

Filipino Medical Technology Dean's Strategies to Overcome Organizational Challenges: A Phenomenological Inquiry

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Abstract:

This qualitative research aims to unravel the challenges encountered by the Filipino medical technology deans when performing their functions and to describe their ways to overcome them.

The deans disclosed that the most common dilemma they encountered rested on people, resources, workload, and personal. People related challenges, for instance, were obviously displayed by the faculty members and staffs' resistance to certain policies and plans laid out by the university. At times, conflict among them arises which eventually gave rise to informal leaders. The deans, however, agreed that problem along this facet could be resolved by appropriate communication. Moreover, they encountered problems on resources during the operation- facilities, budget, manpower, and time management were among them. They were able to manage to go through by prioritizing the purchase of the needed resources and proportionally allocating them to the units of the department. Some deans were resourceful and creative enough to innovate the resources available to suit these to their present requirements. Along with workload-related strategies. Some deans got a hard time in class scheduling and giving teaching assignments because of their doing some administrative roles, they ran short of time to do these. To resolve, faculty restructuring was done so that some academic tasks could be delegated. Finally, the deans did face personal-related challenges. They became enemies to themselves as indicated by their feelings of isolation, self-adjustment to keep even to the stakeholders they dealt with, and exhaustion. To combat, they set time for self-reflection and adapt ways to reach out the people around them.

In spite of the efforts of the deans and despite of the available resources they have, they were still facing some challenges in managing the department. Their unresolved problems will hamper the program operation. Their disclosures implied the need for the top management and other stakeholders to revisit the organization to identify the resources the deans needed for an efficient and effective program operation.

Keywords: phenomenology, Filipino Medical Technology Deans, strategies, organizational challenges, Sun Tzu

1. Introduction

The dean is the chief academic and administrative officer in a specific college or a university (Mundt, 2018). He is the combined leader-manager positioned in the middle of administrative hierarchies (Otara, 2014; Rosser, Johnsrud & Heck, 2003). There is no clear difference, however, between dean as a leader and dean as a manager. Not all managers could be leaders, but leaders could be managers (Mintzberg, 2004). As dean, he should be

able to play both roles; lead the human resources of the organization and manage its financial and physical resources to achieve the vision and carry out the mission. Separating leadership from management would lead to organizational entropy. Thus, as dean he should be able to blend the two to maintain its equilibrium, as Ali (2013) puts it out.

The dean is expected to perform a number of awesome and from time to time conflicting duties, specifically: supervisor of educational applications,

budgets and finance, marketing and recruitment, legal compliance, institutional evaluation and accreditation, and institutional crises, be advocate of instructional support, mediator of competing constituencies, arbitrator of student complaints and appeals, and builder of faculty consensus, entrepreneur, politician, teacher, scholar, mentor, and sage (Ferris, 2008). His functions is that of a chief executive officer who oversight external funding, personnel and company affinity on top of his primary responsibility to manage multidisciplinary academic programs (Wolverton et al, 1999). He is a manager and an academician rolled into one. He juggles more than one roles and attempts to tries to fulfill a myriad of expectations from several stakeholders. Squeezed from above and below as well as from inside and outside the university, he's caught within the jaws of conflicting cultures, pressures and priorities (Otara, 2014).

The modern-day deanship function calls for an extensive variety of managerial and/or leadership competencies. It is observed, however, that deans nowadays commonly come to their positions without some form of formal training, without prior managerial experience, and without a clear understanding of the vagueness of their new roles. They assume their position based on their academic degrees which align or relate to the program they would be managing. As Twale (1997) and Bower (1993) stated, deans are employed based on scholarly endeavors and information of previous successes and not necessarily due to their administrative talent. The deanship position is significant to the academic enterprise, yet training for incumbent deans has been characterized as haphazard (Wolverton et al., 1999), absent (Dill, 1980; Bok, 1986) or minimal (Mc Dade, 1988). In Australian universities, deans expressed a need for some kind of formal training to better prepare them for the position, demonstrating a belief that role preparation may be a concern for some (Sarros,1998). This situation is no different in the Philippine educational setting.

