

Orbits of Empathy: Understanding as a Component of Humane-Driven Leadership

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ABSTRACT:

This phenomenological study was conducted to investigate deeply the meaning of empathy as it is lived and constituted in the awareness of a selected group of academic bureaucrats: the college chairs, deans and directors whom collectively demonstrate their school leadership practices, the orbits of empathy in terms of: empathic concern (caring), empathic perspective (focusing viewpoint), and emphatic feeling (interpersonal sensitivity) in the Romblon State University System in the Province of Romblon, Philippines. Additionally, the problems encountered by the respondents with their respective subordinates regarding empathy in maintaining smooth relationship and vibrant working environment within the college/campus. The value of empathy in the college/university leadership practice cannot be overrated. No educational leaders can recognize and appreciate the joy of human growth and development without empathy. In other words, empathy is imagining yourself in somebody else's skin: feeling what they feel and seeing yourself and the world from their point of view (Brandt, 2018). A semi-structured (Patton, 1990) and in-depth interview was conducted. Field texts were analyzed via a repertory grid. Through continual comparative analyses, an interesting set of conceptual categories were described notably the natural and humane side of an empathetic leader. Data categories have undergone extra analyses yielding themes and sub-themes that marked or captured the central phenomenon, which served as the core of this study. The respondents of this study were Five (5) Deans, Eight (8) Directors, and Twenty-Five (25) Chairpersons with a total of 38 respondents. This study had identified the school leadership practices of the academic bureaucrats on the orbits of empathy: Under empathic concern (caring) are: a) Magic Words, b) Considers Emotions and Preparedness, c) Worth Dialogue, d) Sincere Recognition, and e) Inspire and Influence People; In empathic perspective (focusing viewpoint): a) Open Communication, b) Creativity and Innovativeness, c) Fairness and Firmness, d) Highlights Collaboration, and e) Credibility; and in the emphatic feelings (interpersonal sensitivity): a) Understand

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and Respect Diversity, b) Avoid Marites, c) Self-Realization, d) Humility, and e) Maturity (Transcendent). Finally, based on the findings of this study, the humane-driven leadership framework was strategically formulated. Fascinatingly, this framework could possibly boost the educational leader's humaneness in influencing people, understanding differences, bring-out the full potential of each member, and be able to build a boom of solidarity in achieving the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the institution.

Keywords: Orbits of Empathy, Humane-Driven Leadership, and Academic Bureaucrats.

Introduction

As mandated by law, the overall governance of Higher Education Institutions is entrusted to the board of regents or trustees, and the university president as chief executive officer of the institution. In the next rank or middle management level are the academic deans/directors who act as heads of the faculties of their colleges or schools. As college deans or unit heads, they are expected to provide academic leadership in their college, provide administrative supervision over all activities in their college or unit and assist the president in all endeavors that relate to the general policies of the institution. Precisely, their duties include the supervision of curriculum and instruction; appointment, promotion, or separation of faculty members; allocation of teaching load to faculty members; and formulation of educational policies (CHED 2008).

It is critical for the Institution to appoint or designate and develop more effective managers and leaders capable of moving their unit forward both in good and tough times. It demands beyond traditional strategies for management development and cultivating the skills with utmost significance for success. One of the skills, maybe unexpectedly, is empathy – a dynamic leadership competency.

The value of empathy in the college/university leadership practice cannot be overrated. No educational leaders can recognize and appreciate the joy of human growth and development without empathy. In other words, empathy is imagining yourself in somebody else's skin:

feeling what they feel and seeing yourself and the world from their point of view (Brandt, 2018). As the character Atticus Finch says in Harpel Lee's novel, 'To Kill a Mockingbird.' "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you climb into his skin and walk around it."

Empathy is important to leadership for it helps a leader or a manager understands how others are feeling so that they could respond appropriately to the situation. It is typically associated with social behavior and there are lots of research showing that greater empathy leads to more helping behavior. The results provide insights into how people regulate their emotions. They also show the brain mechanisms typically implicated when harming others become less active when the violence against a particular group is seen as justified. This might provide future insights into how people become desensitized to violence or why some people become more or less guilty about harming others. Our empathetic brain has evolved to be highly adaptive to different types of situations. Having empathy is very useful as it often helps to understand others so we can help deceive them, but sometimes we need to be able to switch off our empathetic feelings to protect our own lives, and those of others. Empathy is important to leaders to understand the root cause behind poor performance. Being empathetic allows leaders to help struggling employees improve and excel. It allows leaders to build and develop relationship with those they lead (Molenberghs, 2017). Apostle Paul in the book of Galatians 5:14 & 15, for the whole Law is summed up in one

commandment: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." But if you act like wild animals, hurting and harming each other, then watch out, or you will completely destroy one another.

