Introduction

All corporate organizations have cultures. This is an implied fact. However, each organization may have its own unique culture shaped by the degree of individual moral responsibilities and actions of the people that are in it (Dempsey, 2015). As each organization member shares their individual culture, they assimilate by accepting the actions of others to the point that each condones what the other does. To better understand the nature of how this interaction produces a unique culture, one need to understand what organizational culture really is. A corporate culture is commonly defined as a set of underlying beliefs and values that form the basis of the socio-psychological actions within the organization (Cancialosi, 2017). It includes the experiences, expectations, and the formed values that guide the members' interaction with one another. For many organizations, their culture evolves depending upon how their corporate requirements, goals, and objectives change. Ascertaining the actual status of an organizational culture maybe not be simple if a system has not emplaced a monitor of its emergence as in my selected organization's case. What can help is to use an objective standardize assessment instrument. The kind of instrumentation that can gather the data and furnish the stakeholders with a quantifiable image of its current overall cultural health.

Assessment Methodology

Gathering the data and finding the relationship between the perceived culture and the organization it represents is beneficial to that organization's members (Janićijević, 2013). Since culture is an intrinsic factor of an organization, it can direct how the members behave within it through corporate norms, attitudes, assumptions, and most of all values members use in their day to day activities. This is the methodology used. A

questionnaire was designed to assess the diversity and cultural awareness of the selected organization, the Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association (PMAAA) subchapter, the North East Group (NEG). This assessment was used to provide the baseline in identifying the current status of the culture of this non-profit organization. There were ten questions that were divided into two sections based on Warner's Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile (Warner, 2002). Warner discussed six competency steps that individuals and organizations follow. The first section is composed of the first three stages: (1) Awareness and Climate, (2) Levels of Inclusion, and (3) Levels of Tolerance and Understanding. The next three are (4) Degree of Empathy, (5) Degree of Adaptation and Change, and (6) Persistence and Commitment which compose the second section. The questionnaire was composed of ten questions answered using a multi-choice method randomly categorized into these two sections (see Appendix A). Using SurveyMonkey, an online survey was sent to all members of the NEG. Twenty members participated and fully answered the questions.

Interpretation of Results

The NEG organization can most benefit from the proper identification of its member's skills, attitudes, and values as they continue to be active in the organization. The data gathered here does provide a few important insights on where the members are in terms of their culture and diversity beliefs (Cox, 2014). For this survey, Warner's scoring rubric was adapted that equates that a score above 595 accumulated sums of the scores can be considered high and that scores below 420 are low (Warner, 2002). The scoring rubrics found that in the area of Awareness and Climate, Levels of Inclusion, and Levels of Tolerance and Understanding, the participant group scored 438 (see Appendix B).

Looking at the questions, numbers 1, 4, 7, 9, and 10 constitute Section 1. Scores for 7 and 9 are both below what is considered low scores (below 84 points). The questions asked were:

7. I know that older people at work are expected to require more patience and time. I find it not acceptable for one group in the organization to dominate others. Accumulated sum = 80.

9. I see that people of a different group are not affected on how they are treated at work. Accumulated sum = 81.

Noting the data based on question 7, it appears that the many of the participants believe that their perception of elderly people connotes a stigma of slow workers. For question 9, they might not be oblivious of some possible adverse effects treating people of a particular group unintentionally.

As for the Degree of Empathy, Degree of Adaptation and Change, and Persistence and Understanding, the common score is 451. Noteworthy is that the result for Question 5 appears to be the outlier which is 80, marked low of the score of 84. The rest is well above the low score. At this, the participant group appears to be hesitant of changing their habit to accommodate a different group to place them at ease.

