

# Organizational Spirituality and People Management Practices of Selected Banks in Batangas City: Measures Towards Management Effectiveness

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*Abstract* - This study investigated the level of organizational spirituality and people management practices in selected banks in Batangas City. It also looked into the significant differences between the responses of managers and their subordinates on the level of organizational spirituality and people management practices. This paper also investigated the extent of association between the constructs organizational spirituality and people management practices. The study used a self - structured questionnaire that focused on the ten best people management practices. It also used the Organizational Spirituality Assessment (Sanders, 2003) to describe the level of organizational spirituality of managers in selected banks. Results revealed that there are excellent practices of organizational spirituality among the bank managers and their subordinates reflecting a leadership style that enhances positive behavior of people towards business goals, and in the process, they earn the trust

and respect of their customers. Bank managers have very good to excellent implementation of best practices on people management that develop the people's skills, knowledge and attributes to improve the performance of their organizations. Another finding of this study is that the managers' implementation of the best practices on people management is not in any way influenced by their level of spirituality.

*Keywords* - Organization, Spirituality, people management, management effectiveness, assessment

## INTRODUCTION

In the very challenging world of business, leaders and managers must discover new strategies that will make their companies achieve growth and success. The stiff competitions from almost all business enterprises, coupled with the harsh economic realities being experienced by many countries around the world, make the management effectiveness, which is always equated with business growth and profit seems too elusive. Oftentimes, the key to business success is its ability to retain the loyalty of its stakeholders, which include not only their customers but also the employees who run the business activities. Towards attaining success, an effective management of its most important asset- the human resource or its people, should be in place. This goal can be made possible through the best practices in people management, which can spring from the humanistic concerns, values and moral strengths of the leaders and managers. The combination of the best practices in people management and the spiritual nature of business leaders can provide the key that will lead to organizational effectiveness.

People management is not a new concept in business organizations. There has been an evolution of the business jargons in relation to this construct; some authors called this concept as *personnel management*, then books and literature mention this as "*human resource management*". Lately, the term is elevated into *human capital management*. Eventually, in these present times experts in the field simply call this popular

concept as people *management*. Business organizations give importance on people management or human capital management because they totally agree that developing the most important asset of the organization, its people, is one vital strategy to meet the organizational goals.

This study focused on two important aspects of human resource management: the ten best practices in people management which are derived from the Investors in People (IiP) standard, and on organizational spirituality. The Investors in People standard is a business improvement tool designed to advance the organization's performance through its employees. It helps organizations to improve performance and realize objectives through the management and development of people (<http://www.proveandimprove.org/new/tools/investorsinpeople.php>; retrieved February 25, 2010). These ten best practices are: (1) business planning strategy; (2) learning and development strategy; (3) people management strategy; (4) leadership management strategy; (5) management effectiveness; (6) recognition and rewards; (7) involvement and empowerment; (8) learning and development; (9) performance measurement, and (10) continuous improvement.

Business planning strategy is connected to the mission and vision of the company. An organization's mission refers to its purpose for existence, or its reason for being. It is a statement of the company's priorities. On the other hand, a vision is a statement of the "dream" or future directions which the company wants to attain or achieve in the far future. (Diamante & Tan 2007).

Learning and development strategy refers to the plans to involve people in the formulation of human resource development programs. The members of the organization should be included in identifying their training needs.

On the other hand, people management strategy refers to the organization's plans in managing its people. The Human Resource office, which is in charge of managing and developing the employees, should have a concrete plan that should ensure the equal opportunity in the development of every member of the organization. Employees should be free to explain their views and opinions about improvement of their works and the organization as a whole.

Leadership management strategy refers to the plan to ensure that the capabilities of the managers to lead, manage and develop people effectively are in place. There should be a leadership brand that will serve as a uniform guide of all leaders to manage their people. Management effectiveness on the other hand refers to success in managing and leading people. The success can be seen through the realization of business goals and objectives through people's performance.

Recognition and rewards strategy as the phrase connotes pertains to the recognition and rewarding of people's contribution to the achievements and success of the business. Meanwhile, involvement and empowerment is about encouraging people to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision-making process. It has been revealed in many researches on motivation (Javier, 1999) that involvement and empowerment of people promote inspiration for the employees to succeed in their works.