The word empathy is used in common conversation today; however, prior to the late 1950's it was seldom used at all (Freedberg, 2007). Its evolution can be traced back to the Greek word *empathia*, translated as "to suffer with" (Cunningham, 2009, p. 681). For the modern era a noted psychologist Carl Rogers in 1957 highlighted the word for the therapeutic community. Rogers defined empathy as a way "to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy, and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto, as if one were the other person, but without ever losing the 'as if' condition" (Hackney, 1978, p. 36). Truax and Carkhuff (1965), other early researchers of empathy, modified the definition slightly to "the skill which the therapist is able to know and communicate the client's inner being" (p. 5).

Empathy can also be seen in the language of philosophers and art critics and more recently in the medical field (Spiro, 1992). The field of education has similarly begun to see the importance of empathy in teaching its teachers. White (1999) outlined empathy and understanding of the students as one of the four "personal-social emotional feelings that impact teaching and what is learned in the classroom" (p. 122).

Directed by an empathetic heart, a humane-school leader deals with and converts subordinates with empathy. The extent to which a humane leader advances empathic concern depends in countless measure, on the ability to understand and feel the needs and concerns of the followers and address these issues through helpful activities and sound decisions. Through empathy, the leader who is emotionally attuned (Goleman, 1995) is able to outspread much consideration to people in the organization. Such is supported by reciprocal trust, understanding, admiration for, and support for someone's ideas

and appreciation to others feelings (Ferch, & Mitchel, 2001; Judge, Piccolo, & Illies, 2004).

Although, there were lots of researches conducted about empathy, there was no scientific research focusing on the topic, "ORBITS OF EMPATHY: Understanding as a Component of Humane-Driven Leadership." The studies reviewed showed the following variables of Campus Directors, Deans and Chairpersons' leadership practices such as, Empathic Concern (Caring); Empathic Perspective (Focusing Viewpoint); and Empathic Feeling (Interpersonal Sensitivity). This suggests a need to conduct a study on ORBITS OF EMPATHY: Understanding as a Component of Humane-Driven Leadership, as the gap of knowledge. Hence, the birth of this research.

Research Methods

The semi-structured (Patton 1990) and in-depth interviews with the respondents were employed (van Maanen, 1992, cited in de Guzman & Guillermo, 2007). The written consent was settled first (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Street, 1998). The IATF Standard Safety Protocols in attending the demands of this study were highly observed. The researchers let the respondents set the schedule for interviews. This procedure minimized their inconvenience and they expressed freely their thoughts. The interviews were accompanied with aide mémoire to enrich the interpretations of data. The researchers used the analog and digital recorders with the written consent of the respondents in order to have more accurate data transcription.

With the aid of a key insider (Holloway, 1997), the interviewers were able to identify the potential respondent(s) in the institution. The former introduced themselves to the respondents before the conversations took place, and also the nature and purpose of the investigation were explained well to them. With the semi-structured interview guide questions, the investigators explained the possible conversations that would take place and how they would occur. Listening skills of the interviewers were demonstrated, and the confidential nature of the dialogue was preserved. Thru these efforts the respondents'

openness to share their experiences with more freedom and details were enhanced (Viernes & de Guzman, 2005).

The investigators transcribed the recorded interview (Poland, 1995). Next, significant statements are subjected to warm analysis by examining text for similarities and differences from which categories are derived (Ryan and

Bernard, 2003). Data categories have undergone further analyses yielding themes and sub-themes that eidetically capture the central phenomenon, which served as the core of this study. The warm and cool analyses (de Guzman & Guillermo, 2007) were pursued via repertory grids for purposes of surfacing the heart of the phenomenon on empathy as a component of humane-driven leadership practice.

Select and Study Site

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondents of the Study.

School / Campus	Number of Chairpersons	Number of Deans	Number of Campus Directors	Total
1. RSU – Main Campus	3	3	0	6
2. RSU – San Andres Campus	1	0	1	2
3. RSU – Calatrava Campus	3	0	1	4
4. RSU – San Agustin Campus	3	0	1	4
5. RSU – Sta. Maria Campus	2	0	1	3
6. RSU – Sta. Fe Campus	2	0	1	3
7. RSU – Sawang Campus	4	0	1	5
8. RSU – San Fernando Campus	5	2	1	8
9. RSU – Cajidiocan Campus	2	0	1	3
Total	25	5	8	38

Given its emphasis for in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, data for qualitative research is drawn from purposefully selected, relatively small but ‘information-rich cases’ (Patton, 2002, p. 46). To identify and have access to these participants, the researchers have communicated and requested the full cooperation of the academic bureaucrats’ whom were considered ideal respondents for this study.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The researchers employed qualitative interviewing as the data collection approach. The semi-structured interview guide served as the prime data collection source. A copy was provided to participants that served as an aide memoire during the in-depth interview process. For the purposes of this study, the participants were asked the following questions: how do you collectively demonstrate in their school leadership practices the orbits of empathy in terms of: empathic concern (caring), empathic perspective (focusing viewpoint), and emphatic feeling (interpersonal sensitivity)? Could you please elaborate and share your most encountered problems regarding empathy with

their subordinates in the college/campus? And how do you create and sustain smooth and vibrant environment within the college/campus?

