

Management Skills and Organizational Issues Toward Change Management Model: The Case of Rural Community Colleges in the Philippines

Jordan Miranda Pocaan¹, Hennie Pama Lomibao², Grace Revilla Campos³, Kristel Ann Rosaceña Hermosa⁴, Faustino Jr. Arimado⁵, Abegail Enriola Ballatan⁶, Karen Pesonila Dumo¹, Jayson Dumo⁶, Menchie Espineda⁵, Joan Conepcion Alej⁷

¹College of Teacher Education, Sorsogon State University, Philippines

²Dean of Admission, Bicol University, Philippines

³Department of Education Albay Division, Bicol University, Philippines

⁴Department of Education Masbate City Division, Bicol University, Philippines

⁵Department of Education Legazpi City Division, Bicol University, Philippines

⁶Department of Education Sorsogon Province Division, Bicol University, Philippines

⁷St. Agnes Academy, Bicol University, Philippines

*Corresponding email: jordan.pocaan@bicol-u.edu.ph

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Abstract: Management Skills and Organizational Issues Toward Change Management Model: The Case of Rural Community Colleges in the Philippines. Objectives: The purpose of the research was to investigate the management abilities of administrators, teachers, and non-teaching personnel, as well as organizational concerns to propose recommendations to solve this issues. **Methods:** This study used sequential explanatory mixed methods research with two phases of data gathering and analysis. It collects and analyzes quantitative data through survey questions before gathering qualitative data through focus group discussions (FDG). **Findings:** Following the four organizational cultures - clan, market, adhocracy, and hierarchy - the diverse management abilities of administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff are described by the study's findings. In addition, the fundamental difficulties of rural community colleges in terms of organizational performance and adaptation, organizational weakness, and internal conflict are discussed. The research also produces the REACT model for change management based on its results. **Conclusion:** Community colleges in rural areas must adopt change management that addresses their organizational challenges and is based on their management skills. Furthermore, additional funding, assistance programs, and manual development for academics and staff are proposed.

Keywords: community colleges, change management, organizational culture, higher education.

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■ INTRODUCTION

Successful community colleges require flexible leaders, faculty, and non-teaching personnel in facing both academic and organizational issues. According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) or the agenda 2030 of the United Nations (UN), the aim for quality and accessible education for all focused not only on student support programs and upgrading school infrastructure but also targets the organizational upgrading and teachers' development aligned with globalization (International Energy Agency et al., 2019). The success and development of every organization depend on the behavior and adaptability of its members (Linnenluecke, 2017; Schein, 1980; Cooke & Lafferty, 1989). Thus, more studies revealed that management skills are associated with behavior (Chisholm et al., 2017; Middleton et al., 2013; Luthans & Doh, 2013) and adaptability is associated with intelligence (Schoenherr & Swink, 2015; Grissom et al., 2015; Udayar et al., 2018; Parmentier et al., 2021; Pocan, 2022).

In the case of rural community colleges (RCCs) in the Philippines, change management, and institutional upgrading are challenging to achieve. Goldrick-Rab et al. (2017) stated that, like most students, community colleges strive to survive due to the lack of funding. Adequate funds allow every academic institution to realize its institutional objectives toward quality service (Kaiser et al., 2014). Other countries fund their community colleges based on their performance (Kahlenberg, 2015); however, in the Philippines, the funds for community colleges depend on the local government units (Philippine Constitution, 1987). Community colleges in third and fourth-class municipalities in the country are expected to receive a small budget allocation. School budget concerns are a significant issue with apparent ties to student progress (Johnson et al., 2014). Schools with lesser funds sometimes

cannot provide fewer classrooms and better programming (Darling-Hammond, 2015), resulting in poorer student success and a socioeconomic and educational divide (Baker, 2021).

On the other hand, Treat and Hagerdon (2013) argued that from regionally oriented schools bent on access and affordability to higher education, skill building, and community involvement, the modern community college is expected to participate worldwide in the liberalization and growth of the global workforce. So, the expectation for every community college is to provide cost-effective education specifically to marginalized students in order to be involved in economic development. Meanwhile, Legusov et al. (2022) stated that community colleges and other TVET institutions contribute to the united nations' sustainable development goals.

