter the labor force for certain period of time because of conflict with housekeeping and childcare roles.

The six women identified significant others or persons influential to their success. Among these are the parents, relatives, and associates. This result concurs to the theory of Harry Stack Sullivan on “significant others.”

The research further revealed that the women’s self-concept and perception evolved from the various positive and negative personal and professional experiences. All of the women respondents showed a positive self-concept despite frustrating and humiliating episodes at some point in their lives.

Successes and failures

The study spelled out the successes and or failures of the women executives. About 80% or five out of six respondents disclosed failures in their lives. The women executives of Siquijor have more successes than failures. The successes of the women executives focused on their personal and professional lives specifically marriage, healthy relationship with spouse and children, career, and promotions in their field. The failures, however, focused on their personal experiences such as not having more children and not being able to finish graduate studies.

Today, women who work as middle or higher-salaried professionals, entrepreneurs, managers, or executives do so not for economic

survival but from a host of reasons: Self-fulfillment, the improvement of standards of living, and the maintenance of a specific standard of living or keeping the management of an enterprise or wealth within the family.

Facilitating factors and characteristics

The women executives identified various qualities and characteristics that helped them to be successful. All the women executives share similar facilitating factors and characteristics. These factors and characteristics are intelligence, hard work, commitment and dedication, patience, honesty, and faith in God. These factors prove that, indeed, the personal qualities and attitudes play an important role for a person’s success in life.

These particular results concur with the study of Wille *et al.* (2018) which enumerated some of the characteristics of a leader personality. Among these are assertiveness, high-level strategic thinking, and decisiveness.

More so, the study also shows that social status, culture, gender struggle, and difficulties are also motivators for women’s success (Al-Barghouthi, 2017, Vanderman-Winter, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The study which is an original and first of its kind case study in the province of Siquijor sheds light and information on how the women executives became successful in their chosen career. This case study proved the truthfulness and veracity of the various sociopsychological theories used by the researcher. Among these are the sociopsychological theories of Alfred Adler, Harry Stack Sullivan, Albert Bandura, and the gender schema theories of Sandra Bem and Carol Hymowitz. Results of the study showed positive tone and favored and reinforced the theories used in the study. Furthermore, the majority of the women executives share similar family backgrounds and personal characteristics and facilitating factors that help them reach their goals and ambitions in life and made them successful.

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