Learning and development strategy is about the interest or concern of the managers for the people in the organization to continuously learn and develop themselves. Leaders and managers should ensure that their people's needs are being met on a regular basis.

The last best practice in people management is continuous improvement. This refers to the improvements that should be continually made to the way people are managed and developed.

Meanwhile, business organizations are now recognizing that one popular approach to management effectiveness, aside from leadership commitment, is through the practice of spiritual development in the workplace. In the recent years, spiritual development has been given a new name that is called organizational spirituality (Sanders, 2003).

Spirituality in organizations has gained attention in organizational development during the past decade (Sass, 2000). Authors of this construct give different meanings and approaches on how they define spirituality. In this paper, the context of organizational spirituality is about recognizing that the people who comprise the organizations are all spiritual beings sharing common human experiences (Thompson, 2000). Organizational spirituality is viewing work as spiritual path, as well as an opportunity for holistic growth and development of organizational members. It can be viewed as a process of organizational learning where every member of the organization demonstrates caring

and compassionate attitude towards fellow employees, superiors, and subordinates, and most particularly with customers, and in the case of the schools, the students (Craig, 1999). It is about acknowledging and developing the truth, integrity, and Divine power within all organizational workers (Laabs, 1995).

Banks are important institutions in our economic system that provides important services to business organizations. Banks fulfill valuable roles in our society by playing a key role in financial intermediation and by creating financial products and services that benefit businesses and consumers. These banks are formal organizations manned by people such as their managers and staff. Banks are considered as service organizations, because their products are the banking services and packages that they provide their clients. Since banks provide an important role to the life of businesses and individuals, it is interesting to find out if these banks practice the people management strategies that are geared towards effective business goals. Similarly, it is also interesting to investigate if these banks practice organizational spirituality in the workplace.

This study is intended to investigate the people management practices in selected banks in terms of the ten best practices in people management, as well as to determine the level of organizational spirituality. This study also determines the extent of association of people management practices and organizational spirituality, and lastly to test the significance differences on the responses between the leaders and staff on people management practices and organizational spirituality.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study used the descriptive design to describe the people management practices and the level of organizational spirituality of selected banks in Batangas City. Four (4) banks are covered by this study; they are: Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation, Bank of Philippine Islands, Bank of Commerce, and Metro Bank. These banks are identified in this study because they belong to the big banking institutions in the country. The respondents of the study are the bank managers and their respective subordinates. The study used

a self - structured questionnaire that focused on the ten best people management practices, and the Organizational Spirituality Assessment (Sanders, 2003).

For statistical treatment of data, the study used frequency distribution, weighted mean, and percentage. A correlation analysis was used to test the significant difference between the responses of the managers and their staff. The same correlation analysis also tested the extent of association between people management practices and organizational spirituality. For data analysis and interpretation, the following rating scale was utilized:

### A. People Management Practices

<b>Weights</b>	<b>Verbal Description</b>	<b>Mean Ranges</b>
5	Excellent	4.50 - 5.00
4	Very Good	3.50 - 4.49
3	Good	2.50 - 3.49
3	Fair	1.50 - 2.49
1	Poor	1.49 - below

### B. Level of Organizational Spirituality

<b>Weights</b>	<b>Verbal Description</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Mean Ranges</b>
5	Strongly Agree	Very High	4.50 - 5.00
4	Agree	High	3.50 - 4.49
3	Moderately Agree	Moderate	2.50 - 3.49
2	Disagree	Low	1.50 - 2.49
1	Strongly Disagree	Very Low	1.49 - below

## RESULTS

Table 1. Level of organizational spirituality in selected banks as perceived by managers and their subordinates

Banks	Managers W.M.	V.I.	Subor- dinates W.M.	V.I.	Overall W.M.	V.I.
Bank A	4.96	Very high	4.50	Very high	4.73	Very high
Bank B	5	Very high	5	Very high	5	Very high
Bank C	4.9	Very high	4.60	Very high	4.75	Very high
Bank D	5	Very high	4.46	Very high	4.73	Very high
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4.96</b>	<b>Very high</b>	<b>4.64</b>	<b>Very high</b>	<b>4.80</b>	<b>Very high</b>

Legend: W.M. = weighted mean; V.I = verbal interpretation

It could be seen from the data that the level of organizational spirituality of managers of all the banks is very high (**w.m. 4.96**). Similarly, the data also reveal that the level of organizational spirituality of the subordinates is also very high (**w.m. 4.64**). A closer look at the data shows that the level of spirituality of Bank D has a weighted mean of **4.46** which is slightly lower than 4.50, and is verbally interpreted as high only.

