

and role-standardizing forces it can be observed that any individual is seen as a cog in the apparatus, what he/she thinks and does is actually determined by the requirements in the organization structure. [16]

In the future presidents must be prepared to deal with these situations as well as the changes that will continue to occur across campuses both within the institutional structure, as well as with the faculty, staff, and students. Semantically, there is a clear demarcation line among the roles, responsibilities and duties concepts. Cohen and Brawer [6] stated that the conceptualization of a role:

...is based on the assumptions that (1) interpersonal/environmental contexts determine role – that is other people's anticipations of how a person playing a certain role will act are, in fact, the determinants of "proper" role behavior; (2) each individual plays a number of roles; (3) the role expectations held by individuals or defined by other members of a group are related to the individual's position in a given social system; (4) the individual's position in the social system affects the nature of his social relationship as well as his role expectations; and (5) role expectations emanate both from the broader society – that is, from the individual's reference group – and from his own perception of the situation (72).

Human personality has been virtually excluded from traditional organization theory. This is clearly manifested in Weber's [32] theory of bureaucracy in which he portrays the bureaucratic organization as a monolithic edifice where norms are clearly defined and consistently applied. The agencies of role socialization succeed in inducing acceptance of organizational requirements, and the sanctions of the system provide constraints and incentives needed to maintain behavioral conformity. Every individual is given a clearly defined role and readily fills it in. There is little room for more complex choice, individual creativity or social change. [32]

For Weber, bureaucracy as an ideal type is administered by "experts" in a spirit of impersonal rationality and is operated on a principle of discipline according to which each member performs his required duties or roles as efficiently as possible. Rationality in decision-making and obedience in performance are the pivots on which the entire system operates. Emotion, in this case, is regarded as a hindrance to efficiency and has to be excluded from the bureaucratic process. [32]

Weber noted the existence of three types of authority: traditional, charismatic and rational-legal. The rational-legal administrator is the pillar of bureaucracy as he/she receives his/her legitimacy impersonally from the system by virtue of his/her technical competence. In Weber's ideal, there is no

place for affection. It is only the charismatic leader who becomes emotionally important to his/her followers and who must personally validate his/her right to lead [32].

Based on the role theory, postsecondary college presidents are actors in a managerial role that has to meet the expectations of all stakeholders. Defining managerial roles is rooted in Barnard's theory of cooperative behaviour and interest in executive behaviours [1]. Three distinct schools of thought have emerged as a result of Barnard's contribution: the institutional school represented by Selznick [28], the decision-making school represented by Herbert Simon [29] and the human relations school represented by Mayo [18]. Even though Carlson [5] is credited with the first classical work about executives' behaviour, the first modern study of executive behaviour is attributed to Mintzberg [21].

According to Mintzberg [21], the manager's job, in our case that of postsecondary college president, can be specifically described within three different categories – informational, interpersonal and decisional roles. These roles are continuously changing as the environment in which the presidents conducting their daily routine activities changes. The following is a prescribed list of such possible generic roles.

In terms of informational roles category, the president is expected to act as a monitor, disseminator and spokesman. As a monitor, the president is constantly scrutinizing the external environment for more information and data with respect to the latest developments. Internally, the president is constantly in contact with their subordinates looking to obtain both solicited and unsolicited information that is helpful in the managerial context. As a disseminator, the president is expected to circulate the gathered information, passing it on to the responsible parties within their control unit. As a spokesperson, the president is expected to release information to other parties outside of their control unit.

In the interpersonal roles category, the president is expected to act as a figurehead, a leader and a liaison. As a figurehead, the president is expected to perform various ceremonial duties which may include graduation ceremonies and academic appointments. As a leader, the president is supposed to assume responsibility for the work performed by the people under his/her command. Within this leadership role, the president needs to perform service, be accountable, fulfil a moral role, act as a steward, build diverse communities with trust and collaboration, and promote excellence. As a liaison, the president should build and maintain contact outside the vertical chain of command.

With respect to the decisional roles, the president is expected to act as an entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator. As

entrepreneurs, the presidents would seek to improve their control unit from all perspectives – financial, teaching, and human resources – by providing a clear vision and articulate advice to their employees. As disturbance handlers, the presidents are expected to react promptly and offer solutions to problems resulting from situational pressures. As resource allocators, the presidents are supposed to properly decide how to fairly and equitably allocate all the resources among the members of their control unit. As negotiators, the presidents are expected to partake in negotiations both internally and externally.

