

ABSTRACT

Many multinational firms based in Macao claim that up-to-standard local managers are not easily available, which is why they have to hire managers mainly from overseas. The purpose of this study is not intended to dispute that claim, what it hopes to achieve instead is to identify some effective or good managers in Macao. Specifically, this research focuses on those administrative managers who are considered good in Tertiary Education sector in Macao.

The primary purpose of this study is to sketch a profile of effective administrative managers in tertiary education settings in Macao, to find out what they do, to determine what kind of capabilities are needed for their expected performance, and to learn how they each become a good manager in their own right. Another purpose of this study is to identify whether the present framework from the literature, i.e. what managers do, is relevant to the case of Macao's managers. It is hoped that this study can also serve as a reference for those aspiring managers who want to develop their career as effective managers.

In order to obtain the required information, in-depth interviews with fifteen managers were conducted in their offices. Recommendations from people in the tertiary education sector, together with the referrals by those managers who had been interviewed formed the list of interviewees. Questions in the interviews were

composed of three main parts which relate to the broad research aim of this study, while triangulation was used for the analysis of data.

This study finds that managerial tasks in higher education sector involve several areas. The main area is human resources management, where managers manage them in various ways, such as developing, mentoring and motivating. Besides, communication with parties inside and outside the organization via various channels, such as meetings, electronic medium, occupies a considerable proportion of their time. Meanwhile, managers also engage in strategic planning, with the aim of establishing some directions and policies to support and assist in achieving the strategic goal of the organization. Ranking next in their tasks is organizing and coordinating, where managers act as coordinators between their own departments and other parties, given the authority vested in them. In all these processes, managers are, in fact, carrying out another important task, i.e. networking. This is important because establishing connections with parties inside and outside their own organization helps managers to play several managerial roles, such as figurehead, liaison, monitor, disseminator, etc.

Apart from the above managerial tasks, this study also identified the capabilities needed by the managers to perform their tasks. Area-specific knowledge allows managers to excel in their own area, and sector-specific knowledge is further

required to facilitate their daily work. However, area- and sector-specific knowledge has to be supplemented by general knowledge in order to be comprehensive, and together these form the knowledge base for effective managers. Skills are of equal importance as knowledge, and some of them such as communication skill and leadership skill receive higher rating than others in managers' daily work. After the technical parts of knowledge and skills, next comes the attitude that is the behavioural and emotional part of capabilities. Appropriate attitudes like being positive and enthusiastic at work and in the ways to dealing with others can make a difference to the result of an action, in the sense that it can influence people around them, especially their subordinates. Some commonalities are identified in their career path. Most of them possess rich work experience, with some in related sector, while some are found to have experience in other sector but they are able to transfer those experience to their current positions. Influences from both present and previous superiors help to shape their management style as well.

Concerning what good managers do and what it takes to accomplish the tasks demanded of them, the above findings are not that different from the literature. It implies that managerial tasks, functions and capabilities as suggested by other scholars are relevant to the case in Macao as well, with some adaptation to the local environment and specific industry, to be sure.