Table 1 also shows that the level of organizational spirituality of both the managers and subordinates of all banks is very high (**w.m. 4.80**).

Table 2. People management practices of selected banks as perceived by both managers and their subordinates

People Management Practices	Bank A	VI	Bank B	VI	Bank C	VI	Bank D	VI
Business planning strategy	4.9	E	5	E	4.6	E	4.7	E
Learning and Development strategy	4.72	E	5	E	4.55	E	4.53	E
People management strategy	4.48	V.G.	5	E	4.65	E	4.61	E
Leadership and Management Strategy	4.63	E	5	E	4.35	VG	4.75	E
Management Effectiveness	4.6	E	5		4.4	VG	4.8	E
Recognition and Rewards	4.6	V.G.	5		E	VG	4.5	E
Involvement and Empowerment	4.4	E	5	E	E	VG	4.6	E
Learning and Development	4.7	E	5	E	4.6	E	4.6	E
Performance	4.6	E	5	E	4.5	E	4.6	E
Management Continuous Improvement	4.63	E	5	E	4.84	E	4.58	E
<b>Overall W.M</b>	<b>4.62</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>4.48</b>	<b>VG</b>	<b>4.63</b>	<b>E</b>

It could be seen from this table that Bank A has an overall weighted mean of **4.62** which is verbally interpreted as Excellent. The people management practice which obtained the highest weighted mean of **4.90** in Bank A with verbal interpretation of Excellent is business planning strategy, while the people management practice which obtained the lowest mean (**w.m.= 4.48**) is people management strategy, with verbal interpretation of very good.

The same table also reveals that Bank B obtained an Excellent rating (**w.m= 5**) in all of its management practices. It could be gleaned from the table that both managers and their subordinates rated all items with a rating of 5, which is verbally interpreted as Excellent.

The data also reveal that Bank C obtained a general overall weighted mean of **4.48** which is interpreted as Very Good. The highest rating obtained by Bank C is in continuous improvement with a weighted mean of **4.48** and verbally interpreted as Very good. The management practice of Bank C which obtained the lowest mean rating of **4.30**, verbally interpreted as Very Good, is involvement and empowerment.

While Bank D obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.63 which is verbally interpreted as Very Good. The lowest mean rating (**w.m.= 4.50**) obtained by Bank D is on recognition and awards, while the highest rating obtained by Bank D is on business planning strategy with a weighted mean of **4.70**.

Table 3. Coefficients correlation between organizational spirituality and people management practices in all banks

<b>r</b>	<b>p value</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
-0.084	.700	Not significant

It could be gleaned from Table 3 that there is no significant relationship between organizational spirituality and management practices in all banks as shown by the value of alpha which are all greater than .05. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between organizational spirituality and management practices is accepted.

Table 4. Comparison of responses between leaders and their subordinates on the level of organizational spirituality and people management practices in banks

<b>Variables</b>	<b>t value</b>	<b>t value</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
People management practices	1.500	0.231	Not significant
Organizational spirituality	2.912	0.062	Not significant

It could be gleaned from table 4 that at 0.05 level of significance, there is no significant difference between the responses of leaders and their subordinates on the level of organizational spirituality and the people management practices. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted.

## DISCUSSION

### Level of Organizational Spirituality

The results which showed that the level of organizational spirituality of both managers and subordinates in selected banks is very high could be interpreted to mean that these managers and their subordinates facilitate and foster a sense of community in the workplace. This could also mean that the managers and their subordinates ensure that there is a feeling of belongingness in the workplace, regardless of their spiritual beliefs. This result could also be interpreted to mean that the employees of the different banks demonstrate caring and compassionate attitude towards fellow employees, superiors, and subordinates, and most particularly with the bank clients or customers (Craigie, 1999). This could also mean that the managers are spiritual persons who view work as their spiritual path as well as an opportunity for holistic growth and development of organizational members.