The academic deanship is a completely unique position in the university and is one of the most challenging and misunderstood positions in higher education (Bray, 2010). With the different roles cited earlier, it is potentially demanding, perplexing and never easy (Wild et al., 2003). The need to

balance the multifaceted missions of education, research, and clinical service as well as the wide constituencies, including students, faculty, and staff, with which the dean must work seems to place the dean into what Hewlett and Luce have recently called an extreme job (Gabbe et.al., 2008).

With the deans' roles and functions cited above, the deans then have to face various challenges at different levels- from the top management, external stakeholders, interdepartmental; both academic and non-academic, students, and parents and down to the lowest level in the organizational hierarchy. This is true to all academic deans and the dean of the college of medical technology is not an exception.

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order no. 13 series of 2017, otherwise known as Policies, Standards and Guidelines for the Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology/Medical Laboratory Science (BSMT/MLS) Program (<http://ched.gov.ph/cmo-13-s-2017-2/>), stipulates the duties and functions of the dean. Aside from administering the general policies of the institution, he has to exercise leadership among the faculty members. In performing these tasks, he has to play the different roles cited earlier.

Although there has been increased attention in the study of deans' significant roles in recent years (Bray, 2010), research about the Filipino medical technology deans' challenges to bring about academic success is still a dearth, hence; this study.

2. Methods

This is a phenomenological research which aims to capture the challenges experienced by the Filipino medical technology deans when performing their duties and functions. Through semi-structured interview, their challenges were unveiled and their strategies in overcoming them were explained.

2.1 Selection and Study Site

As cited by Patton (2002), there are no rules for the sample size in qualitative research. Test measure relies upon what one needs to know, the motivation behind the request, what is in question, what will be valuable, what will have believability and what should be possible with accessible time and assets. Crouch & Mc Kenzie (2006), for their part, supported this statement by taking note that a little

number of members will help the researcher to have a close association with them and expand the legitimacy of fine-grained, in-depth inquiry in a characteristic setting. In qualitative research, the samples are alluded to as selections.

To gain an in-depth perspective on how the deans overcome organizational challenges the researcher will purposely choose the deans of the top ten performing schools identified by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) in the August 2016 board examination which was included in the study and has undergone semi-structured- in-depth interview (Patton, 2002). They were asked to accurately describe their experiences on the phenomenon of the organizational challenges.

2.2 Instrumentation and Data Collection

A guide questionnaire for semi-structured interview was designed and conducted to the deans of the top performing medical technology schools in the Philippines, identified by Professional Regulations Commission (PRC) in August 2016. The interview was purposely done by the researcher herself to ensure capturing as fully as possible the verbatim responses of the participants. The participants' responses and explanation were tape-recorded and transcribed by the researcher immediately after each session.

2.3 Ethical Consideration

To enhance quality of responses in this study, the researcher observed the protocol stipulated in Republic Act 10173, otherwise known as "Data Privacy Act of 2012 (<https://privacy.gov.ph/data-privacy-act/>)." Permission to conduct the on-campus interview was first sought from the administrator. An informed consent and consent form were given to and acknowledged by each participant prior to the interview to establish rapport and give initial information about the study which includes: 1) the purpose of the study; 2) protocols to assure confidentiality of data gathered from the interviews; 3) the usage of pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of the respondents and their respective schools; and 4) the protocols to be observed with respect to ownership, access and dissemination of data.

2.4 Mode of Analysis

The audio-recorded interview was transcribed and some statements given by the participants in Filipino were carefully translated, interpreted and checked to

preserve the original meaning of the responses. The data gathered were read and re-read in order to extract significant verbalizations which were coded, condensed and categorized into themes.

3. Findings

The findings of this paper disclosed the challenges experienced by the participants as they observed and exercised their functions and duties as dean in the college of medical technology. Their responses were arbitrarily thematized into four, namely; people-related, resources-related, work-related, and personal-related challenges. Table 1 presents the challenges and indicators extracted from their responses which provide the springboard in coming up with appropriate strategies to overcome them.

