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Go City Green Through a Community of Practice: Knowledge Management for Environmental Sustainability

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ABSTRACT

Go City Green is an environmental initiative that uses a Community of Practice model of Knowledge Management. In this model, knowledge experts from the university and the international community, facilitators, and university students engage in productive discussions, articulating problems and solutions for environmental protection. Spearheaded by the Bachelor of Arts in Communication Program of Leyte Normal University, Go City Green emphasizes the emergence and dissemination of knowledge throughout the community, from a Communication class to the College of Arts and Sciences and to the international community, with interactions focused on collective interventions both on campus and the outside world. At the end of the Community of Practice, knowledge outcomes reveal various behavioral actions done in the university that contribute to environmental protection. These include waste segregation through reduce, reuse, and recycle; use of personal tumblers instead of plastic mineral bottles; reduction of energy and water consumption by turning off lights and air conditioners in classrooms and turning off the water faucet when doing something else; less consumption and expenditures to reduce waste; paperless submission of student papers; deletion of unwanted and excessive data from cellphones that reduce carbon footprints; continued adherence to health protocols; risk and disaster management practices; and instilling ecological sensitivity, which contribute to their mental health and well-being.

INTRODUCTION

This study, Go City Green, as designed by the BA Communication Program students of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) at Leyte Normal University, focuses on the emergence of knowledge within a learning community through the use of Community of Practice, a model in Knowledge Management. It was initially introduced by the students of Bachelor of Arts in Communication of Leyte Normal University in August 2022 under the Knowledge Management (COMM 123) class of Dr. Leoncio P. Olobia, where the students formed small groups consisting of at least 3 members, including a regular participant, a moderator, and an invited professional or technical expert on a topic of their choice who discussed relevant and pressing issues surrounding the selected theme.

In advancing awareness through the Community of Practice, Go City Green Consciousness was utilized as the domain of interest, bringing together knowledge experts at the university level, with a knowledge expert from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, lastly with an international expert on environmental preservation, Mr. Jesus M. Macasil, Jr., an alumnus of Leyte Normal University and now residing in Switzerland, and together with the students who engaged in various discussions illuminating problems, solutions, and mobilization initiatives associated with LNU Go City Green in the context of Leyte Normal University.

Goals/Objectives

General

Fostering global conversation among LNU students and professionals engaging in knowledge formation in a secure environment through the Community of Practice in order to achieve environmental sustainability through Go City Green.

Specific

1. To engage LNU students through interactive and open communication with professionals in the pursuit of problem-based, solution-focused learning in the context of Go City Green advocacy for environmental sustainability.
2. To manifest the emergence of knowledge within a community of practice as a social learning process manifested in open dialogues between mentors and mentees in a free and conversational atmosphere.
3. To empower the students of LNU to partake in global solidarity through critical thinking of ecologically sensitive issues affecting the university.

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Go Green for Environmental Sustainability” entails the need for urgent action, a vision for a sustainable future, and the awareness that solutions must be widely accessible and advance the welfare of nations, especially in the face of climate change (Savarimuthu, Rao & Reynolds, 2021).

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Nowadays, Go Green has become an initiative to protect the natural resources for the next generation and protect human health through environmental management and implementation of green ways of life (Rusuli, 2016). In business, the depletion of natural resources as a by-product of widespread, global economic growth has urged entrepreneurs to think about the environment when starting or conducting business (Purwandani & Michaud, 2021).

A concept that is related to “Go Green for Environmental Sustainability” is called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR is a part of corporate responsibilities (company responsibilities to all stakeholders), and show that there is a need for both concepts in business ethics, and their applicability is dependent on a particular problem we want to solve (Dmytriyev, 2017). Moreover, each community, exerts cultural cognitive (shared frames of reference; community ideology, identity and values), social normative (expectations of peers and community), and regulative (local laws and regulations) institutional forces. These forces, then, impact the focus, form, and level of CSR in the community (Halbusi & Tehseen, 2017).

In this study, the model of Community Practice from Knowledge Management becomes vital. Communities of practice are voluntary groups of people who, sharing a common concern or a passion, come together to explore these concerns and ideas and share and grow their practice (Mercieca, 2017). Because communities of practice play an important role in shaping their members’ participation in the world and their orientation to it, they create a connection between the individual and the group in the larger social order (Ostermann, 2015). In effect, environmental awareness significantly mediated the relationship between KM practices and a sustainable environment, but green technological use did not find any mediating effect on the relationship between KM practices and a sustainable environment (Weina & Yanling, 2022).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sequences of Execution

1. Students created their specific CoP within a membership target which they identified. As CoP is created based on the common interest of its members, selection was largely based on that premise. They also chose their external and professional expert who served as their mentor that would provide direction on the emergent knowledge that was to come out from collaborative discussions.