These findings are important inputs to the business community of Batangas City because the bank clients or customers could feel

confident that their hard earned money or savings are being managed by the people who are spiritual persons, and who can be trusted to manage their funds. This confirms the statement of Laabs (1995) who pointed out that spiritual persons are capable of acknowledging and developing the truth, integrity, and Divine power within all organizational workers. This could mean that the identified bank managers and their subordinates maybe be considered as individuals who have deep seated values that encourage trustworthiness and integrity in the workplace. These findings also support the opinion of Driscoll (2010) when she stated that those leaders who integrate a moral and spiritual component can transform an organizational culture so members of the organization begin to feel connected to a larger community and a higher purpose. This could mean that the bank managers and their subordinates believe that their works and responsibilities in the bank connect them to their higher purpose or they can better see the connection between their work life and all of their stakeholders, which include their clients and customers.

### **People management practices of selected banks**

The results which showed that Bank A has an Excellent people management practices (w.m.= 4.62) is an indication that this bank practices the ten best people management practices such as business planning strategy, learning and development strategy, people management strategy, leadership and management strategy, management effectiveness, recognition and rewards, involvement and empowerment, learning and development, performance measurement, and continuous improvement. The results which indicated that the highest weighted mean of **4.90** obtained by Bank A in business planning strategy could be interpreted to mean that the managers and subordinates of this bank believe that they involve key people in the planning activities, and that this bank has a clear vision and mission that is understandable and is being communicated to all. Business planning involves goal setting. Lezzote, Lashway and Weber (in Javier, 2004) pointed out that effective organizations have clear and focused mission where employees share an understanding of commitment to company's goals. This is similar to the study of Huil, Tzai-Zang,

& Yihl (2010) which surveyed 236 managers working at steel firms in Taiwan which revealed that there is a close association between HRM practices and business strategy. At the same time, this particular study also found out that business strategies can be positively related to firm performance.

Meanwhile, the result where the lowest mean rating obtained by Bank A is on people management strategy indicates that this bank, although has a very good application of this best practice, has to provide more equality of opportunity for everyone to be developed and trained. Similarly, this particular bank has to be fairer and open to all employees, in such a way that they are able to express their views and opinion freely particularly on issues involving their works. This is confirmed by Kotler (1996) who pointed out that managers should encourage all employees to contribute ideas for the improvement of their performance, and the overall organizational performance.

On the other hand, the results which indicated that Bank B obtained an overall weighted mean of 5 in all of the ten best practices in people management is an indication that managers and their subordinates in this bank fully believe that this bank has an exemplary people management practices. Because this bank is considered as one of the best commercial banks in the Philippines, it could be pointed out that people management practices may have direct relationship with the banks overall performance.

In Bank C, the data indicate that the overall weighted mean is 4.48. This could be interpreted to mean that this bank has very good people management practices. The highest rating of Excellent (4.84) in this bank is obtained by the Continuous Improvement which is an indication that this bank commits itself to the continuous improvement of its services. This could also mean that the managers of this bank encourage the employees to think of ways on how to improve their respective works. According to Wenber and Hongyi (2009), continuous improvement contributes to organizational learning. Rick and Nancy (2010) meanwhile pointed out that continuous improvement could increase the company's competitiveness. This data could be interpreted to mean that Bank C strives to be as competitive with other banks in the locality. The lowest mean rating (4.10), with verbal interpretation of Very Good, obtained by Bank C is on Recognition and Rewards.

This could mean that although the employees described recognition and rewards as very good, there is still much room for improvement, such that the managers of this bank should give more praises and commendations for the job well done by the employees. Similarly, the employees should also see that their efforts and contributions to the banks success are appropriately recognized and rewarded. According to the study conducted by Scarborough (2010), employees who received recognition are twice likely to stay with their companies. The same study suggested that rewarding people should be done in a timely manner, because delay is considered as an enemy of effective recognition. Managers should also understand that individuals are motivated by different incentives, and so it is important that the company recognizes various types of employee successes and reward them appropriately (Scarborough, 2010).

