A Case Study on the Organizational Culture of Local Government Colleges: Exploring Values, Practices and Challenges in Public Administration

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ABSTRACT

Organizational culture is a critical element that influences how employees interact, make decisions, and contribute to institutional goals. In academic settings, it shapes not only professional relationships but also the delivery of quality education and services. Understanding the challenges employees face in adapting to such culture provides valuable insight into areas for improvement in leadership and governance. This study explored the challenges of the employees on the organizational culture of one of the institutions in Misamis Occidental, Philippines. The participants were the 15 faculty and 15 staff who were selected using purposive sampling. Interview-guide questions was used in gathering the data which were analyzed using yin's method of data analysis. Results revealed five (4) themes: core values as the foundation of a unified, ethical, and purpose-driven organizational culture; ethical leadership and core values in shaping organizational culture and governance; ethical leadership and inclusive governance amid structural and communication barriers; and values-driven organizational culture as a catalyst for academic excellence and service quality. A strong values-based organizational culture serves as a key driver in improving academic performance and service delivery through ethical role modeling and behavioral consistency. Leadership development initiatives may prioritize ethical training and value-based decision-making to strengthen governance and employee engagement.

Keywords: barriers, communication, organizational culture, service quality, values

INTRODUCTION

The organizational culture of local government schools plays a crucial role in shaping their effectiveness and overall performance. It encompasses shared values, beliefs, and practices that influence the work environment, decision-making, and stakeholder interactions. A strong and well-defined culture fosters collaboration, enhances teacher commitment, and contributes to improved student outcomes. Research suggests that organizations with a strong culture perform more effectively than those with a weak or undefined culture (Gochhayat et al., 2020). Leadership plays a key role in shaping and sustaining this culture, as effective school leaders promote organizational values and manage institutional dynamics to improve productivity. Strategic leadership, in particular, has been linked to increased teacher commitment and overall school effectiveness Ucar & Dalgic, 2021). Understanding these cultural dynamics is essential for improving school performance and educational outcomes.

The institution's culture contributed to the organization's uniqueness of values, behavior, psychology, experience, ways of thinking, and organizational expectations. Improving employee behavior into organizational citizenship behavior is needed by every organization (Arumi et al., 2021). Organizational culture significantly affected the importance of school policy. The organizational culture and school leadership were influenced by national culture (Huang & Teo, 2020). School culture affects both leadership styles and the corporate image. Leadership styles played a vital role in developing an image of school culture (Kalkan Ümit et al., 2020). Integrating values and leadership values into institutional vision strengthened the school culture and improved the achievement of school (Imron et al., 2021).

The institution's culture shapes its identity by influencing core values, behaviors, and expectations. It creates a distinct environment where shared experiences, collective psychology, and unique ways of thinking guide decision-making processes and interpersonal interactions. Improving employee behavior into organizational citizenship behavior is needed by every organization (Arumi et al., 2019). Organizational culture significantly affected the importance of school policy (Huang & Teo, 2020). The organizational culture and school leadership were influenced by national culture.

This study explores the organizational culture of local government schools in Tangub City, focusing on the shared values, beliefs, and practices that influence school operations. Key variables such as leadership styles, communication methods, teacher collaboration, and community involvement are examined to understand their impact on the school environment. By analyzing how these factors interact, the study aims to uncover the strengths and challenges within the schools' culture, offering insights into how it affects teaching effectiveness, student engagement, and overall school performance. The findings will provide valuable recommendations for improving educational outcomes and fostering a positive school culture.

This case study aims to investigate the organizational culture of local government colleges by exploring their core values, practices, and challenges within the realm of public administration. The study seeks to identify the shared beliefs and behaviors that define these institutions, examining how these cultural elements influence administrative efficiency and educational outcomes. Additionally, it aims to assess the impact of leadership styles on fostering a positive organizational culture and addressing challenges unique to public educational institutions. Recent studies have highlighted issues such as workplace bullying and harassment within local government settings, emphasizing the need for a supportive and inclusive culture to enhance employee wellbeing and institutional effectiveness. By analyzing these factors, the research intends to provide insights into improving governance and performance in local government colleges, contributing to the broader discourse on effective public administration.