Table 1: Challenges at Work: Their Indicators and Deans' Strategies to Overcome Them

CHALLENGES	INDICATORS	STRATEGIES
People-Related Challenges	Resistance Conflict Informal Leaders	Communication Strategy
Resources Related Challenges	Facilities Budget Manpower Time Management	Prioritization, Proportional Allocation, and Innovative Strategy
Workload Related Challenges	Scheduling Teaching Assignment	Faculty Structuring Strategy
Personal-Related Challenges	Isolation Self-Adjustment Exhaustion	Reflection and Reaching Out Strategy

3.1 People-Related Challenges

People-related challenges relate to the problems encountered by the deans in handling people in Medical Technology program implementation. Among those they cited include resistance, conflict, and rise of informal leaders. These drive the deans to come up with strategies to overcome them for smooth program implementation.

Resistance is the overt behavior of the faculty and staff which is observable during meetings and at times in the daily program operation. Some members of the organization refused and even opposed program-related activities and policies. Others whose ideas were contrary to the ones presented ended up with heated argumentation.

When interviewed the deans opened up their below-cited problems.

“I considered resistance as a barrier to program implementation.” D10

“The stubborn ones are really the tenured because they know that they can’t easily be fired.” D8

“It is a behavior that I don’t have a control. I even encountered it when transacting in some offices, but as a dean I have to look into it, considering however that one cannot please everybody, but still I have to find ways to overcome this.” D5

“We cannot advance if there is resistance, although at times it helps us think and rethink our plans before implementing it. It means that resistance sometimes provided us feedbacks that would guide us in redesigning our plans. It’s a matter of how we respond to it that makes resistance beneficial and/or detrimental to our program implementation. D3”

Conflicts, at times, occur in the organization. It happens when there is a protracted disagreement between the deans and the faculty, staff, people in other offices, and even other stakeholders. It usually happens when a heated argument during the meeting is not resolved. Along with this, the deans cited their experiences below.

“We cannot just bring together two people who are in contrast with one another.” D6

“Although the goal is the same, a little-heated discussions among the faculty happens during the meeting. Sometimes we encountered conflict with other offices.” D5

“In an organization, one thing that we cannot remove is competition. Tinting this with personal grudges ignited a heated discussion, when one insisted this should be, the other says the opposite. How will we be able to mediate? We cannot just abort the conflicting ideas; we should weigh this out together and be able to have the two parties meet halfway.” D11

Informal leaders refer to the people who have the ability to influence others, but have no formal authority to lead a group. The deans’ experiences with these people are stated hereunder.

“Informal leaders create factions. We know that they are being followed by their clouds of followers leaving the dean alone. Sometimes, we will be defeated. They hesitated to listen to reasons why the change or policy has to be instituted.” D8

“They control the group. They also have ideas and it seems that they wanted to dictate it all.” D11

3.2 Resources-Related Challenges

Resources provided the backbone of an organization. Deficiency in any of its facets would lame the operation. Like all other managers of the organization, the deans in the College of Medical Technology are facing challenges along with these which include facilities, budget, manpower, and time allocation.

Facilities refer to school buildings, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, toilet facilities, offices, and the like that are important in providing quality teaching-learning activities. The respondents shared their experiences in this area below to the researcher.

“Our problem as regards facilities is along with upgrading our laboratory especially the equipment. We have submitted our request, but the management response is not that quick.” D7

“Sometimes due to cost cutting, our request for renovation was not provided.” D1

“When I presented the floor plan which specifies the setting-up of molecular laboratory, the management was flabbergasted upon knowing how costly it is.” D10

“There are even times that the administration purchased the cheapest equipment that could not give quality service to the students.” D4

Budget refers to the process of creating financial plan of an organization. Budget can be a barrier to change and innovation. As cited by the respondents:

“We’re having a hard time implementing the 5-year development plan that we did. Our problem is the support of the administration, especially if it entails budget.” D6

“Because they are the ones who release it.” D2

“We encountered roadblocks in implementing the plans. These are administration, money, competitors, and lack of knowledge. Of these, money barred most in successful planning.” D10

“It is really expensive to come up with a project that makes you unique from the rest of the schools, financial resources are a big problem.” D1

“We have a lot of plan yet we have no budget. That’s what makes it difficult.” D4

“There is a corresponding budget for whatever activity in the strategic plan that’s why you have to balance. It’s hard because we also become budget officer.” D8

“It really needs financial education, actually that’s the hardest.” D5

Manpower is the people constituting an organization who worked for the attainment of its goals. Along with this resource, the deans shared their experiences on the problems they encountered.