Many studies proved that management skills and organizational culture contribute to the success and issues in community colleges. (Karp & Bork, 2014; Martin et al., 2014; Price & Tovar; Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018) A change management plan anchored on management skills and targets organizational issues implements strategies for effecting change, controlling change, and helping people adapt. The study by Schudde et al. (2014) states that community colleges increase college access, extending postsecondary educational opportunities to underserved students, yet, these students exhibit low rates of program completion and transfer to 4-year colleges. The authors highlighted research areas for further progress and discussed the role sociology could play in transforming community colleges. Monaghan & Attewell (2015) claims that community college students receive lower aid levels after transfer and that transfers disproportionately fail to survive through the senior year are not supported by our analyses.

According to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) (2021), more than 27,000

students enrolled in Community Colleges in the Bicol Region during the academic year 2020 to 2021; one of the reasons is the existing free education for their students. However, RCCs still receive minimum to low funding compared to state universities and colleges. State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) were funded directly by the national government through the department of budget and management (DBM), while the community colleges depend on the local government units (LGUs). According to studies and experts, school funding affects the performance of the schools' organizational culture, management skills, and performance (Adewale & Anthonia, 2013; Ahmed & Shafiq, 2014; Tarba et al., 2019).

Given that the Philippines, as a developing country, face tremendous challenges in pursuing quality education, thus, problems exist inside the formal education system and external factors. Examining the management skills of its personnel and the organizational issues is necessary to benchmark problems and develop solutions. To date, there is no study conducted on the management skills and organizational issues of RCCs in the Philippines. Hence, this study aimed to propose a change management plan for

RCCs by exploring the management skills and organizational issues faced by the administrators, faculty, and non-teaching personnel.

■ METHODS

Participants

Among the 16 community colleges in Bicol Region, Philippines, only 4 were selected as the locus of the study. One of the criteria for selecting the school is the type of funding municipality, wherein, the selected schools were under third and fourth-class municipalities. The study selected community colleges under this type of municipality since they received less funding compared to other schools.

This study explores the 5 RCCs from third and fourth-class municipalities in the Bicol Region in the Philippines. As shown in Table 1, the study surveyed and interviewed 45 school administrators, 115 faculty, and 70 non-teaching personnel using the management skills assessment instrument (MSAI) instrument developed by Cameron and Quinn (2011). The study used the stratified sampling technique to ensure each subgroup within the population receives proper representation within the sample.

Table 1. The participants of the study

Rural Community Colleges	Population by Stratum	Sample by Stratum	Percent
<i>Administrators</i>			
RCC1	9	7	78
RCC2	10	9	90
RCC3	10	9	90
RCC4	11	10	91
RCC5	11	10	91
Total	51	45	88
<i>Faculty</i>			
RCC1	20	18	90
RCC2	23	21	91
RCC3	24	22	92
RCC4	27	26	96
RCC5	29	28	97
Total	123	115	96

<i>Non-Teaching</i>			
RCC1	12	10	83
RCC2	15	13	87
RCC3	15	13	87
RCC4	18	17	94
RCC5	18	17	94
Total	78	70	90

All the participants spent 1 to 15 years in teaching service under regular and probationary status. Most of the participants under regular status obtained master's and doctorate degrees, while most participants under probationary obtained units in master's degrees. Most programs offered by 5 RCCs are Bachelor of Secondary Education, Bachelor of Elementary Education, and Bachelor of Science in Business Management. Determining the management skills of the personnel and organizational culture may identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organization. Furthermore, the survey and interview results guide the study to draw a change management plan to improve the RCCs organizations.

Research Design and Procedure

The study used sequential explanatory mixed methods research that has undergone two phases of data collection and analysis. It first collects and analyzes quantitative data using survey questionnaires followed by qualitative data collection through focus group discussion (FGD) (Wipulanusat et al., 2020). Right after the quantitative data analysis, the study formulates questions that were used in the FGD of this study and were related to the outcomes from the initial phase (Othman, 2020). Furthermore, the study was conducted during the first semester of the academic year 2021-2022.

Instrument

Since the study used mixed methods, two instruments that have been used to gather data. In the quantitative phase, the study used the

management skills assessment instrument by Cameron and Quinn (2011). It is a self-rating form with 60 items in which the participants can rate their management skills on 5 scales: 1-strongly disagree, 2-moderately agree, 3-slightly agree/disagree, 4 moderately agree, and 5-strongly agree. The survey took approximately 20 to 25 minutes to complete. After considering the results of the quantitative data analysis, the second phase formulates interview questions that are related to the initial phase. The interview questions were implemented after the validation of the same group of participants and experts in the field.