Individual interviews were then recorded using a digital voice recorder to ensure more accurate data transcription and enable researchers to focus on the interviewee (Patton, 2002). Together with the recording, brief notes were taken to make responses clear and help pose follow-up questions during the focused-group sessions, and to verify the correctness of transcribed data. To lessen the possible for bias, the researchers engaged in active listening strategies with the goal of listening ‘not to oneself or one’s own inner dialogue’ (Ayres, 2008) but rather joining entirely to the speakers in order to precisely hear and interpret what they are trying to express through verbal and nonverbal communication.

Ethical Considerations

Give that extremely sensitive and confidential information is likely to surface in a study of this type (Cranston et al., 2005), a meeting was held with the participants prior to the conduct of the interview in order to inform them of the nature

and purpose of the researchers, the plans for using the results from the interview, and the protocol to be observed to protect the privacy of the participants and the institutions they represent (Creswell, 2009). On the actual day of the interview, the participants were requested to read and sign a letter of consent to participate in the study and for the interview to be recorded. Participants were assured that their participation in the research was strictly voluntary and that they would have the freedom to withdraw their consent at any time. To enhance respondents' openness to share their experiences more freely and vividly (Viernes and de Guzman, 2005) it was further reiterated that participants may – at their discretion – choose not to answer questions posed by the researchers that they deemed to be unpleasant, or request for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the session. These norms were observed by the researchers in a number of cases when recording sessions had to be disturbed upon the request of participants before issuing certain statement that they wished not to be recorded.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers have communicated and coordinated with the concerned persons from the respective satellites/campuses of the Romblon State University (including Main Campus), Romblon, Philippines. Afterwards, the letter was sent and had informed the concerned about the schedule when to visit their campus/institution. Considering the distance of the respondents, the researchers formulated a letter request to the school heads of the respondent-institutions to conduct the study. The permit was with the data gathering instrument in order to have a double purpose, asking permission to conduct right away and even to stay few days until data were gathered to be economical. There was no monetary to compensate the participants but this study was beneficial to the participants in terms of: 1) Empathic Concern (Caring), 2) Empathic Perspective (Focusing Viewpoint), and the 3) Empathic Feelings (Interpersonal Sensitivity).

The researchers have considered the protection of research participants by obtaining

approach from the Office of the Campus Directors and Deans through voluntary written consent from participants themselves after appropriate information is generated, “The purpose and duration of the study, procedure in the study, the right to withdraw from the study, the right to ask questions, and the potential risks and benefits of the study” (Kreuger & Newman, 2006). The researchers took an utmost care to ensure privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants. To maintain confidentiality, the participants, real name was not reflected; rather pseudo names were given to participant throughout the research process.

To complement and clarify data provided through the questionnaire, an interview was conducted. The researchers have administered the questionnaire personally, so that, questions raised by the respondents will be answered/explained promptly.