“The problem that I can see in successful planning is the faculty turnover. When we invest for faculty development, later on they leave the university.” D4

“Younger faculty looks for greener pasture, looking for other things we cannot offer.” D8

“Other seeks employment abroad. There were instances when the enrolment increased, but they don’t have replacements yet.” D6

“Some medical technologists who are in the academe still preferred to work in the government hospital because of the higher salary.” D1

Time management is essential in planning and strategic implementation and control. As regards with this, the deans faced some problems on budgeting their time with the tasks and role they played as academic managers.

“Time allotted to planning is important. A good strategic plan cannot be designed in one or two days.” D9

“As academic managers, we have other important tasks to accomplish. There are even unexpected events that need to be attended first, time

constraint then hampers the process. As much as we can have a meeting at least once a month to monitor our plan but we don’t have common time.” D11

“We cannot meet as often as we want because there is a class even on weekends in the graduate school. There is almost no common available time for the faculty and staff to come to a meeting. That is why they need to meet on their own.” D5

3.3 Workload-Related Challenges

Workload-related challenges are problems encountered by the academic deans pertaining to the volume of tasks they perform and assign to their subordinates such as scheduling and teaching assignments.

Work schedule refers to the time within the class hours the subject offerings are plotted and assigned to faculty members based on his/her area of specialization. Normally, a regular faculty member is assigned 24 units per semester. Overloading of not more than 6 units, however, is resorted if there is unprecedented increase of enrolment and a faculty is not hired yet for the purpose. Conflict in class schedule is a common problem shared by the deans.

“As regards work schedule, my number one problem is the conflict of classes. That’s why I have to plot it first.” D11

“Most of our young faculty do not want their classes to be scheduled in the morning, that’s why I ask my program chair to be the model, so I and my program chair start our classes at 7:00 in the morning.” D4

Teaching assignment becomes a problem of the deans if the tasks assigned is to be done beyond teaching hours. Giving special assignment cannot be avoided especially during accreditation and/or on holding extra-curricular activities.

“One of the greatest obstacles is how would we encourage faculty members to work difficult tasks, for instance, during accreditation which the expectation to make it is really high.” D11

“There are times that even on weekends, we would do the preparation until past midnight.” D9

“Even part of their job description is to do things outside their job, most faculty members are still reluctant to perform.” D4

"They are overloaded." D3

"They still have classes in the graduate school during Sundays." D5

3.4 Personal Related Challenges

The greatest challenge the academic dean is facing is his own personal issues such as isolation, self-adjustment, and exhaustion. These issues affect his/her manner of handling the situation which if he/she cannot overcome affects his performance.

Isolation refers to the individual tendency to keep himself away from others. At times, medical technologists' academic leaders remove themselves from their peers, faculty, and community thinking their endless list of responsibilities to the management, his subordinates, students, and all other stakeholders. Below are the feelings and thoughts they shared of being isolated.

"What does it take to be here? It's lonely up here in spite of the fact that it's a lucrative position. It's a nice feeling when people call you dean, look up to you, have so much respect with your position and with you personally, but as I said, it's sad and hard because you'll have numerous things to think about." D11

"Sometimes you are left behind and you'll find yourself alone." D6

Self-adjustment is observed by the deans in the daily performance of his tasks. They often interact with people whose reactions towards them vary. They have to resolve the differences by themselves alone, without outside interference. As they experienced:

"Sometimes I realized that what I planned can't be executed. There are instances like that, so I have to adjust so that I could still attain the goal." D8

"There were instances of some sorts of changes, so revisions have to be done and come up with a new one." D5

"If things are not going right, there could be something wrong, so I have to adjust." D3

"At the end of the day, I don't hold grudges nor resentments. I am not capable of that. It's hard that I already did something, yet I still hear words

against me. I just accept the fact that I cannot please everybody." D11

Exhaustion is at times felt by the deans when exercising their jobs. The voluminous work they shouldered tired them much that they suffered from burning out. This is evident in the experiences below that they shared.