Here is question 5:

5. It is needed to change my habit to make those of the different group more comfortable.

Discussion

The Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association is based in the Capital Region of the Philippines. It is a non-profit organization that caters to the welfare of the

graduates of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA). It has overseas affiliate organizations and one of the bigger chapters is the North East Group (NEG) which has areas of a jurisdiction covering New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. It has approximately two hundred fifty members and about fifty affiliate members (non-graduates but were former cadets of the PMA), and five active honorary members (non-graduates of the Philippine Military Academy). The values shared by its members stem from the basic foundation of what was taught them while still cadets of the PMA. It is founded in many military officer traditions that fuel many of their values even until now. The PMA leadership development goal is to instruct, train and develop the cadets so that each graduate shall possess the character, the professionalism and the aptitude required of a regular officer of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (PMA.PH, n.d.). All members who have gone through the academy portals have a very dear place for this in their hearts. Their esprit de corps is nothing less than the best. Their loyalty to one another has been proven time and time again through combat, in trainings, and many more similar ventures that they profess it lasts their lifetime. Their brotherhood is considered everlasting. They are also of Asian descent particularly Filipinos. They possess values such as respect for elders that they show great reverence. So, looking at the questions that the group scored low, probable reason for Q7 is that their perception of elderly people is that of slow workers because that is what they see the elderly Filipino folks be. They appear to move slow for elderly Filipinos do have a tendency to be very deliberate in many of their actions. However, they can normally still be efficient at work. As for being oblivious to some possible adverse effects treating people of a particular group unintentionally, one virtue of the Filipinos is that they possess an active and sacrificial self-control value of

their needs for the welfare of other individuals (Lasquety-Reyes, 2016). Other cultures may see this as shyness. But actually, the reason is that Filipinos have a tendency of shutting up for the sake of not wanting to hurt or to cause somebody else's feelings be offended through uttered words. For question 5, the hesitancy that the data revealed could be that the NEG is composed primarily of individuals who have set foot inside the portals of the PMA and lived the military life which is very unique compared of those who have not served. They are hesitant to open the doors to others who might not understand their norms, traditions, and values that could lead to being misunderstood. However, the group does accept honorary members but they have to go through much vetting before they are accepted.

The Diversity and Cultural Awareness Model: Competency Steps

Change must be welcomed if the purpose is to improve the lifestyle and make the organization more efficient. An organization needs to bring in qualified people of diverse backgrounds in order to harness their skills to accommodate fostering better teamwork (Eskenazi, 2019). In order for the NEG organization to effectively become better at this cultural diversity, there are six sets of actions that its members need to be cognizant of that can form the basis of taking the NEG organization to the next level in terms of diversity (Warner, 2002).

One of the glaring issues that were brought out by the survey is that members are not fully aware of the benefits of diversity. Their borderline overall low scores indicated that they have not established a full climate of mutual trust in the organization. So, the first step that they have to learn is awareness and the right climate towards cultural diversity. NEG must start to be more conscious of appreciating what diversity could bring

to the organization. Members need to understand the many ways different people or groups of people look, their beliefs, and how and why they behave such. This will then pave the way towards establishing mutual trust. NEG must see that diversity can be a strength otherwise their cultural foundation can never be strong when challenged. Often what is simply needed is training and correct indoctrination of the members. The core of these initial actions is to verse the members of what other individuals of other diverse groups experience: fear, anxiety, discrimination, prejudice, bias, and many other things. Other training focuses would be on understanding other racial backgrounds, country of origins, religious leaning, work type, family values, age group, and last but not the least, gender. In order for these to be successful, the leadership must embrace and support it. If leadership is not fully supportive, the diversity program may not be emplaced correctly that there will be no significant forward movement. Here are some specific actions that individuals can take. Members must take upon themselves to spend more time researching about diversity and different cultural issues in order to increase their knowledge. They can also participate in any diversity meetings and discussions focusing on the current culture and beliefs that exist. They can attend diversity awareness training and continuing education. That way, their knowledge of the organizational culture will be further augmented. For the organization, NEG can conduct surveys that will take the temperature of the group in terms of diversity. Base from the result, they can design a series of training and activities that will make sure that the diversity foundation is properly disseminated. Senior leadership must also be proactive and need to lead the charge on these initiatives.

The second step is to emphasize inclusion. The decision-making processes of the organization must not be controlled by only a few people. There should be an inclusion of

participation coming from those in the minority groups. This must include giving everyone's a voice, an opportunity to be heard. It is true that NEG is composed of previous officers and men of the military and that seniority many times prevail but this tradition of seniority must not be abused. Younger retired officers do come into meetings with more current ideas that can become brilliant catalysts for evolving the group towards a better future. Likewise, there should be a balance of gender, religion, and age representation in every decision-making activity. The benefit of having a balanced approach is that it creates a sense of unity, fairness, and honesty. However, the organization must not do so just for the purpose of tokenism. These participative endeavors must be based on making useful all members of different groups so that other members of the groups can also emulate. Individuals can take the following steps that will help them emphasize inclusion. They can reflect whether power can only be vested to the majority and why. They can review the limitations of the organizational process that prevents certain groups to be not involved in some organizational decision-making activities. Be conscious of how meetings are represented and be vocal on why some groups are not represented. For the organization, these can be done. NEG can encourage representation by all groups in all meetings that have policy-making or decision-making implications. They can make sure that invitations are sent out to all individuals that can represent all parties.