Mode of Analysis

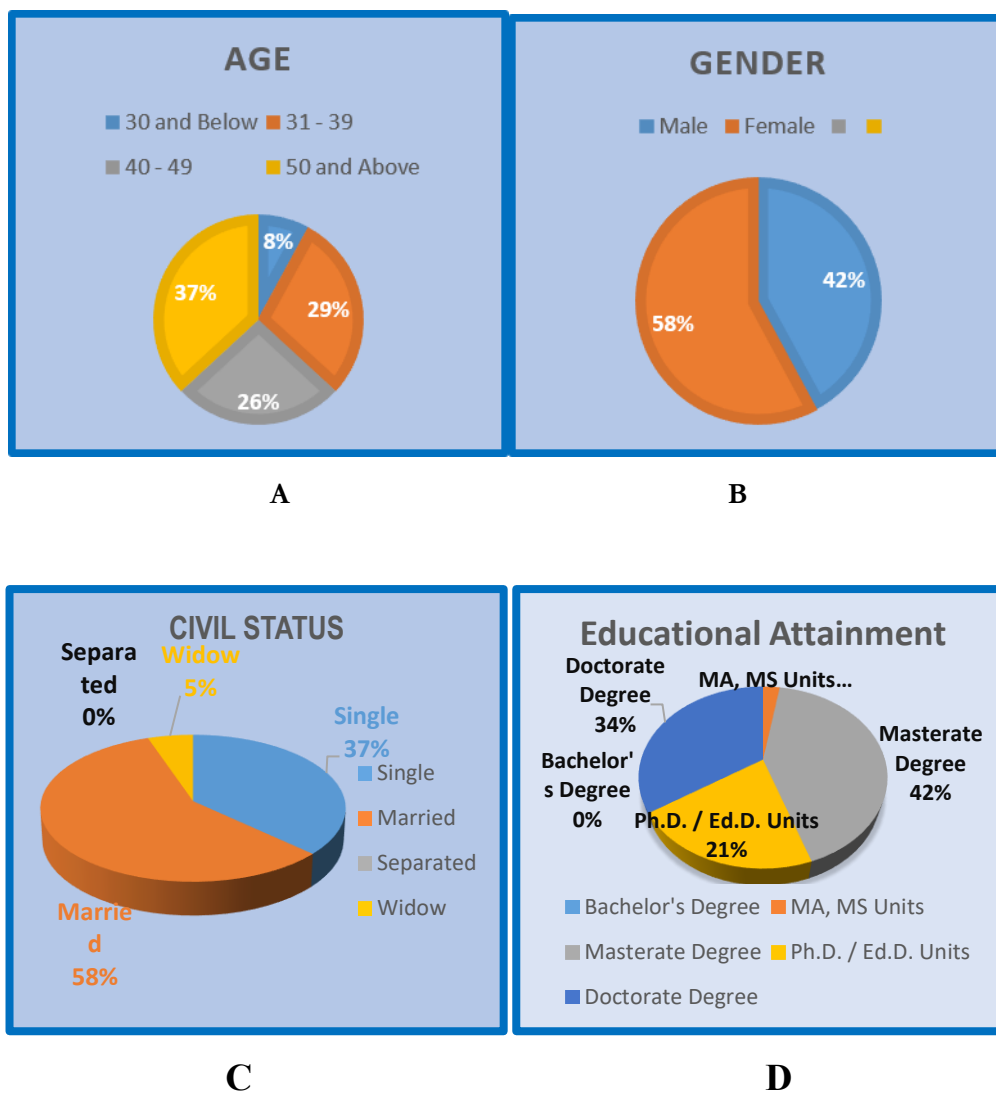
Each recorded interview was transcribed by the researchers. Efforts at immersing oneself in the data have been found useful in data analysis to provide the researchers a sense of the data as a whole and intuit emergent insights for their work (Patton, 2009). To ensure accuracy of the transcription, spot-checking procedures are used (Maclean et al., 2004). After modifying transcripts for minor errors, extended text was subject to phenomenological reduction following the steps proposed in Colaizzi's method (cited in Wojnar and Swanson, 2007). Starting with initial reading and rereading of the field text to get a feel of participations' experiences, field text is organized using within and across case analysis as data reduction technique (Ayres et al., 2003). Cool analyses are then conducted by extracting significant statements from respondents' verbalizations. Next significant statements are subjected to warm analysis by scrutinizing text for similarities and differences from which categories are derived (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). Data categories then undergo further analyses yielding themes and sub-themes that eidetically capture the central phenomenon, which served as the core of this study. The study is conducted from

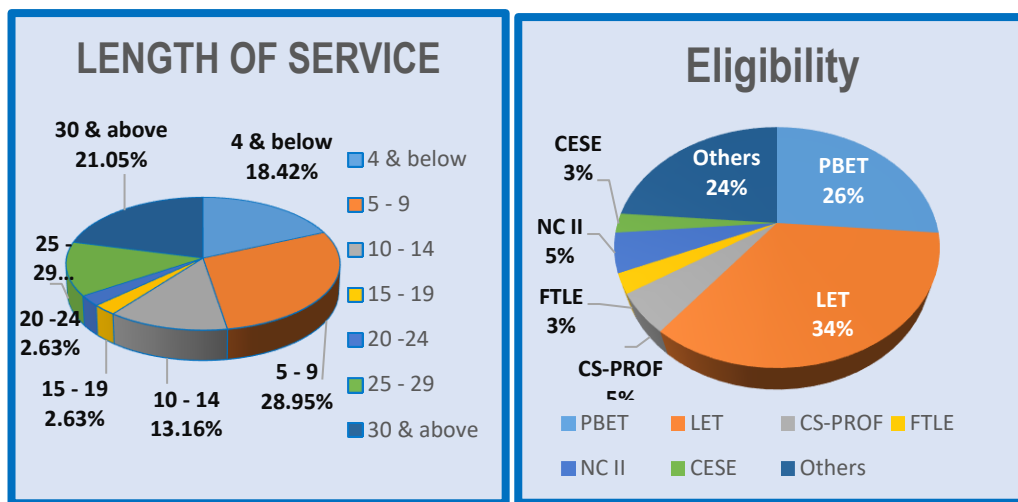
an emic, or insider, perspective given the researchers' work experience and academic background. On gaining a professional role in relation to the participants, the researchers have acquired access to the world of campus director, dean, and chair-participants who willingly opened up about their experience of the phenomenon in question. However, the researchers have recognized the potential bias that one's professional expertise could bear in the way one views, understands and interprets the outcomes of research. The perspective that the researchers adopt in this study is therefore key to reduce the effect of investigator bias. Appreciating and recognizing the uniqueness of the perspective that only campus director, dean, and chair-participants could give on the phenomenon