"As a dean, I am working applying the Filipino bibingka theory. How is bibingka being cooked? It is by putting fire down and up. There are pressures from top level managers and there are also demands coming from the subordinates, so I become a liaison officer. I have to meddle in order to balance the situation to avoid explosion." D11

"I cannot sleep, I do not sleep. I keep on thinking about it." D10

"Sometimes I am tired and want to retire." D6

4. Discussion

People-Related Challenges

Knowing your people are more important than the budget, other resources, and structure. They are the key asset to organizational success, therefore use your people appropriately. The deans disclosed earlier that in planning and program implementation they encountered resistance from the people around them- a typical reaction of the disgruntled few and even the intellectual ones whose ideas and plan of actions contradict to what they presented. The deans' perceived resistance negatively. They regarded faculty members who resisted as disobedient and hindrances to program implementation. They have to overcome this to ensure success of the entire program. Nevertheless in certain occasions, employee resistance may show a positive and valuable role in organizational change. Insightful and well-intended debate, criticism, or disagreement do not necessarily equate to negative resistance, but rather may be meant to provide better understanding as well as additional opportunities and solutions (Bolognese, 2002). The dean must overcome employee resistance by conducting broad-based meetings where goals and tactics are openly discussed and introduce processes that leave little room for individual discretion. As Sun Tzu emphasized, *"The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting."* Successes are still best achieved through subtle diplomacy. (cited in Thiran, 2018). Sun Tzu (cited in Jackson, 2014) reminded the generals to avoid fight as possible and should

know when to fight and when not to fight. He said, *“Supreme excellence consists of breaking the enemy’s resistance without fighting.”*

At times, conflict arises which eventually gave rise to informal leaders. This protracted situation makes the organizational atmosphere unhealthy which augmented the challenges they faced. Conflict has a very precise definition in Sun Tzu's strategy. The term "conflict" describes all conditions wherein two rivals ought to continue investing to prevent their opponent from winning. Since the goal is to prevent the rival from winning, conflict always seeks to harm an opponent enough to prevent them from continuing (Gagliardi, 2007). Conflict normally arises in a group. When with others, encountering it is inevitable. Some may view conflict as a negative condition which ought to be averted at any cost. Others may see it as a phenomenon which necessitates management. Still, others may consider conflict as an exciting opportunity for personal growth (Omisore & Abiodun, 2014)

The Art of War warns us in opposition to the naivety of, by not seeing conflict, failing to prepare for it. Since conflict is seemingly inevitable, it is evidently necessary for the deans’ to be able to identify the source of the conflict, to view it’s constructive as well as destructive potential, to learn how to manage conflict and to implement conflict resolution technique in a practical way (Fleetwood, 1987). De Church, et al (2001), express that active conflict management permits groups to openly talk about issues and disagreements, allowing them to share information and confront a conflict together. In addition, Tjosvold, et al. (2014) argues that openness makes it possible to contradict arguments. Research has shown that there are great possibilities in open conversation and argument confrontation.

If conflict was not resolved, there would be possibilities that an informal leader arises. Informal leader emerges because some elements of leadership and management are missing in the workplace. When team members become afraid or do not have enough trust in the formal leader to listen to their concerns and suggestions, an informal leader surfaces and assumes that role (Hills, 2014).

Create an environment in which it is safe for informal leaders to ask questions, take risks, and challenge you by providing different perspectives. When you don’t agree, explain the rationale for your position and ask for suggestions. Give informal

leaders frequent feedback, being careful not to shut down the communication. (Hills, 2014).

