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Impact of Linkages and Consortia on Organizational Performance

JUDY MARIE R. ZOLETA
ORCID NO. 0000-0002-8251-6822
jrzoleta@liceo.edu.ph

KIMBERLY B. ALVAREZ
ORCID NO. 0000-0002-8792-4972
kbalvarez@liceo.edu.ph

RIZA JOY C. CANAS
ORCID NO. 0000-0003-2580-8930
rcanas@liceo.edu.ph

Liceo de Cagayan University
Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

ABSTRACT

The study sought to assess the impacts of linkages and consortia on the institution, the program, and the individuals who are both directly and indirectly involved with the aforementioned in Liceo de Cagayan University with emphasis on the Biology Program. It employed the descriptive method with survey questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA) as tool for collecting data. Results revealed the strong impact of linkages and consortia on the three categories described (institution, program, and individual) as indicated by the strong agreements of the respondents to the statements in the survey questionnaire. The positive responses further indicated a highly beneficial result from the collaboration and connection with the linkages and consortia through sharing of expertise, services, and research collaborations. The respondents of the study expressed strong agreements on the possible impacts of linkages and consortia indicating an effectiveness of the partnership through partnership synergy. Strong impacts were proven at the institutional, program, and individual level.

Keywords: linkages, consortia, collaboration, synergy, partnership effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Some evidence suggests that collaboration between universities and consortia influences productivity and enhances the goals of the institution. To grassroot efforts, thousands of alliances, coalitions, consortia, and health partnerships have been formed (Kreuter et al., 2000). As the influx and diffusion of knowledge provided a synergy which gained direct payoff at the organizational, program and individual level. According to Nanthagopan (2011), linkages help the organizations keep up with advances in pertinent fields and give access to wide-ranging sources of up-to-date information within each area of the organization's work. He further added that it is important for management to strengthen its organization to develop and manage its communications. According to Moore-Johnson (2003) new teachers have enough energy and commitment but little professional guidance. He further posited that linkages between schools can enhance their learned skills.. Establishing partnerships can also help accomplish shared goals related to advocacy, promotion, and program development. In addition, the benefits gained from the partnership include shared resources, strength in numbers which results in a synergistic effect, cross-promotion of issues, and expanded networks (APA, n.d.) Xia et al (2011) stressed that firms benefit from consortia in two ways, product benefits and process benefits. The former refers to the product that firms jointly develop while the latter is the value obtained from the development process which in this case are independent of the products. It is likened to the incentives obtained by the firm in working with the consortia. Through the institution's membership with consortia through the RPEO, the Biology program was able work with other members, got invited to conferences, derived new knowledge and advancements and somehow obtained both process and product benefits by participating in seminars and joining research competitions. However, the number of partnerships is so limited as well as the involvement of faculty, staff, and students in different events. Partnerships are more on the local scale than on an international scale. As for the program itself and as of this writing, it is not currently engaged yet in the latter type of partnership. But it is the hope of the program to engage in it to further enhance teaching and research competencies of the faculty and enhance the skills of the students.

The researchers focused on the benefits derived from the collaboration process of the institution and of the BS Biology program with linkages and consortia and hopes to find measures to improve, increase the number of partnership, and sustain them.

FRAMEWORK

The study used the theory on partnership synergy put forward by Lasker et al. (2001) wherein synergy is viewed as the proximal outcome of partnership that in turn influences the effectiveness of partnership. This was reinforced by Cramm and Nieboer (2013) who supported the idea that something new is created by combined perspectives, resources, and skills.

This framework supports the idea of Mitchel and Shortell (2000) which emphasized that partnerships or collaboration share a common impetus whereby objectives cannot be obtained by a single force. In effect the collaborative process of co-production results in better and bigger outcomes. This framework confirmed the effectiveness of the partnership and collaboration which resulted in synergy and greater efforts through the impacts gained at the institutional, program, and individual levels.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework which underlies this paper and provides the basis along which the paper focuses on.

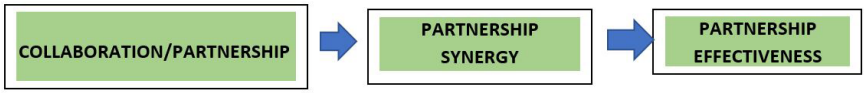

Figure 1. Schema showing the effectiveness of collaboration.

METHODS

Sample and Data Collection

A descriptive-quantitative research design was employed in this study in which a survey questionnaire was employed to collect data. The survey questionnaire consisted of three parts namely, impact on the institution, impact on the program, and impact on the individual (faculty and student). A five-point Likert Scale was used which summated rating scales from strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA). To measure the consistency of the items in the survey questionnaire, the survey material was subjected to a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha which obtained a reliability value of 0.942.