3. Research Question

Based on the analysis of the existing literature research with respect to the managerial roles of the upper level management in tertiary education institutions, particularly, college presidents in the province of Ontario, Canada one issue seems to require some clarification. The present study tries to shed some light with respect to this matter when formulating the main research question which is: What are the most emphasized managerial roles that Ontario postsecondary college presidents are adopting in order to deal with present challenges posed by the new public management ideologies impacting the field of higher education?

4. Methodology and Data Analysis

In order to answer this question, as well as, to develop a rich and comprehensive understanding of the presidents' changing roles and responsibilities, a mix of quantitative and qualitative research approaches has been utilized. The quantitative part of the study aimed at gathering and analysing two distinct aspects about college presidents: the background factors and the most emphasized activities. Given the small sample size to draw from, as well as, the response rate, a qualitative analysis part has been added to the study. The qualitative part has been deemed as a good fit in this case since it will provide a broader view of presidents' managerial roles, responsibilities and actions since it complements the information obtained from the quantitative part of the study.

4.1. Sample size

In order to answer the research question it was important to understand the diversity of the different postsecondary institutions in Ontario since there is evidence that the roles of the presidents are impacted by a number of factors such as: the colleges' mandate, type of institution and language of communication and instruction. With respect to the college mandate, Ontario's postsecondary colleges

are classified as: urban and regional. Given the fact that there are different catchment areas, in terms of geographic location and size, different student population makeup, it is reasonable to believe that the presidents' managerial roles and responsibilities may differ from one category to another.

In regards to the type of organization, in Ontario the taxonomy consisted of two different institutional entities: Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (C.A.A.T.), and Institutes of Technology and Advanced Learning (I.T.A.L.). It will be extremely important to determine the extent to which the new (in the light of new Charter) institutional spin-offs have altered their reporting and/or hierarchical structure, as well as the administrative positions title. In terms of language of communication and instruction, in Ontario there are two types of colleges: English, or French speaking. It will be important to determine if in the French speaking institutions the role of the president is different than in the English speaking colleges, and if any, ascertain the reasons for that.

Summing up, the sample size, accounting for the factors listed above, consisted of twenty-four presidents across Ontario. The actual response rate was 37.5% which was considered sufficient to conduct the study.

4.2. Data Collection

For the quantitative part of the study, the data collection consisted of an online questionnaire. The data collection entailed the use of an "in person" semi structured interview. *This paper includes only the results and the afferent data analysis of the quantitative part of the study since the qualitative part of the study has not been completed, yet.*

The methodology of collecting data online is no longer new and according to Schmidt [26] one of the major benefits of such approach is the access to a largely dispersed population of potential participants besides the pecuniary aspects and efficiency and effectiveness associated with the collection of data.

The online questionnaire entitled a "Participant Questionnaire" consisted of two parts. The first part – Part A – addressed issues related to the presidents' academic and professional background. The second part – Part B – was developed around Mintzberg's taxonomy of managerial roles and addressed issues related to the presidents' most emphasized activities while conducting their work. Each of the ten managerial roles (latent variables) was measured by three distinct statements (indicator variables). All participants were asked to indicate the extent to which each managerial role was used in their daily routine using a four-point Likert-like type scale: 1. Not At All; 2. A Little; 3. Some; and 4. A Lot. As a research measurement instrument the questionnaire was tested for validity (content and context) and

reliability. While both validity aspects were met since the instrument was previously tested by Mech [19] and reviewed by Mintzberg, the reliability analysis revealed a good Cronbach's Alpha (.831) since its value was between 0.8 and 0.9.

The "in person" interviews were encapsulated under the title "Open End Interview Questions" and consisted of a semi-structured interviews containing a set of open – end questions aimed at exploring issues pertaining to presidents' personal views, norms, values, management style, working philosophy and future plans.

The interviews are expected to last between 30-45 minutes. The interviews will be carried out by the researcher and all the answers will be recorded on a voice recorder.

The choice for semi-structured over structured interviews was preferred in order to obtain rich, detailed answers. The interviewee insights about the changing roles of the presidents are expected to be relevant and important. The flexibility that is rendered by the semi-structured interviews helps with adjusting the emphases in the research as a result of significant issues that emerge in the free discussion. In other words, rather than expecting the interview to reflect and address the researcher's concerns and biases, it is of much greater interest to determine the interviewee's point of view and opinions about the proposed theme.