In dealing with people in the organization, communication is a very important tool. As Sun Tzu’s words implied; fighting or engaging in conflict can be avoided when the issues can be resolved by sincere words. Subtle words can neutralize conflicting parties. Moreover, failure of communication can be attributed to the manager. As Sun Tzu further stressed: *“If words or command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, the general is to blame”* (Giles, 2013).

Motivation is important as well. It’s a matter of treating the subordinates the way they expect that manager can win them. As Sun Tzu said: *“When one treats people with benevolence, justice, and righteousness and reposes confidence in them, the army will be united in mind and all will be happy to serve their leader”* (McNeilly, M. 2014).

Effective academic manager has to use appropriate communication in handling people to win them. Consequently, the interest of faculties, staffs and leaders converge toward common organizational aims. Deans ought not only direct mutual communication, but also provide an effective communication network inside and outside universities. Mutual trust and respect provide a suitable context and move the organization toward individual and collective goal attainments. Deans should be collaborative, emphasizing participation, delegation, and teamwork (Otara, 2014).

Resources Related Challenges

One significant problem with operational strategy is the lack of available resources for program implementation. The deans are tasked to manage their department and provide quality education to students. In spite of constraints on resources, they have to carry on this primordial task. The dean is responsible for many aspects in budgeting, such as budget development, management, reviewing the budget, and perhaps even fundraising for their extra-curricular activities. With the limited budget allocation, his decision should rest on the necessity of the resources required. The priorities then should be laid down in the plan. Sun Tzu taught the managers what to do when resources are low. He said, *“Focus more on exploiting your competitor’s weakness rather than throwing more cash/resources at the problem,”* (Giles, 2013)

The academic deans, however, are expected to be creative and innovative when it comes to utilization of resources. In the absence of laboratory facilities, for instance, they should be able to guide the faculty to come up with improvised and/or alternative ones while waiting for the budget appropriated for the purpose.

Moreover, innovativeness is not limited to resources alone. It can also be observed in strategic formulation. For instance, to improve the performance in the board examination, new and different ways of doing it should be employed. If the old review strategy did not work well, a new process should be developed and tried out. In the words of Sun Tzu, "*Make your way by unexpected routes, and attack the enemy where he has taken no precautions,*" (Giles, 2013.). The most significant point for the purpose of creative execution is the idea of making your way by "*unexpected routes.*"

Therefore like war, there is a necessity to continuously search for new and innovative ways of meeting the challenges. As Sun Tzu further stressed, "*Do not repeat the tactics that won you a victory, but vary them according to the circumstances,*" (Giles, 2013).

Workload Related Challenges

Significant teachings were discovered associated with the construct of time as a vital part of the organizational and useful resource framework. Faculty usually had difficulty thinking of their time in terms of outcomes and expectations. The misused term of faculty "workload" was perpetually complex. Faculty members were challenged to manage their work assignments and to distribute time appropriately to different categories. It was unexpected that teaching can become an all-consuming event and rarely is efficiency enhanced even after numerous times of teaching the same content (Mundt, 2018). Scheduling then has to be considered by the dean in class structuring.

Time needs to be tied to expectations of the faculty position and no longer the fractionalized definition of the work. As Mundt (2018) stated, balanced work mission presents institutional support for the main strategic functions of the vision- teaching, research, practice and service. The real time spent on those areas of the job will vary by rank and job expectations, but the college will agree on a standard investment in each of the strategic areas. In the college of medical technology, for instance, faculty

and staff schedule should be equally allocated so that they can carry out their tasks on instruction, research, and community service.

Irrespective of how many long hours the group works, they will continually have a limited amount of time and energy to produce. Human energy is eminently finite. Sun Tzu advises to apply extraordinary capability in topics that call for them, and normal energy when the extraordinary isn't a benefit. As Sun Tzu said "*Pay attention to nourishing the troops and do not tire them unnecessarily,*" (Wee, et al., 1991).

Personal-Related Challenges

Academic managers are subject to various pressures. They are faced with inadequate time for decision-making, coupled with the requirements to be responsive to different individuals, all of whom have a claim on their attention. Often, they lack time for reflection and contemplation as regards detailed processes and practices constituting their day-to-day activities in performing their functions (Johnson, Melin & Whittington, 2003).

