

Original Article

Time Observance among the Non-Teaching Employees in the Three Campuses of the University of Eastern Philippines

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Abstract - This study attempted to determine the time observance among the non-teaching employees in the three campuses of the University of Eastern Philippines. Specifically, it sought to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, civil status, number of children, educational attainment, length of service, and distance of residence from office; the level of implementation of policies on government working hours; and the level of time observance in the office in both morning and afternoon sessions. It also tried to find out if there is a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and their level of time observance in the office and between the level of implementation of policies on government working hours and time observance. This study utilized the descriptive-correlational research design. The population was 203 non-teaching employees at the University of Eastern Philippines. There were 80 sample respondents who were purposively taken from the frontline offices that were always in direct contact with students and clients of the University, such as the cashier, accounting, and registrar offices. The data gathered were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and weighted means. The multiple regression analysis was utilized to test the relationship between profile and time observance and between the implementation of policies on working hours and time observance. The null hypotheses were tested at a .05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents were female, married, and have undergone graduate studies; and most were 30-39 years old who have served the University of Eastern Philippines for 15 or more years and residing within 5 kilometers from the office; they perceived that their supervisors were highly implementing the policies on government working hours, and they had a high level of time observance in both the morning and afternoon sessions. In terms of relationships between the variables, all variables that were correlated, except job satisfaction and civil status and between the length of service and time observance, had a significant relationship.

Keywords - Time observance, Job satisfaction, Policies, Working hours, Level of implementation

I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippine Constitution mandates public officials and employees to serve the people with utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty, and efficiency. This can be realized when the employees report to work regularly and punctually (Art. IV, Sec 1). To ensure this, the Civil Service Commission has prescribed the standard office hours for workers in the civil service, which shall be from eight o'clock in the morning to twelve o'clock noon and from one o'clock to five o'clock in the afternoon, five days a week except Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. There are exemptions to the prescribed working hours, such as in the cases of employees in schools, courts, hospitals, and health clinics or those where the exigencies of the service demand deviation from normal office hours. It is evident that with this policy, proper observance of time is regarded as a primary indicator of performance.

Authorities on the subject of time management have some commonalities in describing time. It is a resource that is both necessary and indispensable since it is involved in every human endeavor. McCay looked at it as totally irreplaceable and has to be utilized to take advantage of its optimal value. In individual careers, increased job performance and promotions may result from good time-management practices. In addition, all types of organizations – business, civic, school, political, and religious – may receive productive, competitive, and financial benefits from the observance of good time-management practices. Success or failure in human endeavor, therefore, depends upon the extent of time management.

Moorehead and Griffin consider the worker's observance of time as part of job-related behavior that affects his productive performance. This perceived relationship has encouraged various writers to explore the dynamics of time and productivity,



particularly on the aspects of observance and job satisfaction, two of the important indicators of this study. There may be many factors to consider in resolving the issue of attendance and punctuality in the office, particularly that of a state university. These factors may not at all be covered in this study in view of their magnitude. However, selected factors were carefully identified and considered as variables that may be useful in this attempt to document a phenomenon existing in the University of Eastern Philippines.

Despite the official policies on the observance of official working hours, tardiness and absenteeism in the public sector is a daily occurrence. Sunico cited a survey conducted by the Department of Labor and Employment in 1992 where it was shown that employee absenteeism and tardiness rate was 10.16 percent which is the equivalent of at least 75 employees completely absent from the office for the whole year. If these employees receive an average of P3 000 a month in salaries, their absence means that the government lost about P2, 700.00 in terms of wasted man-hours which should have been devoted to the delivery of essential service to various sectors of society.

The impact of this negative time behavior cannot be set aside. When certain employees are absent, the number of personnel actually available for a given task is likewise reduced, affecting the delivery of public services. Tardiness, too, bears upon both the employee's effectiveness and organizational productivity.

The University of Eastern Philippines has recognized the problematic situation of attendance among employees as a serious policy issue. What triggers this pattern of behavior among employees? Why do employees become tardy or absent from work? How much does the university incur in terms of wasted time? It was on these premises that this study had been proposed.

II. OBJECTIVES

Generally, this study attempted to determine the time observance among the non-teaching employees of selected offices in the three campuses of the University of Eastern Philippines.