The organizational culture of local government colleges plays a vital role in shaping their overall effectiveness, governance, and educational outcomes. A strong culture rooted in shared values and effective leadership fosters collaboration, commitment, and institutional success. However, challenges such as administrative inefficiencies and workplace issues can hinder productivity. By understanding these cultural dynamics, institutions can implement strategies to enhance leadership practices, improve employee engagement, and strengthen governance. Addressing these factors ensures a more resilient, efficient, and student-centered public administration system.

Conceptual Framework

The organizational culture plays a crucial role in shaping its values, beliefs, and practices, directly influencing governance, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness. Organizational culture in higher education institutions serves as a guiding system that shapes leadership behavior, policy implementation, and institutional performance (Bush & Glover, 2021; Schein & Schein, 2021). This study examines how cultural dynamics influence leadership styles, decision-making processes, communication patterns, and stakeholder engagement among faculty, staff, and students. In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, factors such as digital transformation, inclusivity, and sustainable governance have become integral in shaping institutional culture and administrative practices (Al-Husseini et al., 2021; OECD, 2023). By analyzing these aspects, the study aims to provide strategic insights to improve policy development, administrative efficiency, and the overall learning environment for long-term educational success.

Core Values as the Foundation of a Unified, Ethical, and Purpose-Driven Organizational Culture. Core values serve as the cornerstone for fostering a unified, ethical, and purpose-driven organizational culture in local government colleges. They provide a shared framework that aligns the actions, decisions, and behaviors of administrators, faculty, staff, and students toward common institutional goals (Groysberg et al., 2022). When consistently practiced, these values cultivate trust, transparency, and accountability, reinforcing ethical standards in public administration and educational governance (Denhardt et al., 2021). Moreover, core values guide institutions in navigating organizational challenges, ensuring that responses remain anchored to ethical principles rather than expedient compromises (Schein & Schein, 2021). This values-based foundation strengthens internal cohesion while enhancing institutional credibility and public trust. Ultimately, core values

act as a moral compass that sustains organizational integrity and drives purposeful growth in service of the community (Bush & Glover, 2021).

Ethical Leadership and Core Values in Shaping Organizational Culture and Governance. Ethical leadership, guided by core values, is essential in shaping organizational culture and governance within educational institutions. Leaders who demonstrate honesty, fairness, and accountability set behavioral standards that influence faculty, staff, and students alike (Brown & Treviño, 2020). By aligning policies and decisions with shared institutional values, ethical leaders foster trust, transparency, and respect across the academic community (Hassan et al., 2022). This approach promotes fairness in administrative processes and encourages responsible behavior among stakeholders. Faculty and staff are empowered to work with integrity, while students develop ethical awareness and civic responsibility. Consequently, ethical leadership and core values collectively contribute to the development of a well-governed, values-centered educational institution (Al-Husseini et al., 2021).

Ethical Leadership and Inclusive Governance Amid Structural and Communication Barriers. Ethical leadership and inclusive governance are vital in addressing structural and communication barriers within educational institutions. Leaders who prioritize integrity and openness create safe spaces for dialogue, allowing faculty, staff, and students to voice concerns and contribute ideas without fear of reprisal (OECD, 2023). Inclusive governance ensures that decision-making processes incorporate diverse perspectives, resulting in more responsive, equitable, and sustainable policies (Shields, 2021). Even in the presence of organizational challenges such as hierarchical constraints or limited communication channels, ethical leaders actively work to bridge gaps and enhance transparency (Hassan et al., 2022). This leadership approach strengthens institutional trust, collaboration, and shared ownership, fostering a more cohesive and supportive academic environment despite existing barriers.