The deans may find their position overwhelming and overlooked the issues should be settled and communicate. They may be tempted to retaliate, fire those they perceive to be "against" them, and imagine various unrealistic plots and malicious attempts to dispose of them (de Vries, 1989). Thus, it is easy to understand why academic managers tend to separate, shun away, and disengage themselves which eventually would make them lonely (Wright, 2012). Often, the social separation maintained by the deans' serves as a major contribution to the loneliness they experience. Wright (2012) opined that social isolation is a professional hazard in high positions. Deanship positions within organizations often do not foster work environments where friendship and social intimacy are possible, thereby loneliness may develop.

While academic managers are at risk of loneliness and isolation of their position, there are various ways that they can act on the way to cope with it. They must be willing to listen and to have respect for their colleagues and subordinates, which will contribute to real understanding of the leader and his/her employees, and vice versa (de Vries, 1989). A variety of strategies that can be very beneficial also have been covered. Some depend on reaching out to others, like obtaining some coaching, peer support and confidants, while other approaches can be

generated by the deans' himself/herself, like journal writing, self-development and self-understanding, and spirituality.

Moreover, deans would be stressed by the different roles they played in the organization. Stressors for academic leaders would spring from the resources they handled in their department and even from within themselves as in work-personal conflict (Nadine, 2018) which lead to burnout. If they fail to resolve this, the performance of the college of medical technology would be affected.

Apropos to the above, Sun Tzu reminded the general when to fight and when to quit. When to inspire and when to drive. As he said, *"He who knows when he can fight and when he cannot, will be victorious"* (cited in Wee et al., 1991)

To perform effectively, deans from time to time should self-reflect a bit, otherwise they would become an enemy to themselves. An honest dialog with one's self and an acceptance of one's strengths and weaknesses would give them leeway to quit or not to quit the activities that stressed them. As Sun Tzu further advised, *"Know yourself and know your enemy and you will be safe in every battle. If you know yourself but not know the enemy, you will then lose one battle for every one you win and if you may not know yourself nor the enemy, you will then lose every battle,"* (Giles, 2013)

5. Conclusion

This qualitative research aims to unravel the challenges encountered by the Filipino medical technology deans when performing their functions and to describe their ways to overcome them.

This study disclosed the challenges encountered by the medical technology deans and strategies they employed to overcome them. Their most common dilemma rested on people, resources, workload, and personal. People related challenges, for instance, were obviously displayed by the faculty members and staffs' resistance to certain policies and plans laid out by the university. At times, conflict among them arises which eventually gave rise to informal leaders. The deans, however, agreed that problem along this facet could be resolved by appropriate communication. Moreover, they encountered problems with resources during the operation-facilities, budget, manpower, and time management were among them. They were able to manage to go

through by prioritizing the purchase of the needed resources and proportionally allocating them to the units of the department. Some deans were resourceful and creative enough to innovate the resources available to suit these to their present requirements. Along with workload-related strategies. Some deans got a hard time in class scheduling and giving teaching assignments because of their doing some administrative roles, they ran short of time to do these. To resolve, faculty restructuring was done so that some academic tasks could be delegated. Finally, the deans did face personal-related challenges. They became enemies to themselves as indicated by their feelings of isolation, self-adjustment to keep even to the stakeholders they dealt with, and exhaustion. To combat, they set time for self-reflection and adapt ways to reach out the people around them.

In spite of the efforts of the deans and despite of the available resources they have, they were still facing some challenges in managing the department. Their unresolved problems will hamper the program operation. Their disclosures implied the need for the top management and other stakeholders to revisit the organization to identify the resources the deans needed for an efficient and effective program operation.

This research was able to bridge the gap between the management practices of the non-academic and academic organizations. Regardless of the type of organizations the managers are handling and the theories on management they are anchoring, their practices boil down to century-old Sun Tzu's Art of War. And shed light on coping with challenges which managers normally encountered in the organizations. Findings herein can serve as their guide in operating the program efficiently and effectively.

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