

Acceptance speech of Dr. Robert Edric Josef R. Lizares

It is with much gratitude that I accept the Outstanding Scholarly Work Award for the John Gokongwei School of Management; I would like to thank Ateneo de Manila University for this recognition.

It was in the PhD Leads Program that I first encountered the idea of sustainability. Coming from the corporate world, where managers may focus on gaining market share by encouraging increased consumption, or on chasing profit targets by streamlining costs, I found it fascinating that businesses can, and should, contribute to creating a more sustainable world. Inasmuch as enterprises take from the planet, and profit from communities, these same enterprises must ensure the longevity and regeneration of our limited resources, and safeguard the rights and well-being of members of society. This call for sustainable development is not at odds with corporate goals, and may be a differentiator that enhances business strategy.

This research work hopes to contribute to the conversations on sustainability and business. It explores how leaders play the vital role of embedding sustainability into their organizational cultures so that their members understand its significance and contribute to it even in their daily activities. Building a culture that supports sustainability creates a shared responsibility for it that resonates across all levels of an organization.

Through their functional responsibilities, such as crafting strategy and monitoring performance, leaders weave sustainability into the fabric of their operations; through their social interactions, they serve as models of sustainable behaviors for others to emulate. While their formal designations and interpersonal engagements contribute to building a sustainable culture, leaders first recognize its importance within themselves.

These findings align with our hope of developing competent managers who not only exemplify proficiency in their functional roles, but also demonstrate compassion and conscience in their concern for others and the world around them; and a commitment to sustainable development that goes beyond themselves.

This work would not have been possible without the guidance of my co-author, Dr. Achoot Cuyegkeng, who introduced me to sustainability, and to sound qualitative research methods. For her mentorship, I am deeply grateful. I am also thankful to the PhD Leads Program and Community for creating a space for conversations on leadership and its role in moving the world forward. It is through these conversations that Dr. Edna “BoPeep” Franco, Dr. Joy Teng-Calleja, Dr. Patrick Valentin and Dr. Shy Baquiano provided feedback to enhance this work further. I would also like to thank Dean Robby Galang and Dr. Rico Osi for their support and encouragement in contributing to more research for responsible management and sustainability.

It is my hope to continue contributing to this body of knowledge and to deepen conversations around how business success is not only measured in financial gains, but also in social and environmental impact. Through this, perhaps leaders, both in the present and in the future, can also contribute to creating a more sustainable future for all.

Thank you.