The third step is the level of tolerance and understating. Once other individuals of the minority groups are given due voice in decision-making processes, the views on diversity beliefs and appreciation become better appreciated. Any amount of intolerance must be rejected and not allowed to persists. If there are still blurred views of why

different particular groups exist, they must be discussed and views of their importance are brought to light. There must be no space for questioning any rights of any individuals in NEG. Studies have demonstrated that many intolerance instances are caused by an individual's intent to live with a high level of ambiguity of things that they see as confusing. However, once individuals start to accept it quietly and calmly with an open mind, they will become more comfortable with cultural diversity gradually. Otherwise, they can become aggressive and fascistic telling other people of their preset mind models of those who are diverse. But there is hope for them and that by patiently exposing them little by little to the other group's particular values and norms that they can be convinced and will experience the intended insight. This can be facilitated by training and continuing education. The steps individuals can take to ensure this hold is by continuing to read articles about diversity; to calmly and peacefully accept situations that one cannot understand, and to not be hasty with making any conclusions or making judgments. For the organization, NEG can encourage individuals to accept uncertainty as a new norm. It can also coax people to consider gathering more information rather than make a hasty decision. The organization may also place people of different backgrounds together so that each will be exposed to the other and will allow them to know one another better.

The fourth step is the degree of empathy. This is considered the highest state of understanding another person's nature and beliefs. It is parallel to the ability to put somebody on some else's shoes in order for them to feel what they feel, hear what they hear, and view through their eyes what they perceive and see. Empathy is simply showing the sincere and genuine appreciation of an individual and understanding why they behave as such. One of the greatest challenges of empathy is that people see others differently

because of their stereotype beliefs. Stereotyping is when people ascribed to others some traits on their basis of connection to a particular group that may or may not be accurate. These can act as automatic filters to judge some people by inconveniently categorizing them from having some noxious traits even before knowing and understanding the person well enough. As long as people are not well acquainted with members of a particular group, many individuals will continue to use stereotyping and see others differently on basis of their color, race, religion, gender, age, education, height, weight, accent, and many other characteristics. NEG can combat this by making sure that appropriate association is made through closer association and involvement with these individuals to shed light on who they are. For the individual actions, one may eat lunch with another person of difference in order for that person to get to know the other better, and maybe get a glimpse of their life-decision process. Offering to help minority group members if assistance is needed is also another friendly way of getting to know them better. It is important to adjust your mental prototypes as you start to learn more about the other group members. For the organization, NEG has to make sure that when changing the mental stereo prototypes of its members that it will consider actions that will minimize or stop any negative interaction that might come from other members in the group. NEG should also think of ways on how to reward individuals who successfully accept cultural diversity as their norm.

The fifth step is the degree of adaptation and change. Each member must be able accommodate into their lifestyle the essence of cultural and general awareness. This lifestyle needs to be sustainable and must be incorporated into the organization as a whole. So, what does this entail? The NEG policies must continue to evolve and need to

incorporate policies, procedures, and mechanics of diversity as part of the members' roles as they work together to achieve the corporate goals. There are many tools on how to achieve this. They range from the way people are hired, to the setting of the organizational objectives, looking on promotion and career development, the way communication is processed, meriting rewards and accomplishments, and of course all these can be accomplished through continuing education and training. Policies and procedures can be rewritten to promote diversity, acceptance of particular groups, tolerance of differences, and removal of stereotyping. But rewriting may not be enough. There must be a group commitment to observe them. That is the only way that change can be assured. For the individuals, they can serve in committees that reviews diversity policies and offer their thoughts on how to better advance it. For the organization, reviewing major policies in order to further encourage diversity and making sure to publicize and communicate any major policy changes to the whole NEG.

