

Power influence and promotion



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Rounding gives us a value of 2, which translates to a mean response for our sample that 'moderately agrees' with the statement. Where one person responded with 'unable to rate' the sample was reduced to 19 and reasons for this response were then investigated at the interview stage. ANALYSIS. Refer to appendix A for the results of the Staff survey. It was surprising to discover from statement 1 that most lecturers said they were unaware of the aims and objectives of the institution, their focus was to teach the curriculum given to them. I got a sense that lecturers felt they were working in isolation and rarely felt part of the institution as a whole.

This idea was reinforced by comments made in follow up interviews with the lecturers that there was very little collaboration or cooperation in solving problems, or even in the planning of units goals or standards (statements 4-10). Lecturers said they experienced short-term quick fix solutions (statement 3) to problems ranging from student discipline (statement 14), curriculum changes (statement 20) and even personal issues such as visiting a doctor (statements 40, 41). There were no overriding procedures (statement 44) to deal with even the simplest of issues, often the same problems would arise 3 or 4 times, and would be dealt with in a different manner each time depending on which officer was presented with the problem.

Lecturers would get to know different officers viewpoints, then carefully select which officer to approach with the problem to achieve a favourable outcome. Often the teachers felt to get advantaged they would need to form good relationships with one or two particular officers, just to get certain jobs done, this was indicated by statements 45-47, and more so in statement 50

on using behind the scenes lobbying to gain power, influence and access to resources.

Lecturers felt that officers revelled what can be crudely said as attention. Many officers had little to do during the day, and in a strange way were grateful for the task. They would try and take ownership of the problem, even if they were not competent to do so, lecturers would often say that by giving them problems to solve, they would feel important and powerful. Consequently would try to please the lecturers with favourable outcomes, but often final decisions would be out of their hands. This would frustrate lecturers more because indications from officers would be 'don't worry it will all work out we are doing our best for you....'

Then finish off with 'inshallah,' which actually means if Allah wills it. But was loosely meant as 'I don't really know what is going to happen, the decision is out of my hands.' This only fuelled an impression that many pieces of information that were passed down from a central command were never fully understood by the UAE nationals that ran TSI, they just followed orders, ignored implications and invented their own reasons for the orders.

Not only did lecturers feel that they were poorly managed and had to use what they saw as unprofessional tactics to get the job done, equally officers were thought of as being managed poorly, as they were not equipped, trained or even competent enough to do their jobs. There was an over-powering feeling that it is all about who you know, not what you know, it was felt by lecturers that this ran from the lowest paid menial worker all the way

up to the commander himself. Many thought that officers were appointed based on family connections, or contacts in higher positions of that society.

Many felt that this was true of the whole country, and all institutions and organisations were run a similar manner, especially with the governments focus on 'emiratisation' which was trying to get a larger population of local Arabs into employment, so that the country was not so reliant on foreign manpower. Many of them needed to be trained by foreigners, but at the same time the local Arabs were given power in management positions over the more talented foreigners.

It was unfortunate that many of these local Arabs entering employment were ignored and business was running as usual around them as they were not trusted to effectively or competently carry out particular jobs, many of them were left sitting around all day drinking coffee. This was similar to the situation at the Technical studies Institute, where very small, simple tasks were given to these officers, they were often given management positions over the far more talented foreign staff, who in turn felt frustrated in not being given the authority to run the institute, which they felt could be run far more efficiently and effectively.

Students had some opportunities for reward (statement 15), unfortunately many of the prize giving ceremonies took place where disappointed lecturers were not invited, or informed even in those cases where lecturers were directly responsible for the subject area for which the students were being awarded. These ceremonies took place on the parade ground, in many cases before lectures, which began at 7: 00 a. m. Once a year a graduation parade

took place, which was universally attended and full of pomp and circumstance, with often nationally respected military dignitaries present. It is a well rehearsed extravaganza and a strong example of the behavioural and visual expression of the organisational culture.

Staff Development for lecturers was non-existent (statement 19), when I questioned a senior officer why this was so, the response I received was surprising, " we carefully select lecturers from overseas that have already received a wealth of training, if they needed any more development we wouldn't employ them." Many western staff felt that their lack of training, especially in dealing with students quite new to the English language and secondly themselves being new to the Islamic culture often caused them problems which could have been eradicated with some staff development. The area of using technology in the classrooms was noticeably absent, lecturers were not encouraged to use these, even though facilities were available. Lecturers felt that the local Arabs were equally in dire need of training, especially in management and organisation skills, as these seemed to be the roles that they were entering.

Curriculum was another major worry, all lecturers responded to statement 20 as strongly disagreeing to seeing the curriculum being reviewed and updated regularly. After probing questions, I found that lecturers of the same subject area were not even communicating with each other, they would teach to the best of their abilities, modifying the curriculum independently, but this would not be a shared, coordinated effort, which was ironic, as I found that the lecturers wouldn't even dream about working in this way in their previous jobs.

Many of the lecturers felt that examination results were probably the greatest indicator of what teaching was going on in TSI, and that the officers looked at these more closely than any other indicator of a lecturer's performance. Lecturers thought that as students were paid a high salary to be at the college, it is easy to continuously fail exams, repeat a year and in a way make a career of failing exams, student's salaries would not really be affected. Examinations would often test memory rather than skills.

Lecturers mentioned that this was the case as many students had just begun learning the English language. Others argued that exams were purposely made easy to indicate a high pass rate, at the cost of a good standard of education. Often well motivated students were taught by a select few lecturers that held doctorate or masters degrees who were chosen by officers. Lecturers felt that some of their colleagues had become very complacent and lazy, compromising on educational standards, as examination results could be easily passed or explained away.

A key issue was that of innovation, foreign lecturers strongly disagreed with statement 25 that innovation was highly valued. Lecturers claimed that many of the local officers would listen very carefully to fully understand new ideas and then discourage the idea based on 'it wouldn't be practical to implement at the TSI', or say 'the commander will not go for that here.' Often the officers would then present the ideas as their own, to get recognition for 'their abilities' and hope for further power influence and promotion.

The foreign staff could see this going on, and some lecturers would play the game, as they knew that if the officer receives more power and influence,

they could use his new connections, power and influence for their own purposes. The officer is obviously impressed with the lecturers' viewpoint, as he 'stole' his idea, presenting it as his own, and therefore would listen more keenly for any further ideas. Often ideas would be passed on with the lecturers' own agenda in mind.

This worked well for some lecturers as there were no promotions, incentives or chances to develop (statements 27, 29, 50), they would never directly have influence or power over such things as curriculum, examinations, funding of facilities, distribution of workloads, choosing who the heroes of the organisation were, hiring, firing, etc., except by manipulating influential officers.