Bank D, on the other hand obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.63, which is verbally interpreted as Excellent. This is an indication that this bank has an excellent application of the ten best people management practices. The lowest mean rating (4.50) of Excellent is on Rewards and Recognition, which is similar to the findings in Bank C. This is an indication that Bank C still has an opportunity to improve its recognition and rewards strategies to its employees. The highest mean rating of Excellent is obtained by Management Effectiveness. This could mean that the managers and employees of this bank believe that the bank realizes its business goals and objectives through the people's performance. Additionally, it could mean that they feel that the bank obtains success in managing and leading its people. This is parallel to the opinion of Fergie and Darleen (2010) who investigated the profiles of effective managers, where they opined that "exceptional" leaders are those who build trust and demonstrate accountability. They are also those who exhibit competencies in their specific functions. The same study revealed that leaders who are considered effective are those who have the ability to execute plans and turn the plans into successful results.

## **Extent of association between people management practices and organizational spirituality in selected banks**

The results which revealed that there is no significant relationship between organizational spirituality and management practices in all banks could be interpreted to mean that the ten best people management practices have no association with the organizational spirituality. It could also mean that people management practices and organizational spirituality are two separate constructs which do not have any bearing or relationship with one another. This study is similar to the findings of Javier (2004) which investigated the causal relationship of spirituality, stress, work values and management effectiveness of school managers where it was revealed that spirituality did not have any association with management effectiveness—which is one of the ten best people management practices included in this study.

## **Significant differences on the responses of leaders and their subordinates on people management practices and organizational spirituality.**

The data on Table 4 which revealed that there is no significant difference on the responses of leaders and their subordinates on people management practices and organizational spirituality is an indication that leaders and their subordinates of the identified banks have the same opinion on the way they interpret the applications of organizational spirituality and people management practices in their respective banks. This could also mean that leaders and their subordinates have common observations and opinions on the way the people management practices are applied in their respective banks. The results are indications that people management practices and organizational spirituality are common leadership and management approaches that are being applied and being observed in the identified banks in Batangas City. The results are also an indication that bank managers integrate spirituality in their leadership style. Authors confirm that spirituality in organizations have offered a broad range of potential benefits for individuals which include personal fulfillment and meaning ( Church et al, 1994; Craige, 1999; McCormick, 1994;

Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Neck & Milliman, 1994). Moreover, these results are in consonance with the level of spirituality of bank managers which are described as excellent. It could be further interpreted that these professionals are worthy of the trust and confidence of their clients and subordinates.

### **Measures that will enhance the management effectiveness of the identified banks.**

1. The identified banks should continue to foster their sense of spirituality because this leadership style encourages the trust and confidence not only of their people, but importantly, their customers.

2. Bank A should be able to provide equality of opportunities to all employees in terms of training and development. Similarly, this bank should be able to provide more strategies that will convince their people that they encourage them to freely share their ideas, particularly on how they will improve their works.

3. Bank B should continuously maintain their excellent people management practices.

4. Bank C should be able to improve their strategies on the way they award and recognize their people.

5. Bank D should also find new strategies on the how to reward and recognize their people better.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The study generated these conclusions:

1. The excellent practices of organizational spirituality among the bank managers and their subordinates reflect an effective leadership style that enables the managers to influence the behaviors of their people towards their business goals, and which earns for them the trust and respect of their customers.

2. Managers' very good to excellent implementation of best practices on people management implies that the bank managers develop its people's skills, knowledge and attributes to improve the performance of their organizations.

3. The managers' implementation of the best practices on people management is not in anyway influenced by their level of spirituality.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approaches to organizational spirituality should be maintained or even improve in all banks so that they can continue to gain the trust and confidence of their customers.

2. Bank A should be advised to provide equality of opportunities to all employees in terms of training and development. Similarly, this bank should be able to provide more strategies that will convince their people that they encourage them to freely share their idea, particularly on how they will improve their works. This can be done in the form of employee suggestion boxes or in the regular meetings where everyone is given the chance to speak freely.

3. Bank C and Bank D should be able to improve their strategies on the way they award and recognize their people, such as giving praises at the instant where employees perform well, or instituting simple ceremonies where deserving employees are given awards.

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