Values-Driven Organizational Culture as a Catalyst for Academic Excellence and Service Quality. A values-driven organizational culture serves as a catalyst for academic excellence and service quality in educational institutions. Shared values such as integrity, respect, excellence, and commitment align the efforts of administrators, faculty, staff, and students toward continuous improvement and institutional success (Groysberg et al., 2022). Faculty are motivated to deliver high-quality instruction, staff provide efficient and responsive support services, and students are encouraged to strive for academic and personal growth (Bush & Glover, 2021). Administrators play a critical role in ensuring that institutional policies and programs reflect these values, promoting fairness, accountability, and quality assurance (Denhardt et al., 2021). Over time, a strong values-driven culture becomes the driving force behind sustained academic performance, enhanced service delivery, and a positive institutional reputation.
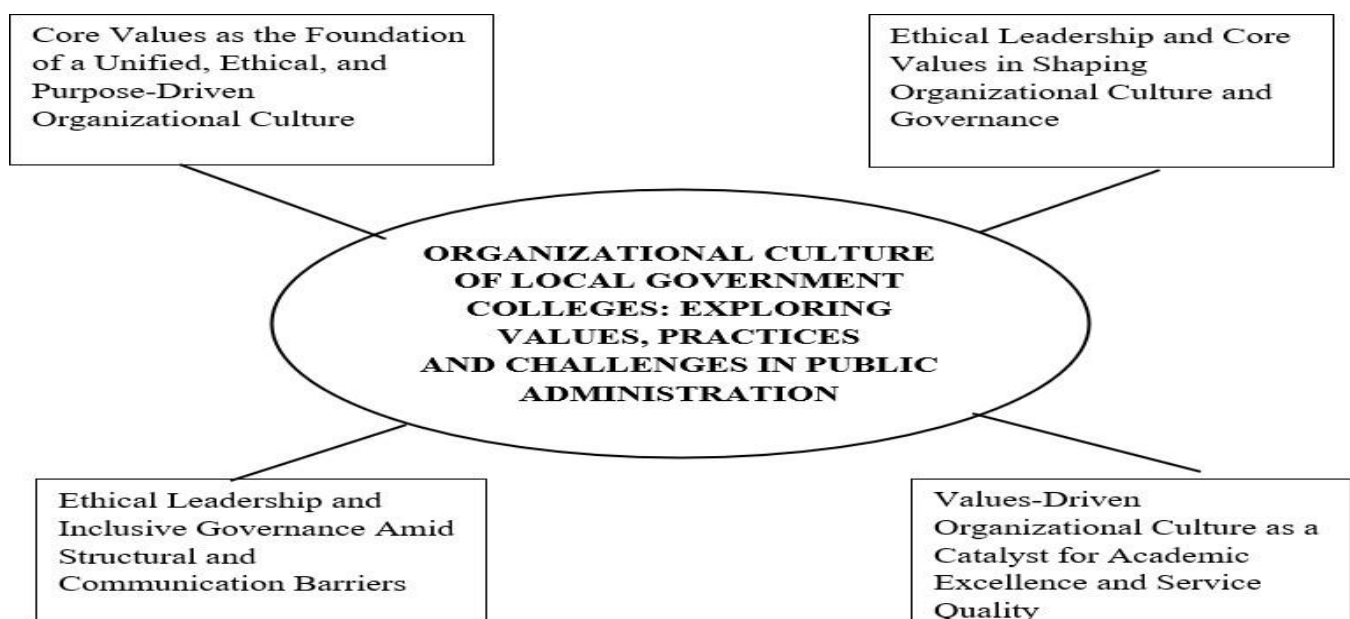

Figure 1: Schematic Diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study explored the organizational culture in one of the institutions in Misamis Occidental. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. How do the core values of local government colleges influence their organizational culture and decision-making processes?

2. What are the common practices that shape the work environment and administrative functions within local government colleges?

3. What challenges do local government colleges face in maintaining an effective and ethical organizational culture in public administration?