under study served as an overall guiding principle for the researchers in the conduct of this study.

Results and Discussion

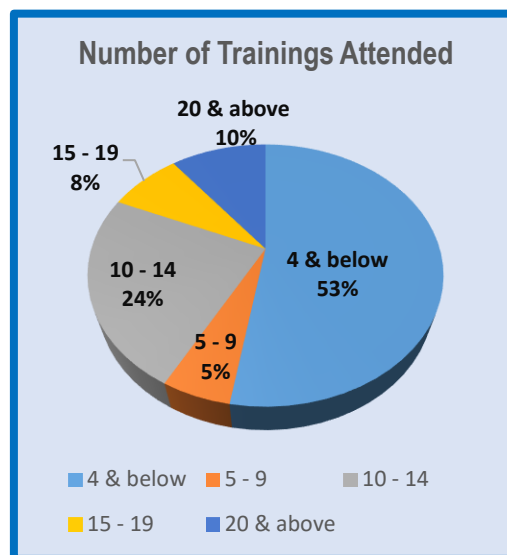
Considering the age of the respondents (Figure 1 A), most of them have been in service for 5 to 9 years (28.95%). The respondents are dominated by females and most of them are already married with 22 or 58% respectively. Majority of the respondents are masterate degree holders with 16 or 42.11%, and 13 or 34.21% are doctorate degree holders. While 13 or 34.21% respondents are LET passers, 10 or 26.32% are PBET passers. Among respondents, there are 20 or 52.63% who have attended seminars, trainings, and workshops related to management and leadership practices 4 and below.





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Based on the in-depth analyses from the respondents' interview, the Orbits of Empathy: Understanding as a component of Humane-Driven Leadership (see Figure 1) created consequently. The Orbits of Empathy reveals the indispensable leadership practices of the academic bureaucrats in sustaining smooth and vibrant environment in the organization. As shown, the heart of the orbits is the humane-driven leadership that must be internalized and realized by the school leaders and managers. There are three (3) core components of orbits of empathy, namely: 1) Empathic Concern (Caring), 2) Empathic Perspective (Focusing Viewpoint), and the 3) Empathic Feelings (Interpersonal Sensitivity). There are sub-components under Empathic Concern (Caring): Magic Words,

Considers Emotions and Preparedness, Worth-Dialogue, Sincere Recognition, and Inspire and Influence People. In Empathic Perspective (Focusing Viewpoint): Open-Communication, Creativity and Innovativeness, Fairness and Firmness, Highlights Collaboration, and Credibility. On the other hand, Empathic Feelings (Interpersonal Sensitivity): Understanding and Respect Diversity, Avoid Maritess, Self-Realization, Humility, and Maturity (Transcendent). Empathic Concern (Caring), the academic bureaucrats shall possess gentle and thoughtful attributes that would address the unique differences and uncertain circumstances while leading people in the organization; Empathic Perspective (Focusing Viewpoint), the academic leaders shall have a logical thoughts, wide and inclusive global perspectives which adhere the vision, mission, goals and objectives

while integrating the quadratic functions of the university such as instruction, research, extension, and production; and Empathic Feelings (Interpersonal Sensitivity), the academic

managers shall have an instinct consciousness and/or discernment on how to establish and create seamless working environment.