Data Analysis

The study used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) v.26 in quantifying the data (Cheng & Philips, 2014). Moreover, the study used a radar chart to describe the commonalities and differences in the responses. For qualitative analysis, the study used coded transcripts to merge similar ideas, themes, and sub-themes. Coded transcripts were used instead of verbatim since the study has a large number of participants. The study also used a qualitative master data sheet for easy data corroboration.

Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the dean of the schools through a response from the letter of research undertakings introduced to the respective offices (Zimmer, 2020). Arrangements were also made to meet research governance requirements. Moreover, the

respondents signed an informed consent form, which discussed the study background, survey and interview procedures, confidentiality, benefits from participation, voluntary participation, and consent.

■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Management Skills

Figure 1 shows the management skills of administrators, faculty, and non-teaching personnel. The administrators' management skills show stability from adhocracy, market, and hierarchical cultures; however, it slightly declined in clan culture. It implies that the administrators

were flexible and had strong management skills. On the other hand, the management skills of the faculty show higher stability from managing the development of others in clan culture to hierarchical culture. It means that the faculty demonstrates support and value the similarities and differences of every employee in the organization. Lastly, the non-teaching management skills show strength in managing the development of others, managing interpersonal relationships, and teams; however, it partially declined in energizing employees. It means that non-teaching personnel is competitive as well as supportive.

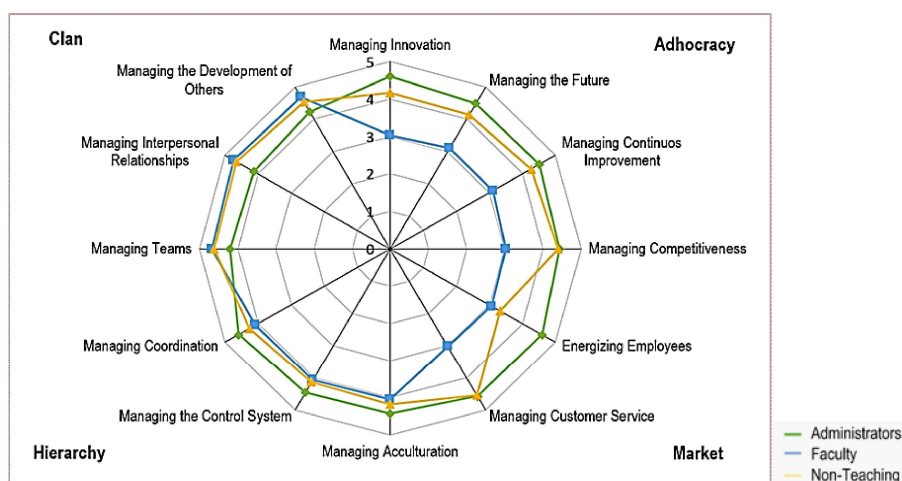


Figure 1. Management skills of administrator, faculty, and non-teaching

Management Skills of Administrators

Results revealed that the administrators possess consistency and high managerial competencies, which means they possess high capability and strength (hierarchy $M=4.49$; market $M=4.53$; clan $M=4.62$; adhocracy $M=4.53$). It is advantageous since high leadership competencies positively affect the organization's performance (Hawi, 2015). In addition, the book by Mayfield (2020) argued that school administrators must have strong management skills to give stability and direction to the organization. DuBrin (2020) stated that the high

management skills of administrators are essential as they are responsible for the work performance of the organization. Moreover, administrators show high managerial flexibility. According to Mackey et al. (2017), influential education leaders are flexible, whereas flexibility is a significant skill since it enables an individual to generate novel ideas (Kolb et al., 2014).

Management Skills of the Faculty

Furthermore, based on the results, the most dominant management skills of the faculty were managing teams ($M=4.69$), managing

interpersonal skills (M=4.74), and managing the development of others (M=4.69) under the clan culture (M=4.71). According to Kim et al. (2014), these management skills create a warm, supportive, and pressure-less working environment that facilitates firms to focus on developing people and team spirit to work with each other as a family. In addition, it prioritizes the development of shared understanding and commitment above an organized communication procedure (Afsar et al., 2020). It suggests that the faculty are exposed to a culture of cooperation and program engagement, while the core values reflect participation, loyalty, and dedication (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Carter & Baghurts, 2014). However, these results may sometimes hinder effectiveness (Liu, 2015). It is conceivable for the administration to be entirely top-down; such may impede workplace morale and cooperation (Kahsay & Bulte, 2021; Scott & Scott, 2016).