4. How do faculty, staff, and students perceive the impact of organizational culture on academic performance and service delivery in local government colleges?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

 This study utilized a case study research design to explore the organizational culture of an institution in Misamis Occidental. A case study approach is appropriate for an in-depth investigation of real-life phenomena within their natural context. To ensure rigor and credibility, the study will adopted Robert K. Yin's (114) systematic framework for case study research. This design is appropriate in exploring the values, practices, and challenges in the administration of faculty and staff in public institutions.

Settings

This study was conducted in one of the institutions in Misamis Occidental. This institution is funded by the local government unit (LGU) of the city. The college operates under the governance of the LGU, which ensures that its operations align with local policies and regulations. Committed to its quest for academic excellence, the institution continuously enhances its curriculum, faculty development programs, and student services to provide quality education. It strives to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to become competent professionals and responsible citizens. Through its unwavering dedication to education, the institution aims to empower students and help them build a better future.

Participants

 The study included thirty (30) employees, comprising fifteen (15) faculty members and fifteen (15) staff, selected through purposive sampling. Participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) currently employed, (2) holding a Regular or Job Order status, and (3) classified as either faculty or staff, and (4) willing to participate in the study. Before conducting interviews, the researchers were ensured that all participants meet these criteria, ensuring relevance and alignment with the study's objectives.

Instruments

 The interview was conducted using the semi- structured interview guide. The interviewer is also given some leeway to probe and explore additional questions in response to what are deemed significant response (Bryman, 2004), while allowing rapport and empathy to develop between the researcher and the participant. To assist the researcher with the structure and flow of the interview, an interview schedule was created. The participants were asked a series of questions about their values, practices, and challenges in public administration.

Data Gathering Procedure

After obtaining an approval from the Graduate School of Misamis University to conduct the research, the

researcher had undergone the iterative process to research participants from the target institution. The researcher then sought approval from the college president. Upon approval, the letter was presented to the VPAA, to the Deans and to the faculty and staff of the institution.

Once potential participants are identified, the researcher explained the research objective of the study, research procedures, the risks and benefits of participating in the study, participants' rights, and confidentiality. The participants signed the consent form to become the participants in the study, and were given information about the interview process as well as procedures for obtaining a copy of the interview protocols. When data saturation was reached and the information received from interviewees become redundant, the recruitment and interviews of the participants come to an end (Merriam, 1998). The interview process took two weeks which started in August 2024. In the pre-interview, the researcher explained the research purpose and inform with clear instructions and directions to endure the participants' understanding. The researcher gathered information during the vacant time of the participants. After gathering the necessary data, the researcher did the iterative process familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for the themes, reviewing the themes, defining the names of the themes, and producing the report to map the most critical themes in the data.

Ethical Considerations

Before beginning this study, the researcher ensured that all participants have given their consent. The participants were advised that they are under no obligation to answer any questions that they did not feel comfortable answering. Before the interview, participants were given advance notice, a broad outline of the subject to be discussed, an indication of the type of information required of the participant, the research being conducted, and how the information they provide will be used. The length of the interview was disclosed to the participant prior to the interview. There enough time allocated before and after the interview to ask any questions about the research topic.

All participants have signed a consent form confirming that they are willing to participate in the interview while maintaining confidentiality and privacy throughout the process. The researcher was sensitive to the questions to ask about the research and the participants' potential vulnerability while preparing, researching, and analyzing the subject and data. It is important to note that people's employment experiences vary, so the researcher's approach to the subject was carefully considered.

To collect information from the participants, an in-depth face to face and semi- structured interview guide was used. Each interview consumed 15-30 minutes using audiotape and transcribe verbatim. Meetings were held in the offices of the participants and all interviews were conducted by the researcher.

Data Analysis

The six stages of Yin's (2009) case study process were used in this study. The case study approach by Yin was used to evaluate the transcripts of all the interviews. Following these steps, namely: 1. Plan, 2. Design, 3. Prepare, 4. Collect, 5. Analyze, and 6. Share.