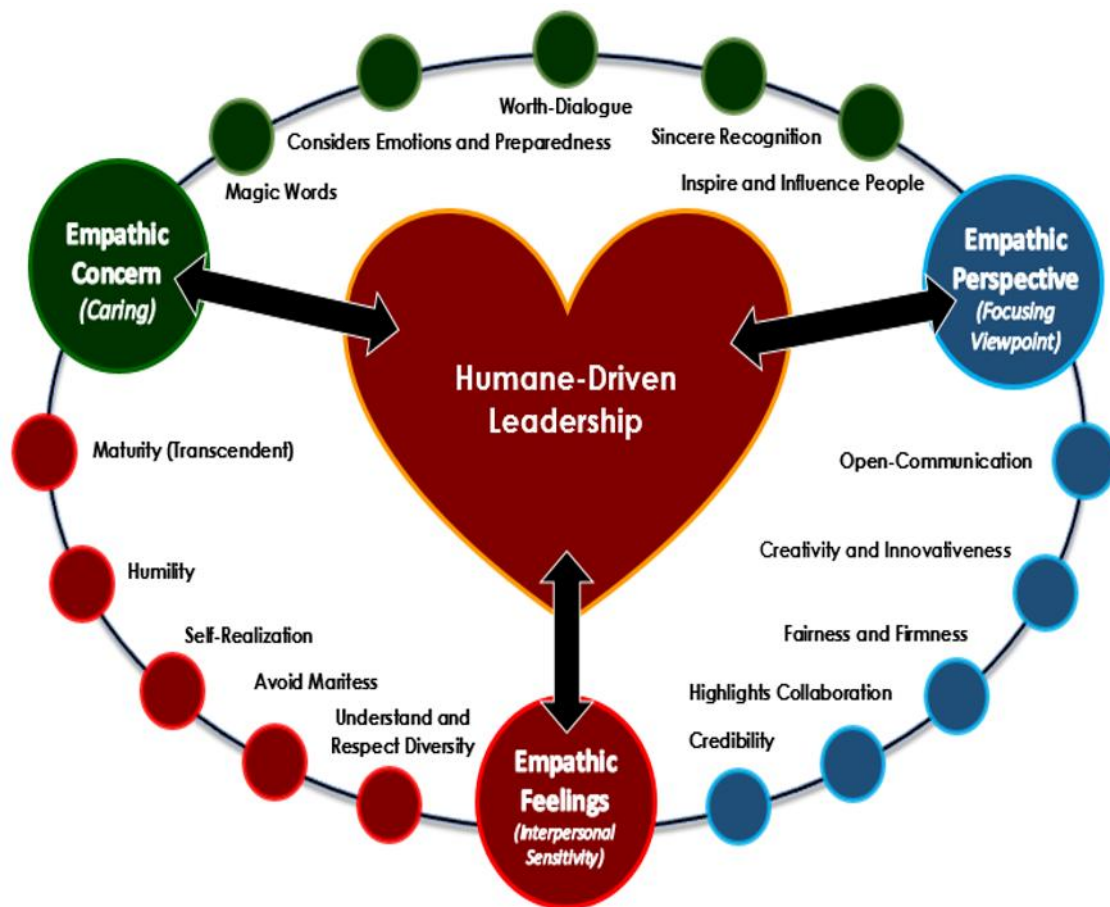


Figure 1. Shows the Orbits of Empathy as Component of Humane-Driven Leadership Framework

Empathic Concern (Caring)

The academic bureaucrats: chairpersons, deans, and directors of the satellite campuses and colleges have shared their experiences on how they were able to show deeply and demonstrate genuinely the care that each member of the organization need to be felt. Making themselves available and surely attending to whatever concerns their subordinates are facing. Interestingly, the following attributes are effective ways on how to maintain harmonious relationship among people: Using Magic words, Considers Emotions and Preparedness, Worth-Dialogue, Sincere Recognition, and Inspire and Influence people. As mentioned during the focused-group-discussion.

One Director said:

I always see to it that I could give enough time and personally talk to the concerned faculty and ask them what they need or is there any issue or problem to be addressed?

Another respondent verbalized:

Yes, it is really important that we are aware of what is happening in the workplace, that we know the issues and be able understand emotions of our teaching and non-teaching personnel, so that we could have a healthy and smooth working environment.

Chairperson reacted:

One way to let them feel they are valued is when we often use magic words, like, you know what?

I have seen your work, and it was good... keep it up! I appreciate your initiative and creativity... Simple, yet words that could potentially boost the moral or self-esteem of the receiver, resulting them to work harder and make it better.

Another respondent said:

I agree with you... by simply saying, Hi! Hello, good morning... to all the members of the organization... that could potentially boost the enthusiasm and moral to perform well in their respective duties and responsibilities.

Another chairperson narrated:

I Agree with you! But, there times out of control... problem arises, that's why we need to consider or listen to someone's sentiments and try to understand their differences.

Another said:

That's true... everyone should be sensitive enough. Try to talk the concerned, both parties will be given equal chance to express their thoughts and sentiments in order to have a reasonable and fair judgement.

One Director suggested:

Giving genuine acknowledgement to members who collaborate-well or actively participate and truly contribute to sustain development within the system must be observed. Likewise, motivating others who are hesitant or afraid of showcasing their potential skills may result to a better change, improve work performances and may be able to sustain healthy relationship.