Specifically, it aimed to:

1. determine the profile of the respondents in terms of the following:
 - a. sex;
 - b. age;
 - c. civil status;
 - d. number of children;
 - e. educational attainment;

- f. length of service; and
 - g. distance of residence from office;
2. identify the policies on government working hours of the University of Eastern Philippines;
3. find out the level of time observance in the office in both the morning and afternoon sessions;
4. find out if there is a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and their level of time observance in the office, and;
5. determine if there is a significant relationship between the level of implementation of policies on government working hours and level of time observance.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the three campuses of the University of Eastern Philippines, namely Main Campus, Laoang, and Catubig campuses. The university is the only state university in Northern Samar. The main campus is located in Catarman, the capital town of the province. The Laoang and Catubig campuses are approximately 45 and 65 kilometers, respectively, away eastward from the main campus.

The University of Eastern Philippines – Laoang used to be the Laoang National Technical School (LNTS), which is located in the town proper of Laoang, an island town. On the other hand, the University of Eastern Philippines – Catubig was formerly known as the Pedro Rebadulla Memorial Agricultural College (PRMAC). Both were integrated into the University of Eastern Philippines in 2002 by virtue of R.A. 8292.

The respondents of the study were 80 randomly selected permanent non-teaching employees on the first and second levels in the three campuses of the University of Eastern Philippines. Only personnel who actually report to the administration building daily were included as respondents of the study in order to have an unhampered observation on their time observance behavior, particularly on tardiness, absenteeism, and utilization of time (both for official business and for personal use). Furthermore, only employees who are on the regular work schedule of 8:00 AM – 12:00 Noon and 1:00 – 5:00 PM were taken as respondents of this study.

The independent variables of the study are the employees' demographic profile which includes age, sex, civil status, number of children, educational attainment, length of service, and distance of residence from office; and implementation of policies.

The dependent variable is time observance for time-in, break time, time for other purposes, and time-out for both morning and afternoon sessions.

Both the independent and dependent variables were measured using questionnaires.

The descriptive-correlational research method was used in this study in order to describe the existing situations in the three campuses of the University of Eastern Philippines as to the extent of time observance of the non-teaching employees. It also described the demographic profile of the respondents and looked into the relationships between demographic profile and level of time observance; and between the level of implementation of policies on government working hours and level of time observance.

The study used a three-part research questionnaire, which was patterned after the instrument used by Anton. Part I generated information on the profile of the respondents such as sex, age, civil status, number of children, educational attainment, and length of service.

Part II consisted of statements on the implementation of policies on government working hours that were used to document the respondents' observation on their superior/supervisor as they report to the office daily during working days and how they implement and impose on their subordinates the rules and policies on time observance.

Part III consisted of items on observable acts, such as arrival, break time, time devoted to actual work, time spent for personal purposes, and departure, both in the morning and in the afternoon sessions.

The response categories and their weighted points in all parts of the questionnaire are as follows:

The level of satisfaction of the respondents considered two aspects of their work environment, level of implementation of policies and level of time observance, were determined through their response in the questionnaire.

The sum of the weighted scores in every part of the questionnaire of each respondent and the mean scores were computed.

The instrument used in this study was patterned from the questionnaire used by Aranton on the time observance among employees of selected offices of the local government of Iligan City. Inasmuch as it was already validated, there was no more need to have it validated.

The purposive sampling technique was used in the study. Only the personnel in the Cashier's, Accounting, and Registrar's offices were considered in this study, considering that they are the frontline offices that are always in direct contact with students and clients of the University. The main criterion for the final choice of these respondents was their presence in the office during the period of the study, doing over-the-counter transactions, where their behavior in time observance could be studied closely. However, only 80 employees who were observed to be consistently in their office during the duration of the study were finally considered.

After the questionnaire had been polished and approved by the Graduate School of the University of Eastern Philippines, a formal request was made to the University President and to the Executive Directors of the Laoang and Catubig campuses to allow the researcher to conduct the study during a specific period only.

The questionnaires were administered in the three campuses after a brief confidential observation period on-time behavior of employees. Assistance from students who were conducting on-the-job training in the university was solicited to enable the researcher to have a simultaneous observation of all sample offices in one full day to cover many facets of time observance of target employees.

The research assistants were first convened for half a day for a briefing on the mechanics of the observation to be undertaken, with emphasis on the confidentiality of the study to avoid any artificial reaction from the respondents. Assignment of offices was made for each assistant during the briefing session, using the sketch of the location offices and personnel concerned.

Daily observations taken from the logbook and Daily Time Records (DTRs) were looked into by the assistants to validate the time observance of employees, and these were submitted to the researcher. The period of observation was done for only five (5) working days in a week and for four weeks in one month.

After the observation period, the questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher.

Different statistical tools were used in this study depending on the analytical requirements of the data. For the descriptive data, frequency counts, percentages, and means were used.

To test the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and time observance, the Multiple Regression Analysis was utilized.