Planning. To study more about the issue, I chose a topic that I am personally interested in learning. With my adviser's aid and supervision, I was to employ purposive and snowball sampling to choose people from whom I could collect data, considering the sample size, accessibility, and timeframe. The data gathering strategy and study questions were developed with the help of my adviser. Identifying the research objectives or rationale for conducting a case study, selecting to employ the case study method (as opposed to other methods), and comprehending its strengths and limitations were all part of the planning stage (Yin, 2009).

Designing. At this point, I had decided on the most efficient way to begin my study and drive my decision-making, considering the degree of flexibility that is open to modification as preliminary evidence is gathered. I selected the study technique and created the research tool. The study design was logically related to the research questions to the research results through the actions followed during data collection and data analysis. The research design included research questions, relevant propositions/hypotheses, the unit of analysis, the logic tying the data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings. The logic that connects the data to the propositions should also ensure that the data collected is accurate and relevant (Baskarada, 2014).

Defining the unit of analysis and the likely cases to be studied, developing theory/propositions and identifying issues underlying the anticipated study, determining the case study design (single, multiple, holistic, embedded), and developing procedures to maintain case study quality are all part of the design stage (Yin, 2009).

Preparing. To collect data, I obtained permission from the Dean of the Graduate School and other involved organizations or agencies to allow me to gather data from the participants.

Collecting. After the participants were identified, face-to-face interviews were scheduled and conducted by asking open-ended questions not related to the research questions to put the participants at ease. During the actual interviews, I began with an introduction and an explanation of the study to dispel any participants' preconceptions. Then, while using a recording device, I proceeded to the interview by soliciting input from the participants. Next, I double-check that most of the major study topics will have enough supporting evidence. Finally, as part of the essential information, I documented non-verbal communications. Following the case study methodology, employing numerous sources of information, constructing a case study database, and maintaining a chain of evidence are all part of the collection stage (Yin, 2009).

Analyzing. I read and re-read the interview responses. Sentences that were similar in content and context were blended, and meanings were compiled. The themes common to all participants will be developed using emerging results. Theoretical assertions and other tactics were used in the analysis step. It considers and applies analytic procedures, investigates competing theories, and presents data (facts) separate from interpretations (Yin, 2009). "Data analysis" is defined as "viewing, categorizing, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining evidence to generate empirically based conclusions" in the context of case studies.

Sharing. After the final reviews, this stage was to comprise presenting and disseminating the findings to my participants. The sharing stage focuses on defining the audience, creating textual and graphic resources, providing enough proof for a reader to draw their judgments, and revising and rewriting until everything is perfect (Yin, 2009).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study focused on the organizational culture of local government colleges by exploring values, practices, and challenges faced by the faculty and staff in public administration. The participants of the study are the 15 faculty members and the 15 office staff of the institution. The age range of the faculty participants is between 28-52 years old of which eight (8) were females, and seven (7) were males. As to the staff participants, the age range is between 24-53 years old, of which nine (9) were females, and six (6) were males.

The following are the four (4) themes formulated in the study: (1) Core Values as the Foundation of a Unified, Ethical, and Purpose-Driven Organizational Culture, (2) Ethical Leadership and Core Values in Shaping Organizational Culture and Governance, (3) Values-Driven Organizational Culture as a Catalyst for Academic Excellence and Service Quality, and (4) Ethical Leadership and Inclusive Governance Amid Structural and Communication Barriers.

Core Values as the Foundation of a Unified, Ethical, and Purpose-Driven

Organizational Culture

Core values represent the fundamental beliefs and principles that guide an organization's behaviors, decisions, and long-term strategies. In academic institutions, particularly in local government colleges, these values play a critical role in shaping a cohesive and ethical organizational culture. They serve as the foundation for aligning institutional goals with individual actions, thereby promoting transparency, accountability, and a shared sense of purpose. When integrated into governance, communication, and daily operations, core values contribute to the development of a resilient and mission-driven academic environment. As such, they are essential in fostering sustainable practices and upholding institutional integrity across all levels of the organization.