The results also Scott highlight managing acculturation (M=4.05), managing the control system (M=4.07), and managing coordination (M=4.08) under a hierarchy culture (M=4.07). These results may indicate that the organization can be slow to adapt to change and are typically inflexible when it comes to bending toward their

employees' needs or meeting their students' demands (Gallos & Bolman, 2021). In general, results revealed that the faculty demonstrates support and value for the similarities and differences of every employee in the organization.

Management Skills of Non-Teaching

For non-teaching, managing competitiveness (M=4.40), energizing employees (M=4.32) and managing customer service under market culture (M=4.09) and managing teams (M=4.63), managing interpersonal relationships (M=4.65), and managing the development of others under clan culture (M=4.60) shows as the dominant management skills. It implies that non-teaching emphasizes competitiveness between the organization and its competitors and employees (Bowe et al., 2017). Furthermore, the results also emphasize developing shared understanding and commitment instead of a formalized communication process (Berkemeyer et al., 2015). According to Motilewa et al. (2015), the organizational culture positively impacts non-teaching staff's job performance. In general, the results suggest that aside from being competitive, non-teaching faculty are also supportive.

Organizational Issues

Table 2. Organizational issues

Coded Transcripts	Categories	Themes	Description of Themes
Organizational practices are somehow aligned to its vision; however, several factors, such as members' qualifications, support system, funding, digitalization, and globalization, hinder putting the vision into practice.	Practices and Vision	Issues on organizational performance and adaptability	Organizational performance and adaptability
Most members are willing to adapt to organizational changes provided the support they demand such as institutional upgrading. However, other members are comfortable with the current organizational culture.	Resistance to change		
The organization meets the satisfaction of its students; however, given that the	Clientele satisfaction	Organizational weakness	Core issues and areas for

students are only locals and mostly from low-income families, it can imply that students are not too demanding.

improvement

Since RCCs are funded by the local government, politics plays a role in selecting administrators, and local politicians sometimes control the school's decisions. Poor digitalization, expertise, and support systems are also considered core issues.

Root cause of the problems

There was a problem regarding promotion and choosing administrators. Seniority and nepotism are the common cause of conflict. Other problems exist because of the absence of the faculty and employees' manual.

Organizational Conflict

Internal conflicts

Issues within the organization

There is no opportunity for the members to pursue higher learning. There is a lack of support programs in times of calamity and emergency.

Funding allocation and support programs

Using coded transcripts, Table 2 presents the data on the organizational issues, generating 3 themes from the 6 categories. The issues on performance and adaptability were based on practices, vision, and change resistance, for organizational weakness was anchored on clientele satisfaction and problem root cause. Lastly, the internal conflicts were based on organizational conflict, funding allocation, and support programs.

Issues on Organizational Performance and Adaptability

Based on the participants' responses, organizational practices are somehow aligned to its vision; however, several factors hinder putting the vision into practice, such as members' qualifications, support system, funding, digitalization, and globalization. Problems in realizing institutional objectives and vision require adequate funding and expertise. This result was supported by several research findings, which argued that more community colleges encounter slow progress because of their limited funds which are essential in supporting institutional upgrading (Cunningham et al., 2014; Scott-Clayton, 2015;

Jenkins & Fink, 2016). Moreover, qualified experts in the field are most likely to apply to SUCs for better opportunities. This result was also expected since the lower-income local government units funded the selected RCCs.

In terms of change resistance, most participants are willing to adapt to organizational changes provided the support they demand, such as support programs and institutional upgrading. It implies that the participants' willingness to adapt change management depends on the support system they will receive. School leaders should guarantee the support system in adapting change management. To guarantee that everyone within an organization embraces the changes caused by a merger, leaders must be knowledgeable and educated in the process of organizational transformation (Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006; Cameron & Green, 2019).

On the other hand, other participants are comfortable with the current organizational culture. It means that these participants are contented and favorable with the organization's current culture. According to several studies, the inability to adapt change management is because of political influence (Kuipers et al., 2014; Pelling

et al., 2015), age (Mahon & Millar, 2014), and obsolete skills (Worley & Mohrman, 2014; Kohnke, 2017).

