

Turbulent Times Management Tolerance and Personal Power of Secondary School Administrators

FRUCTUOSO C. BALITON

<http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6745-8516>

totsbaliton@gmail.com

Department of Education

Leyte, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Turbulence refers to both internal and external changes within organizations, and demands from their environments. Power involves the potential to influence others, both in what they do and how they feel about something. This descriptive survey-correlation method of research aimed to determine whether the tolerance for managing in turbulent times of secondary school administrators of Leyte, Philippines were related to their personal power profile. A set of data-gathering questionnaire, composed of two parts was utilized. The results showed that the respondents have to work on improving their tolerance for managing in turbulent times and must have something likely to characterize in the world of work into the next century. Expert Power is the dimension of power that is subscribed by them, which is considered to be their behavior in work organizations since as suggested by the results, the respondents prefer to influence others by employing this particular form of power. Chi-square established that the non-significant relationships between the two variables imply that being ready to face turbulence and change, has nothing to do with their personal power profile or how they prefer to influence others.

Keywords — Educational Administration, organizational change, descriptive survey-correlation, Tacloban City, Leyte, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Turbulence refers to internal changes within organizations as well as external changes in demands from the environments (Wallace & McMahon, 2004). Educational institutions that are managed by the School Heads are not exempted from the concept of globalization (Baliton, 2012). Just as elsewhere in Europe, where social work in the Netherlands is facing ever more administrative changes, as Hoijtink and Doorn (2011) opined, the Secondary School Administrators of the Philippines are also in the same dilemma.

We live in a turbulent world that is caused by economic uncertainty. Everywhere you look, there is turbulence as the uncertainty and discontinuity make it more difficult to predict and plan. Barrows and Neely (2011) stated that a turbulent world poses a dilemma for performance measurement, which takes six to twelve months to design, develop and deploy.

Wallace and McMahon (2004) point out that schools will have areas of turbulence and stability that both exists at the same time, but the balance may be more towards one than the other at different times.

The present study attempted to determine the relationships between the tolerance for managing in turbulent times of secondary school administrators in Leyte, Philippines and their personal power profile. The findings of the study may serve as an instrument that gives an impression of their tolerance for managing in turbulent times – something likely to characterize the world of work into the next century as well as to determine whether they are comfortable to adapt change. This study may also serve as feedback for school administrators to determine what dimension of power they prefer to influence others by employing the particular form of power.

FRAMEWORK

Organizations have areas of turbulence and stability co-existing at the same time, but the balance may be more towards one than the other at different times (Wallace & McMahon, 2004).

Cuban (2008) defined turbulent change as an order the organization can readily absorb, where imposing change is more acceptable if developed or modified, and one could argue that changes may be more psychologically acceptable. Therefore, it is important in any discussion to consider who is responsible.

“Change” is the word of most organizations (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 2010). Some of these changes may be radical or incremental (Nadler & Tushman, 2008). Incremental change, considered as an organization’s natural evolution, is frequent and less traumatic, which includes the introduction of new products, new technologies, and new systems and processes.

The success of change in organizations depends partly on “change agents” who lead, support, and take responsibility for changing the existing behavior patterns of another person or social system. This responsibility is essential to the leadership role. Simply put, effective change agent means being a great “change leader” (Conger, Lawler & Spreitzer, 2009).

Ouston (2007) states that ‘managing change’ has been seen as something special, which occurs intermittently against a background of stability. Kotter (2004) opines that power is used to make things happen, while influence is the exercise of power. Managers derive power from organizational and individual sources, which are called position and personal powers, respectively. Power-oriented behavior is an action directed primarily at developing or using one’s wishes.

There are several types of power that influence the outcome of a negotiation:

1. *Position*, as conferred by one’s formal position in an organization. A marketing manager, as an example, is in the position to influence the decisions that affect the marketing department;
2. *Knowledge or expertise*, which can wield tremendous power. Of course, knowledge in itself is not powerful. It is the use of knowledge that confers power. Thus, one could be a bright person but still be powerless;
3. *Character or ethics* where more trustworthy individuals have more power in negotiations, whether they do what they are going to do—even when they no longer feel like doing it;
4. *Rewards* where people who can bestow rewards or perceive rewards hold power. Supervisors, with their ability to give raises, hold power over employees. Money can have power, but money, like anything else, holds very limited power if not distributed;
5. *Punishment* when those who have the ability to create an outcome for a counterpart, like managers who have the authority to reprimand and fire employees, have this type of power. Another example are state troopers and highway patrol officers who have the ability to give out speeding tickets;
6. *Gender* where negotiation case studies revealed that, when dealing with the opposite sex, and when a woman casually touched a man’s hand or arm to make her point, is an example of this kind of power;
7. *Powerlessness*, where in some instances, giving up all power can be very powerful. If one threatens a hostage with death, it may just challenge to go ahead and kill

him. At the point that the hostage gives up power, or control over his death, the kidnapper loses power; 8. *Charisma or personal power*, which is the trait of leaders who have the passion and confidence in what they believe in; 9. *Lack of interest or desire*, as in many other areas of life, the side with the least interest in the matter holds the most power; and, 10. Acting *crazy*, which sounds funny, but bizarre or irrational behavior can confer a tremendous amount of power. Every organization has someone who blows up when confronted with problems. Those who have been in this type of behavior tend to avoid such individuals. As a result, they are not given many tasks to accomplish because others are afraid to ask them.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are to: 1) determine if the secondary school administrators of Leyte, the Philippines are comfortable to be with turbulence and change; 2) determine the dimension of power that they prefer to influence others; and 3) trace significant relationships between the respondents' tolerance for managing in turbulent times and their personal power profile.

METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive survey-correlation and purposive sampling methods of research. The respondents were the secondary school administrators of Leyte, Philippines, who were the participants in the “Regional Division - Based Strategic and Operational Planning Process and Content.”

Table 1: Profile of the respondents of this study

Position	Male	Female	TOTAL
School Principal IV	4	2	6
School Principal III	6	4	10
School Principal II	8	2	10
School Principal I	4	3	7
School Head / Head Teacher	3	2	5
Teacher-In-Charge / Teacher III	1	1	2
TOTAL	26	14	40

Part I of the questionnaire measured their tolerance for managing in turbulent times, taken from the Turbulence Tolerance Test of Peter V. Vail (1989).

The respondents were requested to select their responses, on how they would like to have a job given a particular characteristic, by placing a number one to five on the line before each statement using the following scale:

- 5 - I would enjoy this very much; it's completely acceptable
- 4 - This would be enjoyable most of the time
- 3 - It would be about equally enjoyable and unpleasant
- 2 - This feature would be somewhat unpleasant for me
- 1 - This feature would be very unpleasant for me

The instrument gives an impression of the respondents' tolerance for managing in turbulent times that may have something likely to characterize the world of work into the next century. The higher the score, the more comfortable they seem to be with turbulence and change, which is a positive sign.

To determine the average response of each respondent their responses were interpreted using the following scale:

- 4.51 – 5.00 Very comfortable
- 3.51 – 4.50 Comfortable
- 2.51 – 3.50 Ready
- 1.51 – 2.50 Not comfortable
- 1.00 – 1.50 Not very comfortable

Part II of the questionnaire measured their personal power profile, adapted from the Personal Power Profile Assessment of Hinken and Schresheim (1959). It contains statements subdivided into five dimensions of power, namely, *reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert*.

The respondents were requested to mark the number that most closely represent, from each statement, behaviors that they, as leaders in work organizations can direct toward their subordinates, thinking regarding how they feel and regarding how they prefer to influence others, as follows:

- 5 - Strongly agree
- 4 - Agree
- 3 - Neither agree nor disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 1 - Strongly disagree

Coding was done to facilitate the analysis of the data in interpreting the respondents' responses. A high score on any of the five dimensions of power implies that the respondents prefer that particular form of power.

The researcher requested permission to gather the data from the Program Director on July 9, 2013, the first day of the session. The distribution and the retrieval of questionnaires to the respondents, lasted until July 11, 2013.

Frequency counts were used to determine their tolerance for managing in turbulent times and their personal power profile, while the Chi-square was used to trace significant relationships between the variables, tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. The tolerance for managing in turbulent times of the respondents

Scale	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
4.51 – 5.00	0		Very Comfortable
3.51 – 4.50	4	10%	Comfortable
2.51 – 3.50	28	70%	Ready
1.51 – 2.50	8	20%	Not comfortable
1.00 – 1.50	0		Not very comfortable
TOTAL	40	100%	

The data show that the secondary school administrators of Leyte, Philippines have to work on improving their tolerance for managing in turbulent times. These findings are related to the study of Hoijtink and Doorn (2011), where it analyzes the changes that local institutions are currently facing and how these representatives are reacting to these changes, which is divided into three sections. The first describes four administrative changes that organizations, in the field, are currently facing. The second is based on the results of the studies and analyzes how social workers and managers from these organizations are experiencing and handling these administrative changes. The third zooms in on what is called the most beneficial strategy, which is the binding reaction. Hoijtink and Doorn (2011) argue that these turbulent times call for organizations to create strong coalitions which are necessary to guarantee service provision as well as innovation in a meaningful way.

Table 3: The personal power profile of the respondent

Power Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Reward	4	10%
Coercive	0	0%
Legitimate	4	10%
Referent	12	30%
Expert	20	50%
TOTAL	40	100%

The overall pattern so far indicates that the dimension of power subscribed by the Leyte, Philippines secondary school administrators is Expert Power, which is considered to be their behaviors in work organizations since 20 or 50% of the respondents indicated that they prefer to influence others by employing the particular form of power.

Chi-square established that the tolerance of Leyte, Philippines secondary school administrators for managing in turbulent times is not related to their personal power since the obtained value of X , which is 9.05, is lesser than the tabular/critical value of X at the 0.05 level of significance of 12.592. Hence, Null Hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between their tolerance for managing in turbulent times and their personal power profile was accepted.

The non-significant relationships between their tolerance for managing in turbulent times and their personal power profile imply that being ready to be with turbulence and change, has nothing to do with their personal power profile or how they feel regarding how they prefer to influence others.

Tolerance for managing in turbulent times is one of the administrative challenges. Considering that improving cross-cultural relations includes understanding the true meaning of appreciating demographic and cultural diversity (Baliton 2015), it is, therefore, imperative that school administrators must be ready to face turbulence and change.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the secondary school administrators are merely ready to be with turbulence and change, and they subscribe or employ Expert dimension of power when they prefer to influence others. Finally, there is no significant difference between their tolerance for managing in turbulent times and their personal power.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The researcher discussed the findings of the study with the respondents during the Leyte Division Secondary School Administrators Association, Incorporated (LDSSAAI) Congress, on May 2014, and challenged them that these will serve as an instrument that gives an impression of their tolerance for managing in turbulent times, for them to be comfortable, if not very comfortable, to be with turbulence and change. The LDSSAAI, where the researcher is an officer, will conduct a training on “Managing in Turbulent Times” in one of their congresses in the future.

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