Core Values as Strategic Anchors. Core values function as strategic anchors by aligning institutional behavior with the overarching mission and vision of the organization. In local government colleges, these values not only reflect the ethical foundation of the institution but also influence strategic decisions, from policy formulation to resource distribution. When deeply embedded in the organizational structure, core values help sustain a culture of purpose, accountability, and long-term institutional growth.

According to Faculty Participant 13, core values influence institutional decisions by anchoring planning and development efforts in shared ethical principles. This is echoed by Faculty Participant 16, who emphasized how values such as integrity and compassion shape a culture of transparency and care. Similarly, Staff Participant 2 noted that these values ensure alignment with the college's mission and foster an environment where openness and inclusivity are prioritized.

"The core values of local government colleges shape their organizational culture by guiding behavior and institutional priorities. Their influence on decision-making is evident as they serve as foundational principles for strategic planning, resource allocation, and policy development." (FP 13)

"The core values of local government colleges play a crucial role in shaping their organizational culture and guiding decision-making processes. Values such as integrity, compassion, and excellence create an environment that prioritizes transparency, empathy, and high standards in daily operations." (FP16)

"The core values guide the way we approach our work, ensuring that everything we do is aligned with the college's mission. It promotes an environment of transparency, where all staff are encouraged to be honest and open in their duties. This builds trust and makes decision-making processes more inclusive." (SP 2)

These responses collectively illustrate that core values are not abstract ideals but practical tools that guide behavior and structure within local government colleges. Literature supports this perspective, with Wong and Lasrado (2022) stating that core values embedded in public academic institutions enhance strategic alignment and institutional coherence. Moreover, Kim and Bang (2023) found that values-driven cultures in higher education promote ethical leadership and more participative decision-making practices. This alignment between participant insights and recent studies highlights the critical role of core values as strategic anchors in achieving organizational effectiveness.

Core Values Promote Ethical and Professional Culture. Core values are instrumental in shaping an organization's ethical and professional culture, particularly in educational settings such as local government colleges. These values foster shared standards of behavior and professionalism that guide both interpersonal interactions and institutional decision-making. By establishing a moral and operational framework, core values help ensure that governance and daily practices align with ethical expectations and institutional integrity.

Faculty Participant 15 emphasized that core values promote ethical governance and inclusivity, influencing both organizational structure and institutional practices. Faculty Participant 14 further described core values as a directional compass, shaping operational routines and long-term planning. Additionally, Staff Participant 3 highlighted how values such as respect and compassion cultivate collaboration and help align decisions with ethical standards. These perspectives collectively demonstrate how core values are deeply embedded in the moral fabric of the institution and serve as a guide for ethical conduct.

"The core values of local government colleges influence their organizational structure and decisionmaking by promoting ethical governance, inclusive practices, and a focus on quality." (FP15)

"They act as a compass within the college, providing direction for both day-to-day operations and longterm goals."(FP14)

"I believe that the core values create a collaborative atmosphere. When the values of respect and compassion are emphasized, it ensures that we work together towards common goals, and this culture helps inform decisions that are ethical and in line with our mission."(SP 3)

According to Mulyadi et al. (2021), organizations that explicitly uphold core values such as fairness, respect,

and accountability are more likely to foster ethical work environments. Likewise, Simons and Leroy (2023) found that ethical cultures in educational institutions significantly improve professional engagement and reduce incidences of misconduct. These findings support the idea that values-driven environments lead to enhanced institutional cohesion, trust, and ethical consistency in decision-making.

Core Values Foster Engagement and Morale. Core values are powerful drivers of institutional engagement and morale, especially within academic settings like local government colleges. When leadership upholds these values, they create a culture of inclusion, trust, and motivation that empowers faculty, staff, and students alike. This supportive environment fosters not only individual well-being but also institutional productivity and cohesion.

Faculty Participant 11 emphasized that core values guide institutional management in fostering a harmonious and progressive academic environment. Faculty Participant 12 highlighted the positive effects of these values on employee morale and productivity, citing reduced uncertainty, stronger communication, and a results-oriented mindset. Staff Participant 3 elaborated that inclusive practices grounded in core values enable meaningful participation in decision-making, which enhances morale and ownership across the campus. Together, these responses point to the critical role core values play in creating a culture where individuals feel valued, heard, and engaged.