Organizational Weakness

According to the participants, the RCCs meet the satisfaction of their students; however, given that the students are only locals and mostly from low-income families, it can imply that students are not too demanding. According to Martin et al. (2014), students in community colleges have common characteristics such as having clear goals, strong motivation and a drive to succeed, the ability to manage external demands, and self-empowerment. In addition, most students in community colleges managed to work while studying (Moschetti & Hudley, 2015; Weis, 2018). It concludes that instead of demanding support and complaining about the clientele issues, the students intend to understand the school's situation provided the low-income local government units support them. This stigma may cause slow organizational progress since both organization and clients intend to understand only the situation rather than adapting change management.

On the root cause of the organizational problems, participants shared that since RCCs are funded by the local government, politics plays a role in selecting administrators. They also claim that local politicians sometimes control the decision of the school; provided that the local government funds community colleges, it can be implied that local politicians oversee the school's status and decisions. The governance of public schools is a complex issue that incorporates government entities at national and local levels (Mergel & Desouza, 2013). On the other side, it allows government officials to monopolize decisions rather than allowing school officials to execute decisions with autonomy.

On the other hand, participants also considered poor digitalization, underqualified

members, and lack of support systems as core issues. It implies that RCCs with poor digitalization are being left behind in organizational trends and upgrading. Digitalization is a new trend in every organization (Machekhina, 2017); it enhances the work process and output and saves time (Girrbach, 2021). For the organization of the digital educational process, the potential of highly qualified, trained personnel of educational institutions will be necessary (Qizi, 2021). The lack of support systems in an organization disallows the professional growth of its members and institutional upgrading, which may result in being left behind.

Internal Conflicts

In terms of organizational conflict, participants echoed that there was a problem regarding promotion and choosing administrators. It may link to the previous findings where politicians sometimes monopolize the school's decision, especially in selecting the person in the position. According to Henig (2013), politicians appointed individuals as school leaders because of their qualifications and personal connection. Moreover, the participants added that seniority and nepotism are the common cause of conflict. The appointment serves as a "debt of gratitude" where school leaders should provide favors to the politicians who appointed them to the position. According to Ballano (2017), in Filipino culture and politics, the "Padrino system," also known as patronage, is the value system wherein one receives favor, promotion, or political appointment by a family tie or acquaintance instead of merit. The "Padrino system" has been the subject of several disputes and instances of corruption (Ballano, 2017).

Furthermore, participants added that other problems exist because of the absence of the faculty and employee manual. A manual is an indispensable tool that guides every member of an academic institution to familiarize themselves

with the administrative and academic policies, employees' rights and privileges, and in responding to their duties (McDonald & Hatcher, 2020; Lindsey et al., 2018). It implies that the absence of a manual may exploit the employee's rights and privileges. Since the manual serves as the bases for protecting the rights of employees and administrators, its absence definitely may cause confusion and unending organizational issues (Pyzdek & Keller, 2014).

The participants also cited that there is no opportunity for the members to pursue higher learning. Part of institutional support is offering dedicated members opportunities like free training and professional development scholarships (Jacoby, 2014). Lack of support programs such as seminars, training, and scholarship may result in organizational stagnation, affecting the institution's quality as a whole. However, it is undeniable that the institution has limited funds to deliver these demands. Another issue raised by the participants was the lack of support programs in times of calamity and emergency. The Philippines encounters at least 20 typhoons yearly (Aruta, 2022); hence, it was expected that this calamity would affect the living of every organizational member. This result may be linked

to the absence of a faculty and employee manual, wherein there is no basis on whether every member's assistance during a crisis is a right and privilege. The reason relies on the fact that low-income municipalities fund RCCs.

Proposed Change Management Plan

A change management plan assists in managing the change process and assures budget, timeline, scope, communication, and resource control (Islam & Evans, 2020). The strategy for change management will reduce the impact a change may have on the organization, its workers, customers, and other key stakeholders (Doppelt, 2017). The analysis and implications of this study are used to develop and proposed the REACT model of a change management plan for RCCs. REACT model stands for **Revisit, Empower, Adapt, Capture, and Transform**.

Under **revisit**, the academic council will re-assess and re-align the institutional vision, mission, goals, and objectives to institutional policies, processes, and practices. Revisitation will redirect the organization to its primary purpose and aims (Jacobs et al., 2016). It should be done at the end of the academic year.