The sixth and final step is persistence and commitment. There will always be biased and prejudicial discrimination that will challenge the organizational diversity process and may undo what has been accomplished. There must be a solid commitment from the leadership to become persistent in the application of the cultural diversity process. Negative actions must not be tolerated. Deeper education of all individuals in the NEG organization will help in the maintenance and sustenance of the change that is warranted. Here is a suggested long-term strategy: focus on the means for positively resolving conflicts in all levels through a win-win approach rather than a win/lose resolution. Another long-term strategy is by confronting directly obvious biases, prejudices, or discriminations. This could be achieved by a more stringent policy against

individuals who are recidivists, and who continue to demonstrate negative attitudes and actions toward certain individuals. These can be in the form of serious disciplinary sanctions to the point of removing individuals even if they are in positions of authority and influencing them to make amends to the aggrieved party. For the individuals, continue to raise diversity awareness in diversity meetings and forums. Review all major policy changes to ensure that they are not prejudicial or discriminatory. Make sure that if any conflict occurs within your sphere of influence that the win/win resolution prevails. For the organization, offer resolution training and coaching underscoring the win/win resolution process.

Conclusion

Ascertaining the foundational culture of an organization requires a good and objective instrument that can provide a standardized assessment of its current state. The instrument to use must be able to provide the needed data that when analyzed could provide a quantifiable image of the overall culture that will become the foundation of steps when it is time to bring the needed change (Lukić et al., 2014). A similar instrument has been used to perform a critique of the North East Group culture. A survey was designed that enabled a good look at where the members of the NEG are in terms of their diversity culture. An interpretation of the gathered data was presented with the results analyzed that lead to recommendations on how the diversity areas where NEG needs improvement can be advanced.

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Appendix A

Diversity and Cultural Awareness Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to assess the diversity and cultural awareness of your organization. This assessment will provide the baseline in identifying the current health of your organizational culture.

Instructions: Indicate how often each statement is true of your own behavior.

Key: 1 = Never   2 = Hardly Ever   3 = Seldom   4 = Occasionally

5 = Often   6 = Usually   7 = Always

1. I find it not acceptable for one group in the organization to dominate others.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

2. I know that the current organization's cultural policies are adequate and people who does not agree must move on.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

3. I think that anecdotes and stories about people who are different are not bad as long as they are not done in bad taste.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

4. For me, a hiring system that gives preference to a protected group member or other minorities is not a good idea.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

5. It is needed to change my habit to make those of the different group more comfortable.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

6. It is important for me that organizational rules and procedures change to accommodate other people's cultural beliefs.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

7. I know that older people at work are expected to require more patience and time.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

8. I think most initiatives to bring about better diversity awareness do not bring about needed change.

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7

9. I see that people of a different group are not affected on how they are treated at work.

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7

10. In my opinion, corporate minority groups need not adapt to majority rules.

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Appendix B

Scoring Rubric

There are six progressive phases organizations and individuals go through when it comes to cultural competency. They are (1) Awareness and Climate, (2) Levels of Inclusion, and (3) Levels of Tolerance and Understanding. Then (4) Degree of Empathy, (5) Degree of Adaptation and Change; and (6) Persistence and Commitment.

Consolidated scoring:

1. Reversed the scores for questions 7, 8, 9, and 10.

2. Accumulated Raw Scores.

1 = 89	2 = 95	3 = 102	4 = 103	5 = 80
6 = 99	7 = 80	8 = 90	9 = 81	10 = 85

   Perfect score per question is 140 (always true behavior). The survey results adapted Warner's scoring rubric, assigning 60% (84) as low and 85% (119) as high per question.

3. Awareness and Climate, Levels of Inclusion, and Levels of Tolerance and Understanding: accumulated sum of scores on Questions 1, 4, 7, 9, and 10 = 438

4. Degree of Empathy, Degree of Adaptation and Change, Persistence and Commitment: accumulated sum of scores on Questions 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8 = 466

Scoring Interpretation:

1. Awareness and Climate, Levels of Inclusion, and Levels of Tolerance and Understanding: The common score is 438, score above 595 is considered high, and scores below 420 are considered low.

2. Degree of Empathy, Degree of Adaptation and Change, and Persistence and Understanding: The common score is 466, score above 595 is considered high, and scores below 420 are considered low.

The survey result is available here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-3QKGLRJM7