Another Campus Director said:

You are right, Sir! What you have said is one of the holistic approaches and initiatives that should be done for it could definitely stimulate enthusiasm, and cultivates sense of responsibility among members in the organization. It denotes that, being a leader is not just simply taking the position without deeper understanding of others, sensitivity and sincere heart to inspire, make relationship intact and healthy while achieving the common vision, mission, goals and objectives of the institution.

Empathic Perspective (Focusing Viewpoint)

The academic leaders and managers shall have a logical thought, wide and inclusive global perspectives which adhere the vision, mission, goals and objectives while integrating the quadratic functions of the university such as instruction, research, extension, and production. There are five sub-themes being identified under focusing viewpoint: Open-Communication; Creativity and Innovativeness; Fairness and Firmness; Highlights Collaboration; and Credibility. The conducted in-depth interview highlighted the desirable practices of directors, deans and college chairpersons of the Romblon State University, Romblon, Philippines. These may be good to be imitated or adopted by the educational leaders from the HEIs.

One Campus Director narrated:

There are times that conflicts happen in the organization whether you like it or not. The story goes like this, Mr. X is pulling an issue against Mr. Y, a faculty member. He criticizes badly and compares himself to Mr. Y even there are students who are listening. He is intentionally trying to demoralize and destroy someone's integrity, to the point that everyone was already affected by this act. As the head of the campus, I call the attention of Mr. X and had a dialogue... I asked him regarding his intention why he is biting Mr. Y on his back. I carefully investigate and I was able to know the reason behind, why he is doing it. In short story, there was a misunderstanding between Mr. X and Mr. Y. He misunderstood Mr. Y with what he heard from him during one of the meetings conducted. In return to that, he said that he is just doing revenge to what Mr. Y did to him. I immediately call the attention of Mr. Y and talked about the issue. He (Mr. Y) said that, it was not intentionally done or spoken to Mr. X... Because at that time he has not in the good mood, that's why he was able to say bad words toward Mr. X... As a leader, I requested their presence to have a dialogue and settle the issue between them. Thank GOD, it was solved. It is not easy to manage this kind of situation, but because what I want is to solve it, I mediate them, and serve as a good channel of communication.

One Dean reacted:

Great Job! Congratulations, you were able to settle the problem in your working environment... it is really important that you did not only listen to one side of the coin/story instead, you talk to them, gather them, mediate them at the end you were able to know the reason behind and was able to resolve the concern. That's why we need to demonstrate just and strong willpower in problem-solving and in decision-making.

Another respondent said:

That's how should be done! Communication is very important. It makes things clear and precise. There is no problem that cannot be solved, if there is a wide open-communication within the organization.

One chairperson narrated:

Yes, also in sustaining development, as a leader it is vital to appreciate and recognize the artistic skills, abilities and experiences of other members of the teaching workforce, highlighting their creativity and innovativeness. As a saying goes, "two heads are better than one." The perspective of each and every one could make a difference in achieving the VMGO of the institution as well as the global sustainable development goals.

A Dean shared:

I am happy with your mind-set. Fairness in giving credits and Firmness in making decisions toward success really an extraordinary qualities of a humane leader with all the endeavors we are facing nowadays in the educational system, as we also participate to address the global challenges in education; meeting the international standards. Leaders really need to bring altogether the competitive workforce towards sustainable development, in relation to the mantra of the University, "To serve with honor and excellence!"

Another Director affirmed:

Yes, you are right Doc! To achieve the global aspiration of the institution, there should be a strong collaboration of experts, initiatives to level up the services that the university are extending to the stakeholders, being mindful of

the demands in the global arena of education. For the vision of the university is: A research-based academic institution committed to excellence in service nurturing globally competitive workforce towards sustainable development.

Another Director stated:

The University President is striving to make Romblon State University a premier institution; to become the center of excellence, not just in MIMAROPA, Philippines, but in the global sphere. She wants that her people are demonstrating quality services, and showing extraordinary credibility in relation to the mantra of the University - serving with honor and excellence. This should start from within, in our circle as academic bureaucrats as we demonstrate trustworthiness, especially in making decision and taking action. Furthermore, accentuates partnership among members and stakeholders in achieving the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the educational institution.

Empathic Feelings (Interpersonal Sensitivity) The academic managers shall have an instinct consciousness and/or discernment on how to establish and create seamless working environment. This is one of the crucial practices that the university deans, campus directors, and chairpersons must be genuinely displayed and shown to all; embracing the uniqueness of personalities while working together to achieve the desired outcomes. There are sub-themes identified under Empathic Feelings (Interpersonal Sensitivity): understand and respect diversity; avoid marites; self-realization; humility; and maturity (transcendent). The Understand and Respect Diversity refers to practices inclusion and embraces individual's diverse culture in the organization. Avoid Marites it is a common expression word of Filipinos which means, "MARE ANONG LATEST?" No to gossips, Yes for the truth! to avoid misunderstanding and misjudgment. Self-Realization is an understanding of one's self strengths and weaknesses to break the gap, and be able to work collaboratively without boundaries and hesitations. Humility it means that leaders must approachable, reachable and able to mingle

with diverse personality, bringing together in unity, and committed to serve with honor and excellence. Maturity (Transcendent) it denotes

that leaders show deep and wide-open understanding on the individual differences (behavior, perspective and culture).