2. When it was first tested in 2022, a virtual platform for communication between members, moderator, and the mentor (e.g. Messenger) was utilized. In the virtual space, the goals and objectives of CoP were identified. The Mentor, after, orienting the members on the nature of the CoP, began by posting questions that started the conversation. This was facilitated by a moderator who followed-up the members on their participation

and provided direction on the discussions. Because the nature of the CoP was voluntary, members joined the conversation freely, acted as lurkers (silent participants), or even left anytime they wanted. The principle behind this is that members in the community come and go as they please. They were not committed and obliged to become members, in the first place. With or without new members, the conversations persisted until the objectives were answered in which case the CoP came to a close.

3. The mentor saw to it that the members built their learning and that new knowledge was created as a lived experience within the community of practice. As such, the level of questioning encouraged active participation as critical in the survival of the CoP.

4. The moderator guided, facilitated, and regulated discussions making sure that multiple and diverse perspectives were sought, for instance, and varied representations heard. Also, the moderator set the pace of the discussion by taking breaks as agreed upon by the entire community, which also set the date for future sessions.

5. As the nature of interaction was rather informal and conversational, everyone saw to it that no one was left out. Discussion built until the most important knowledge has already been generated in which case members of the CoP could decide to close the conversations.

6. A summary of the CoP proceedings then followed highlighting how knowledge emerged from the onset up to the final meeting. Reflections were included in the final report of the CoP with everyone sharing insights and introspections on their journey.

7. Based on the flow of interactions with the CoP, it ran between 1-2 months. This provided a more in-depth discussion on the issues raised by the members.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sequences of Execution

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Community of Practice in a Knowledge Management Class

On October 24, 2023, the Knowledge Management class of Dr. Leoncio Olobia, together with his students, considered Go City Green as a forum for exchanging ideas on how the university students respond to the call for environmental protection amidst climate change using the Community of Practice model of Knowledge Management. The concept was derived from the Go City Green campaign of Tacloban City where the university belongs.

Moreover, social learning transpired and knowledge was sought resulting from the different interactions between the teacher who served as the technical expert and the students as the participants of the community of practice.

Community of Practice at the International Level

After the college-wide activity, Go City Green became internationalized when a webinar format was done with a knowledge expert in the person of Jesus M. Macasil, Jr., an independent consultant and alumnus of LNU, shared his experiences, insights, and recommendations. The following were highlighted:

1. Go City Green ought to coincide with behavioral action at the individual level. Anything big such as internationalization will only be realized if an individual takes initial steps.

2. Social entrepreneurship will foster economic benefits of environmental mitigation such that students and the

general public will create income-generating pursuits including cultural artifacts using eco-friendly materials to boost awareness and income.

3. Giving back to nature for what has been taken away from it. This could mean that when a tree is cut to make way for building expansion, there must be a replacement through planting or greening the surrounding with a garden.

Finally, another knowledge expert, Prof. Kenneth Cinco, a theater enthusiast and an accomplished literary writer, articulated that the use of theater spreads consciousness of LNU Green to vast audiences. Apart from its creative value, theater in all forms including digital theater, solidifies commitment to spread learning on disaster management across the globe through conversations on climate change. Using theater as a vehicle for social transformation, Go City Green consciousness engenders cultural workers and international audiences to partake in environmental issues for sustainability.

Insights

1. Go City Green is the university's direct response to student active participation in environmental protection through simple acts of waste segregation and management, water and energy conservation around the campus, among others.

2. Fostering awareness and mobilization in a safe and secure environment where students and mentors interact freely facilitates active and pro-active responses.

3. Go City Green is a behavioral-inducing campaign that utilizes communication as an active agent in delivering positive results to environmental preservation.

Differences from the Traditional Approach

1. Advancing Go City Green Consciousness by utilizing Community of Practice (class, college, and internal level), as a forum for sharing ideas and experiences instills that knowledge emanates within the learning community.

2. Incorporating theater drama in articulating the campaign deepens understanding through artistic endeavor.

3. Accentuating behavioral practices within the community of learners of LNU mobilizes the advocacy campaign.

4. Allows for digital platform creation as in the case of a Learn Out Loud website where students put together individual Communities of Practices, that when combined, creates a meta-narrative of Go City Green from local, national, and to local dimensions.

5. Active participation of LNU engages openness of students to internationalization through collaborative discussions forging intellectual mobility.

Impact to Various Individuals and Stakeholders Students

1. Fosters awareness through collaborative discussions relevant to Go City Green as a behavioral-cognitive advocacy campaign towards environmental sustainability.