Table 3. Proposed change management plan for rccs (react model)

REACT (What?)	Action Steps (How?)	Duration (When?)	Manpower (Who?)
Revisit	Revisit, reassess, and re-align the institutional vision, mission, goals, and objectives to institutional policies, processes, and practices.	End of the Academic year	Academic Council
Empower	Empower every member by providing support programs such as team building, seminars, training, and scholarships for professional development.	Beginning of the academic year for team building and Year-round the professional support programs	Board of Regents
Adapt	Adapting new trends in organizational management, such as digitalization and acquisition of global standards through accreditation.	Year-round	Member of the board, Administrators, faculty and non-teaching

Capture	Capturing the core issues through collaboration with stakeholders, community leaders, and the members of the school provides practical solutions. Sharing significant concerns, including funding and organizational conflicts, through open forums.	Every end of the semester	Member of the board, Administrators, faculty, non-teaching, and external stakeholders
Transform	Transform institutional practices by developing and employing an employee manual that will guide every organization member with the administrative and academic policies, their rights and privileges, and in responding to their duties. Impose institutional support programs, most especially in times of crisis. Tap local government officials to realize this motion.	Beginning of the academic year	Member of the board, Administrators, faculty, non-teaching, and external stakeholders

Furthermore, CCs should **empower** every member by providing support programs such as team building, seminars, training, and scholarships for professional development. Empowerment upgrades its members and strengthens the value of unity (Kinchin et al., 2015). Teambuilding should be done at the beginning of the academic year and year-round for the professional support programs.

Moreover, adapting new trends in organizational management, such as digitalization and acquisition of global standards through accreditation, will counter every member’s change resistance (Benavides et al., 2020). **Adapting** should be done year-round since it allows significant institutional upgrades to meet quality standards. It will also lessen the change resistance of every member and provides opportunities to perform better in their duties. **Capturing** the core issues through collaboration with stakeholders, community leaders, and the members of the school provides practical solutions through sharing significant concerns, including funding and organizational conflicts through open forums. It will provide an opportunity for every organization member to speak and be heard (Guo & Saxton, 2018); it is appropriate to conduct every end of

the semester. Lastly, **transform** institutional practices by developing and employing an employee manual that will guide every organization member with the administrative and academic policies, their rights and privileges, and in responding to their duties. Impose institutional support programs (Ranta et al., 2018), most especially in times of crisis, and include local government officials to realize this motion.

■ CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study results, it can be concluded that the administrators’ management skills were more likely flexible than faculty and non-teaching. The advantage of being a flexible leader is that it ensures better organizational results of undertakings. Flexible leadership in a less funded academic institution is essential to respond in uncertain or unpredictable circumstances. On the other hand, the faculty demonstrates support and value for the similarities and differences of every employee—faculty personnel desire to perform their best in a work atmosphere that values diversity. Working well in a diverse workplace begins with self-awareness, which includes thinking about managing prejudice, inadequate treatment, and

disagreement and showing appreciation to others.

Furthermore, non-teaching personnel demonstrates competitiveness and support to members. Competitiveness is the attribute or capacity of an organization to accomplish its objective with more success than rival organizations. In addition, the support of non-teaching to other employees exhibits unity and a strong foundation of the organization.

Although administrators, faculty, and non-teaching possess different management skills, organizational issues still exist. The problem in adapting change management and realizing institutional vision relies on support systems such as additional funding and digitalization. Resistance to change may reduce provided that the institution should offer institutional upgrading. Additionally, RCCs are very political, whereas local politicians can monopolize the schools' decisions since they hold their budget allocation. Likewise, organizational members and the students were only at the level of understanding the school's situation rather than finding solutions to provide quality service better. Moreover, the existence of nepotism and seniority culture and the absence of faculty and employee manual further deteriorate the organizational management of RCCs.

The REACT Model of a change management plan for RCCs is based on their management skills and organizational issues. The model targets specific areas of need and opportunities for RCCs to upgrade their organizational management. The suggested REACT Model may enhance RCC communication, productivity, stress reduction, and decision-making; it may also aid in improving employee morale and creating a more pleasant work environment.

The limitation of the study can be found in the quantitative phase, where participants ask to rate their management skills using the MSAI. Other possible sources of management skills of

the participants and triangulation may further uncover unforeseen information relevant to the study findings.

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