"These core values anchor the management of the institution to ensure that the entire school community thrives and develops in a harmonious and progressive manner."(FP11)

These practices affect employee morale and productivity by boosting confidence in the system, reducing uncertainty and confusion, promoting open communication and collaboration, enhancing job satisfaction, fostering a unified culture, and encouraging a results-oriented mindset". (FP12)

"Inclusion is a major practice here. Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to provide input on key decisions, especially in relation to academic programs and student services. This involvement fosters a sense of ownership and improves administrative processes." (SP3)

Castillo and Trincado (2022) found that values-based leadership improves employee engagement, particularly when inclusion and transparency are institutionalized. Similarly, Ali and Khan (2024) noted that core values that promote openness and collaboration significantly enhance organizational morale and institutional effectiveness. This suggests that when core values are actively lived out, they do not merely inspire, it is through them that institutions thrive.

The theme implied that for local government colleges, the articulation and integration of core values serve as the bedrock of institutional identity, guiding both administrative practices and academic pursuits. When core values are clearly defined and consistently practiced, they foster unity among stakeholders, reinforce ethical standards in decision-making, and provide a sense of shared purpose that strengthens organizational resilience amid public sector challenges. This suggested that embedding core values in institutional culture not only shapes effective governance and accountability but also enhances trust, collaboration, and performance, ultimately ensuring that these colleges fulfill their mandate of delivering quality education while serving the public good.

Ethical Leadership and Core Values in Shaping Organizational Culture and Governance

Ethical leadership plays a pivotal role in translating core values into practical actions that shape organizational culture and governance. In local government colleges, leaders who model integrity, transparency, and fairness reinforce a values-driven environment that influences both formal policies and informal norms. Such leadership fosters trust, accountability, and shared purpose among faculty, staff, and students. When core values are consistently reflected in leadership behavior, they become embedded in institutional decision-making and strategic planning. As a result, ethical leadership becomes not only a catalyst for good governance but also a sustaining force behind a cohesive and principled academic community.

The sub-themes formulated for this theme are the following: *(1) ethical governance and decision making; (2) ethical and transparent governance in shaping work environment; and, (3) enhancing employee competency and engagement through training and development.*

Ethical Governance and Decision-Making. Core values serve as ethical benchmarks that shape governance practices and institutional decision-making in local government colleges. When consistently applied, they help align policies, processes, and leadership conduct with principles such as integrity, fairness, and public accountability. This alignment ensures that the institution not only meets its strategic objectives but also upholds a culture of transparency and social responsibility.

According to Faculty Participant 5, the integration of core values into governance ensures that decisions reflect integrity, fairness, and compassion, especially in selecting programs and designing strategies aligned with the institution's mission. Faculty Participant 13 supported this by highlighting the consistent alignment of institutional goals, resource allocation, and operations with transparency and academic integrity. Faculty Participant 12 emphasized practices such as regular policy reviews, faculty consultations, and community engagement as manifestations of ethical governance. Staff Participant 7 added that core values directly influence daily interactions and decision-making, reinforcing a culture of honesty and teamwork. These insights collectively demonstrate that ethical leadership, grounded in core values, institutionalizes accountability, inclusivity, and mission-aligned strategies.

"By ensuring that all actions and decisions align with the principles of integrity, public service, fairness, and compassion for the people, the core values are reflected in the college's mission and vision, the selection of programs that benefit the community, and the design of strategies that strengthen the quality of education and public service." (FP5)

"By ensuring that institutional goals, resource allocation, and operational decisions align with principles such as transparency, equity, and academic integrity, the core values are consistently reflected in the college's practices and decision-making processes." (FP13)

"These practices, such as regular policy reviews and updates, staff and faculty consultations, adherence to government accounting systems, community extension programs, and employee recognition and welfare initiatives, demonstrate a commitment to transparency, accountability, and inclusive governance." (FP12)

"The college's core values, like integrity and excellence, drive how we handle tasks and interactions with others. It influences decision-making by fostering a culture of honesty, ensuring we always take the right path in resolving issues, and encouraging teamwork." (SP7)

Recent literature supports this perspective: Alshurafat et al. (2021) found that ethical governance structures built on core values improve transparency and institutional performance. Additionally, Kim and Schachter (2023) highlighted that values-based decision-making strengthens institutional legitimacy and fosters public trust, especially in public academic institutions. These findings affirm that embedding core values in governance leads to sustainable, trust-based, and ethically sound institutional development.