The relationships were tested at a .05 level of significance.

IV. FINDINGS

A. The Employees' Profile

a) Sex

The data in Table 1 show that out of the 80 non-teaching employees who were the respondents of this study, 43 or 53.75 percent were female, and 37 or 46.25 percent were male. This means that there are more female non-teaching employees than males in the three campuses of the University of Eastern Philippines.

b) Age

The findings revealed that 24 or 30 percent of the non-teaching employees of selected offices in the three campuses had ages from 30 to 39; 23 or 28.75 percent were 50 years old or above; 18 or 22.5 percent were 40 to 49 years old, and 15 or 18.75 percent were 20 to 29 years old. This finding shows that the majority of the non-teaching employees were 30-39 years old and above. This implies that the majority of the non-teaching employees are in their prime years, are dynamic, and are capable of being productive. This confirms the findings of Gibson and Klein that at this age, regardless of the length of time they had been in the job, employees have increased coping capacity, perhaps as a result of greater stability, ego strengths, and similar factors.

c) Civil Status

The data show that 60 or 75 percent of the 80 non-teaching employees are married; 17 or 21.25 were single, and only 3 or 3.75 percent are widowed. It can be implied that the majority of the non-teaching personnel are married and can be expected to have a sense of responsibility in doing their job.

d) Number of Children

The data on a number of children reveal that 40 or 50 percent had 1-3 children; 19 or 23.75 percent had 4-6, and the same number had no children because many of them were unmarried, and two had 7-9 children. Exactly half of the total number of respondents had only 1-3 children. This suggests that, generally, the employees can be expected to incur fewer absences since, according to Steers and Rhodes, absenteeism is expected to increase with family size.

c) Educational Attainment

Out of the 80 non-teaching employees, 50 or 62.5 percent have undertaken graduate studies; 20 or 25 percent were college graduates, and 10 or 12.5 percent had educational attainment of college-level or below. Education-wise, it is evident that the majority

of the non-teaching employees were highly qualified for their positions, although some did not yet have a college degree.

d) Length of Service

As regards the length of service, 32 or 40 percent of the respondents have rendered services for 15 years or more; 13 or 16.25 percent have stayed in the service for 10 to 14 years; 15 or 18.75 percent have rendered 5 to 9 years of service, and 22 or 27.5 percent have been in the service for 5 years or less. The majority of the respondents had 15 years or more of experience and has a long attachment to their workplace. It can be deduced that the non-teaching employees of the University have gained sufficient experience on how to perform their functions, having stayed long in their present place of work.

Level of Implementation of Policies on Government Working Hours

The data reveals that the respondents were generally highly satisfied with the way their office head/supervisor implemented policies on office attendance and on office punctuality. They were likewise highly satisfied because their supervisor checks the presence of employees in the office; imposes discipline on employees who are tardy and who are unreasonably absent; follows the rules and regulations with regard to government time and attendance policies; does not practice favoritism in the office; and monitors employees' presence in their our posts. However, they seemed to dislike the way their head/supervisor imposed disciplinary actions on employees who were unreasonably absent. The mean of 3.54 means that there is a high level of implementation of the policies on government working hours by their head/supervisor. It can be implied that the non-teaching employees are sensitive to what their supervisors are doing in the office and that they have a good working relationship with their superiors.

B. Level of Time Observance of the Non-Teaching Employees

a) Morning

For the morning session, the non-teaching employees had a very high level of observance in terms of reporting to the office on or before the prescribed time of arrival; using time exclusively for office work; reporting back to the office after the break time; doing office work even when one has health problems, and not using a portion of office hours for travel time. However, the findings revealed a moderate level of time observance in terms of not entertaining visitors during office time and the monitoring by security personnel the going in and out of employees from the office during office time. The grand mean of 3.86, which is equivalent to a high

level of time observance, implies that the non-teaching employees generally comply with Rule XVII, Section 5 of the Omnibus Rules implementing Executive Order 192.

b) Afternoon

The data on the level of time observation in the afternoon session reveals that the non-teaching employees in the three campuses of the University of Eastern Philippines generally had a very high level of observance in terms of reporting to the office on or before the prescribed time of arrival; leaving the office at the prescribed time of departure; reporting to office even if there are important personal transactions to make; doing office work even if one had health problems, and not using a portion of office hours for travel time. On the other hand, they had a moderate level of time observance in terms of entertaining visitors during office hours and the monitoring by the security personnel the going in and out of employees from the office during office hours. On the whole, the grand mean of 3.87 means that they also had a high level of time observance in the afternoon session. It can be implied that the employees are very much aware of the rules on the standard office hours that the Civil Service Commission has prescribed for workers in the civil service and do their best to observe them in the performance of their job.