The Features of the Humane-Driven Leadership Framework

EMPATHIC CONCERN (CARING)		The academic bureaucrats shall possess gentle and thoughtful attributes that would address the unique differences and uncertain circumstances while leading people in the organization.
1.	Magic Words	Speaks words that stir motivation and excitement to work hard, efficiently and effectively.
2.	Considers Emotions and Preparedness	Conducts observation to deeply understand someone's level of maturity and readiness before designating a task.
3.	Worth-Dialogue	Provides equal chance/s to express individual's thoughts and sentiments to have a reasonable and fair judgment.
4.	Sincere Recognition	Gives genuine acknowledgement to members of the organization who are actively contributing for sustainable development.
5.	Inspire and Influence people	Stimulates enthusiasm, and cultivates sense of responsibility that make members in the organization holistic.

Table 1. Shows the theme, empathic concern (caring) and its sub-themes.

EMPATHIC PERSPECTIVE (FOCUSING VIEWPOINT):		The academic leaders shall have a logical thought, wide and inclusive global perspectives which adhere the vision, mission, goals and objectives while integrating the quadratic functions of the university such as instruction, research, extension, and production.
1.	Open-Communication	Serves as a good channel of communication and hears the voice of the school constituents.
2.	Creativity and Innovativeness	Imparts artistic skills, abilities and experiences as well as regenerates ideas that will lead the institution to a sustainable development.
3.	Fairness and Firmness	Provides just and strong willpower in problem-solving and decision-making.
4.	Highlights Collaboration	Accentuates partnership among members and stakeholders in achieving the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the institution.
5.	Credibility	Demonstrates trustworthiness especially in giving decision and taking action.

Table 2. Shows the theme, Empathic Perspective (Focusing Viewpoint) and its sub-themes.

EMPATHIC FEELINGS (INTERPERSONAL SENSITIVITY):	The academic managers shall have an instinct consciousness and/or discernment on how to establish and create seamless working environment.
1. Understand and Respect Diversity	Practices inclusion and embraces individual's diverse culture in the organization.
2. Avoid Marites	It is a common expression word of Filipinos which means, "MARE ANONG LATEST?" No to gossips, Yes for the truth... to avoid misunderstanding and misjudgment.
3. Self-Realization	Understands one self's strengths and weaknesses to break the gap, and be able to work collaboratively without boundaries and hesitations.
4. Humility	Approachable, reachable and able to mingle with diverse personality, bringing together in unity, and committed to serve with honor and excellence.
5. Maturity (Transcendent)	Shows deep and wide-open understanding on the individual differences (behavior, perspective and culture).

Table 3. Shows the theme, Empathic Feelings (Interpersonal Sensitivity) and its sub-themes.

Conclusion

In this qualitative research, there are three (3) notable themes transpired from the leadership practices of the directors, deans, and college chairpersons of the Romblon State University System in the Province of Romblon, Philippines. Specifically, these are: empathic concern (caring), empathic perspective (focusing viewpoint), and emphatic feelings (interpersonal sensitivity). Under empathic concern (caring): a) Magic Words; b) Considers Emotions and Preparedness, c) Worth Dialogue, d) Sincere Recognition, and e) Inspire and Influence People; In the empathic perspective (focusing viewpoint): a) Open Communication, b) Creativity and Innovativeness, c) Fairness and Firmness, d) Highlights Collaboration, and e) Credibility; and lastly, in the emphatic feelings (interpersonal sensitivity): a) Understand and Respect Diversity, b) Avoid Marites, c) Self-Realization, d) Humility, and e) Maturity (Transcendent). Academic leaders and managers are anticipated to be all-inclusive in influencing and bringing other school constituents in the pedestal, wherein competitiveness, innovation, economic efficiency, excellent services are extraordinarily

observed and sustained in the whole system. Working change frequently involves serving people to overcome obstructions to change and this entails passionate intelligence and nurturing of eloquent relationships (Fullan, 2003). Finally, the findings of this study could potentially serve as knowledge-avenue, and practice empowerment for directors, deans, and college chairpersons in creating a healthy, smooth and vibrant working environment geared towards sustainable development.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors have equal contributions in the completion of this research and preparation of the manuscript.

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