The participants of the study were 30 individuals from each of the following respondents- administrators, faculty, and students, which included those directly and indirectly involved but with more focus on those who were directly involved because not everyone got to have the opportunity to engage in every event. They were asked to answer the survey questionnaires and at the end were made to

identify the process or product benefits obtained from the partnership.

Statistical Analysis.

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software was used to interpret and analyzed the data collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the mean values for impact questions. The mean values were compared to a range of values with range 4:21-5:00 as strongly agree, 3:41-4:20 as agree, 2.61-3.40 as neutral, 1.81 -2.60 as disagree, and 1-1.80 as strongly disagree. As shown in the impact questions on institution, the highest mean falls in item A.2 "Shared information among member institutions reinforced the improvement of instructional strategies" verbally described as strongly agree. The lowest mean (4.281) on item A.1 and the other impact questions in the same category also have the same verbal description. This is in consonance with the findings of Nanthagopan 2011.

On the second category, impact on the program, the highest mean (4.5625) falls in item B.2 "The membership in linkages and consortia provided an opportunity in career grants" is also verbally described as strongly agree. The same degree of agreement is true to all other questions under the same category. This is supported by the findings of Xia (2011).

As to the impact on the individual, the highest mean (4.5625) falls in item C.4 "Linkages and consortia provided a career boost" which is verbally interpreted as strongly agree. All other items obtained the same description. This is in consonance with the contention of Cramm and Nieboer (2013) and Mitchel and Shortell (2000).

In general the respondents expressed a strong agreement to the positive impacts of linkages and consortia indicating that partnering and collaborating with them gained benefits for the institution, the program, and individual faculty and students.

Table 1

Overall descriptive measure of respondents on the impacts of linkages and consortia

QUESTIONS	MEAN (x)	DESCRIPTIVE MEASURE
A. Impact on the Institution		
A.1 The linkages and consortia enhanced the goals of the institution.	4.281	Strongly Agree
A.2 Shared information among member institutions reinforced the improvement of instructional strategies.	4.469	Strongly Agree
A.3 Shared expertise among member institutions provided expanded professional networks.	4.3750	Strongly Agree
A.4 The linkages and consortia provided an opportunity for career grants.	4.406	Strongly Agree
A.5 The tripartite partnership with linkages and consortia invoked some kind of synergy that produced better results.	4.3438	Strongly Agree
B. Impact on the Program		
B.1 Linkages and consortia provided the opportunity to improve the exit competencies of the students.	4.3444	Strongly Agree
B.2 The membership in linkages and consortia provided the opportunity for academic innovation.	4.5625	Strongly Agree
B.3 Linkages and consortia provides a wide range of topics that the program can benchmark on.	4.375	Strongly Agree
B.4 Linkages and Consortia provides the students and faculty free access to the use of laboratory facilities and services in other member institutions.	4.500	Strongly Agree
B.5 Shared complementary knowledge in linkages and consortia was used to improve instruction.	4.500	Strongly Agree
C. Impact on the Individual (Student/Faculty)		
C.1 The membership in research consortia increased my participation in research.	4.438	Strongly Agree
C.2 The membership in linkages and consortia enhanced research interest and capability of students and faculty.	4.5313	Strongly Agree
C.3 The membership in linkages and consortia has increased the scientific productivity of students and faculty.	4.4688	Strongly Agree
C.4 Linkages and consortia provided a career boost.	4.5625	Strongly Agree
C.5 Linkages and consortia expanded technical skills of students and faculty.	4.438	Strongly Agree

CONCLUSIONS

The respondents of the study expressed strong agreements on the possible impacts of linkages and consortia indicating an effectiveness of the partnership through partnership synergy. Strong impacts were proven at the institutional, program, and individual level. The impact on the institution included enhancement of its goals, improvement of instructional strategies, and expanded professional networks. At the program level, the impact included the improved exit competencies of students, opportunity for academic innovation, benchmarking on new topics, and free access to services and laboratories in another institution. At the individual level, the partnership resulted in the enhancement of research capabilities, scientific productivity, career boost and technical skills of both students and faculty who were engaged.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While the study suggest a strong impact of linkages and consortia, it is deemed necessary to recommend the following:

1. Creation of a platform that will strengthen and nurture the partnership with linkages and consortia such as stronger research collaborations;

2. Ensure that collaboration results are put into practice;

4. Ensure that a greater number of the faculty and students are given the opportunity to engage in every activity of the consortia and linkages; and

3. Allow the outcomes of the partnership to diversify into some income streams or exchange of knowledge through professorial visits to sustain the partnership.

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