2. Increases participation of students to environmental interventions within their capacity such as proper garbage disposal, clean water utilization, among others.
3. Instills values formation on environmental protection as long-term action.
4. Promotes greater participation to issues affecting the climate change
5. Instills human dignity as a global citizen imbued with social responsibility.

Faculty/University

1. Research and development priorities incorporating ethical considerations that impact Go City Green campaign.
2. Profound extension activities fostering community interactions that are facilitated by LNU faculty
3. Foster stakeholder networking initiatives such as the private and the government sectors.
4. Faculty serving as resource speakers, facilitators, and project leaders for specific endeavors relevant to Go City Green.

Responses

Industry/Market

1. The LNU Community took an active step to partake in the Go City Green Consciousness campaign by regulating garbage disposal; installing a water reservoir to

collect water for various purposes, among others.

2. Continued school surveillance of the different buildings and offices on compliance to the protocols of preservation.

3. LNU Community received partnership from the Bureau of Forest and Agricultural Resources through a three-day seminar workshop on water resource utilization and conservation involving BA Communication students of LNU and Forestry students from the Visayas State University.

4. Stakeholder support was fostered with private environmental groups spearheading in environmental programs.

Government

1. Go City Green, as an initiative of the city government of Tacloban, effectively pursues risk disaster management as part of the public order responsibilities along with police duties.

2. Environmental initiatives are serious concerns in pre-disaster, during disaster, and post disaster operations. Go City Green provides the avenue for productive solutions in mitigation and response to environmental disruptions.

3. The Community of Practice disseminates relevant risk disaster communication to target and specific audiences, which are regulated by government interventions.

Figure 1 illustrates Cost-Benefit Analysis of Go City

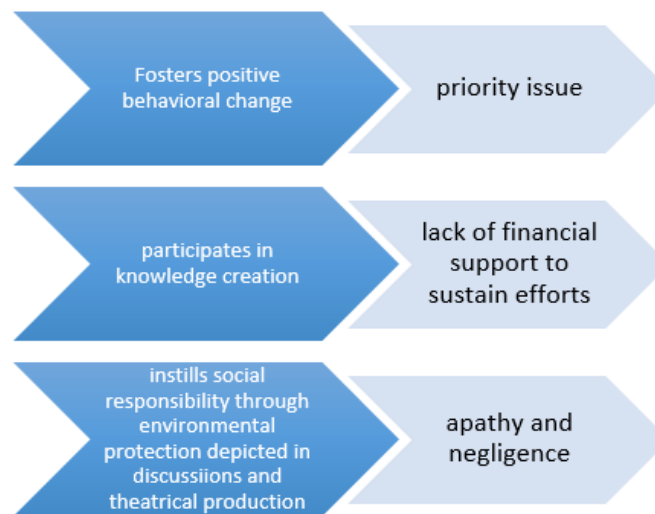


Figure 1: Cost-Benefit Analysis

Green. On the left side in blue, benefits of the project include fostering positive behavioral change, exemplified in students' direct responses to mitigate the effects of climate change; participates in knowledge creation illuminates the emergence of knowledge within the community of practice as a result of engaging discussions between the expert, moderator, and the participants; instills social responsibility through collaborations and using theater to disseminate consciousness are vital components of the project and forming behavioral practices impact the members in a positive way. The right side in gray lists some negative aspects of the program. Priority issues of the university such as academics,

other student program activities, teaching and learning, among others, can undermine Go City Green efforts; lack of financial support to sustain efforts is an important concern that hinders the realization of goals and objectives; apathy and negligence are some observations coming from the students. All these costs can be remedied through the following:

1. Improve Go City Green consciousness campaign with student organizations helping in the dissemination. Next, inclusion of environmental preservation in LNU should be part of the learning curriculum of each program of the university.
2. Apart from institutional funding, LNU can engage

with external stakeholders, the private sector and alumni community to put up a revolving fund for the conduct of the Go City Green operations.

3. Apathy and negligence can be remedied through changing behavioral practices, exposing the students with seminars and lectures on caring the environment, and by directly informing students of their social responsibility especially to those in violation of environmental preservation.

CONCLUSION

LNU's effort to instill a long-term direction is in accordance to the city's plan. Second, Go City Green continues to manifest consciousness by fostering new dialogues that propel behavioral change. Through this, students are more abreast of new practices and trends in environmental preservation. Lincreases partnerships with other government agencies and the international community using the Community of Practice of Knowledge Management, increasing the project's visibility in the academe and the different sectors. In this avenue, knowledge assemblage continues to manifest within a learning community. Finally, the Community of Practice can be continued with emerging issues considered for discussion. Its expansion can lead to greater awareness and participation.

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