The above findings disconfirm the finding of Naduma, where attendance practices were found to be unsatisfactory. The respondents incurred time wastage in each of the indicators, such as tardiness, use of break time, under time, use of office hours for personal purposes, and absence.

C. Test of Relationship

To test the null hypotheses in this study, multiple regression analysis was used.

D. Employees' Profile and Level of Time Observance

Table 6 presents the summary result on the relationship between the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, civil status, number of children, educational attainment, length of service, and distance of residence from the office, and time observance.

a) Sex

Sex was found to be significant with the level of time observance because the F-Ratio of 7.55579 was greater than the significant F of 0.0074. The coefficient of determination was 8.83% explains the degree of relationship between the variables. This finding suggests that sex is associated with time observance. Women are more prone to make absences than men, perhaps since it is to the former

that the traditional family responsibilities, such as caring for the sick children, are assigned.

b) Age

This variable was also found significantly related to time observance as reflected in the F-ratio of 3.175536, which is greater than the significant F of 0.0786. The coefficient of determination of 3.91% indicates the influence of age on time observance. It can be said that the older an employee is, the higher is his/her level of time observance. This supports Naduma's finding that employees who were 50 years and above did not use the official working time for personal business.

c) Civil Status

Civil status was significant with time observance since the F-Ratio of 0.96901 was greater than the significant F of 0.3280 with a 1.23% coefficient of determination. It can be inferred that an employee's civil status determines his/her time observance in the office. Since unmarried employees generally have fewer family responsibilities, they can be expected to observe office hours more efficiently than those who are married.

d) Number of Children

The number of children was also found to be significant with the level of time observance because of the F-Ratio of 1.63991, which was greater than the significant F of 0.2041. The degree of influence of the number of children to time observance was 2.06%. This implies that absenteeism and tardiness are expected to increase with family size.

e) Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is related to time observance because the F-Ratio of 3.88631 was found to be greater than the significant F of 0.0522. The coefficient of determination of 4.75% indicates the influence of educational attainment on time observance. This negates Naduma's finding that employees who were pursuing graduate studies incurred more absences than those with lower educational attainment.

f) Length of Service

The length of service was not found to be significant with time observance because the F-Ratio of 0.01390 was less than the significant F of 0.9064. This led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the length of service and level of time observance. It can be implied that the length of service of an employee is not a guarantee of very good attendance behavior.

g) Distance of Residence from Office

Since the F-ratio of 3.2041 is greater than the F significant of 0.1432, with 1.19% as the coefficient of determination, it can be said that an employee's level of time observance depends to a

certain degree on how far or near his/her residence is from the office. It can be inferred that the father is one's home from the office, the more is the tendency for him to have more absences or to be tardy than one who lives near the office.

D. Implementation of Policies on Working Hours and Time Observance

The F ratio of 4.836677 is greater than the significant F of 0.0308. Thus, the implementation of policies is significantly related to the level of time observance. It can be said that if the supervisor seriously implements the policies on time observance, it follows that his subordinates are wont to also religiously observe office hours.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were formulated based on the findings of the study:

1. The significant findings of this study are valuable information that is employing and professional organizations, such as the University of Eastern Philippines, have to take into serious consideration in formulating management policies and decisions if they have to be more efficient, achieve better results and survive in an increasingly competitive business environment.

2. The University of Eastern Philippines, with its three campuses and any similarly situated organizations, should consider the sex, age, educational attainment, number of children, and number of years experience, and distance of the applicants' residence from office among the qualifications of future employees since all these variables were found to be positively associated with job satisfaction and level of time observance.

3. Although the majority of the respondents were pursuing graduate studies, a significant few are college undergraduates. It will serve the University well if these employees are required to go back to school and finish a degree. One way to encourage them to do this is to grant them financial assistance through the University Scholarship Program.

4. A significant number of employees have their residence, which is more than five kilometers away from the University, and presumably, commute daily to report to work. In order to minimize problems on absenteeism and tardiness among these employees, the University should provide housing facilities for them and their families at a reasonable/affordable price.

5. There was an observed widespread dissatisfaction with their present pay among the respondents since it was alleged that their pay did not give them financial

security and was not commensurate to their number of working hours. State universities and other such organizations should invest in Employees Assistance Programs or any other organizational innovations of which an individual's outside work becomes an important concern for the organization. This scheme can help remove or reduce the impact of dissatisfying pay, and perhaps minimize turnover, especially of efficient employees, and can mutually benefit the employees and the organization.

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