5. Results

The first part of the online questionnaire revealed important information about who the presidents are in terms of gender, age, previous position held, highest degree of education held, number of years of managerial experience and workplace characteristics. The data gathered from the study, namely the quantitative part, was subjected to statistical descriptive measures, particularly, rate of frequency and percentages.

5.1. Background Factors

The results revealed that: a.) the majority of the presidents (66.67%) that participated in the study were males; b.) the age of the majority of the participants (66.67%) was between 40 – 59 years of age; c.) the majority of the participants (66.67%) held a Vice-President position prior to their presidency term; d.) with small exceptions, majority of them have a doctoral degree (44.45% PhD and 33.33% EdD); e.) the majority of the presidents have over 11 years of managerial experience (66.67% between 11-20 years of managerial experience while 22.22% over 21 years); f.) with one exception, all the presidents worked in English speaking postsecondary institutions; g.) half of the participants worked in urban colleges (55.55%) while the rest in regional

ones; h.) with one exception, all participants worked in CAAT's.

5.2. Managerial Roles

The second part of the online questionnaire was aimed at determining the most emphasized activities routinely pursued by the presidents. After determining the frequencies, mean, range and mode for each of the activities it was concluded that *the most emphasized* activities were "encourage teamwork among your staff" and "represent the college to outside groups" while *the least emphasized* were "resolving problems that develop with other institutional units" and "put a stop to misbehaviour within or outside the College". Tallying up all the results, overall, it can be claimed that *the most emphasized* roles were the entrepreneur, spokesperson and figurehead, while *the least emphasized* roles were the negotiator and disturbance handler.

Analysing further the results from the second part of the questionnaire, it can be concluded that the president position is quite a complex one, demanding various and numerous activities to ensue in order to guarantee an efficient and effective running of a higher education institution. In this respect 25% of the presidents emphasize between 16-22 activities while another 25% of them between 8-15 activities; the remaining 50% of the presidents emphasize only between 0-7 activities. That means that on a daily basis, the presidents are confronting numerous and different challenges that require them to perform various activities in order to ensure the successfulness of their job.

6. Conclusions

The findings of this study are very important for understanding who the college presidents are and what are the most emphasized managerial roles displayed as part of their executive behaviour. In spite of the fact that the sample size was limited some valid and valuable conclusions can be drawn. The conclusions drawn offer only a partial understanding of the college presidents managerial roles since they cover only the quantitative part of the study. More and detailed information is expected to be added once the qualitative part will be completed and analysed. Based on background factors analysis it can be concluded that the majority of college presidents are males, 40 -59 years of age who held a Vice-President position prior to the presidency term, who have obtained a doctoral degree and have between 11 – 20 years of managerial experience in the field of higher education.

Based on the analysis of the managerial roles analysis it can be concluded that overall, the findings of the study align with the existing literature on higher education in the sense that it confirms that the role of the postsecondary college presidents reflects the changes that impacted the field of higher education in the past two decades, in particular the new public management ideologies. According to the results of this study the job of postsecondary college presidents has become more managerial in nature in the light of the most activities and roles emphasized. In this respect it can be concluded that the role of the college president has, also, become more entrepreneurial, requiring a lot of skills and abilities that are needed to deal with daily challenging situations within their work setting.

Moreover, the study proves the fact that part of the postsecondary college presidents' success rests with their capacity to develop and maintain a large work-related network of relationships that eventually can be deemed helpful when the situations require. As educational leaders, postsecondary college presidents understand the importance of the market-oriented, student-centred, business-like management and accountability. Acting like figureheads when sharing the academic mission, institutional focus and values with external audiences or when looking for external support, whether pecuniary or not, postsecondary college presidents of today acknowledge that their job has become very complex and demanding in terms of skills, knowledge and abilities.

In stark contrast, college presidents tend not to act as disturbance handlers or negotiators since they consider these roles as not important or relevant to what they consider is expected of the position they occupy. To them, the activities associated with these roles are at the bottom of their managerial "ivory towers" concerns, as they feel more like embracing the mantra of college chief executive officers.

More information and a better contour of their managerial profile will be added to the existing one once the qualitative part of this study will be completed. A more nuanced and in-depth, source-rich picture will be developed at the time and a better answer to the study research question will be formulated. Till then, based on the existing data and afferent results it can be claimed that the findings of the present study align with the existing literature research in the field of higher education.

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