Ethical and Transparent Governance in Shaping Work Environment. A values-driven governance structure not only shapes institutional policies but also creates a work environment rooted in respect, inclusion, and accountability. In local government colleges, ethical and transparent governance builds trust among employees, enhancing their motivation, collaboration, and job satisfaction. This environment allows faculty and staff to feel valued and empowered, which directly contributes to organizational productivity and harmony.

Faculty Participant 1 emphasized that respect and cooperation are key contributors to positive morale and productivity, highlighting how values-based interactions elevate workplace satisfaction. Participant 9 echoed this by noting that mutual respect and role modeling promote a culture of professionalism and ethical conduct. Faculty Participant 14 shared that involving staff in decision-making fosters inclusivity and strengthens collaborative governance. Staff Participant 9 further affirmed that the institution's commitment to core values guides leadership and community-centered decision-making, reinforcing mutual respect among staff. These

responses reflect how ethical and transparent governance practices, when anchored in institutional values, nurture a supportive and high-functioning work environment.

"Respect and cooperation greatly impact employee morale and productivity—when these are present, people are happy to work and happy to serve." (FP1)

"Mutual respect for one another and becoming a role model to colleagues and students." (FP9)

"Participating in decision-making by including faculty and staff in committees fosters collaboration and inclusivity." (FP14)

"Our institution's core values play a significant role in keeping the staff and leadership on track. Decisions are often made with the community's welfare in mind, and this value system fosters a culture of mutual respect among all staff members." (SP9)

According to Ahn and Park (2022), transparency in leadership positively correlates with employee engagement and organizational trust, particularly when ethical standards are consistently upheld. Similarly, Zhou et al. (2023) found that inclusive and respectful governance structures significantly improve workplace climate and performance in academic settings. These findings validate the participants' experiences, confirming that ethical governance is vital to cultivating a collaborative and morale-boosting environment.

Enhancing Employee Morale and Productivity through Respect and Inclusivity. Respect and inclusivity are central components of core values that shape the internal culture of local government colleges. When these values are actively practiced, they foster an environment where employees feel seen, supported, and motivated to perform well. Such a culture encourages both individual commitment and collective accountability, directly impacting morale and productivity.

According to Faculty Participant 2, core values offer guidance that shapes both interpersonal relationships and institutional priorities, resulting in a culture where respect drives how people work and interact. Participant 3 highlighted how ethical behavior and teamwork are encouraged through values-based culture, reinforcing cooperative and productive dynamics. Faculty Participant 11 emphasized the importance of modeling proper behavior as a way to embed values into daily practices. These insights demonstrate that cultivating respect and inclusivity is not just symbolic—it actively boosts morale and productivity. Staff Participant 7 further noted that a strong focus on teamwork and mutual respect contributes to smooth operations and a motivated workforce.

"Core values provide guidance, set priorities, and influence choices within the institution. They shape the culture, affecting how people work and relate to one another, and guide decisions on what gets done and how it's done." (FP2)

"The core values of local government colleges shape their organizational culture by encouraging ethical behavior and teamwork." (FP3)

"A good approach to ensure that the core values of local government colleges are formed and reflected by everyone is by promoting the proper behaviors to follow." (FP11)

"We have a strong emphasis on teamwork and mutual respect in our office. By fostering a collaborative work environment, we ensure that administrative functions run smoothly, as everyone feels valued and motivated to contribute to the team." (SP7)

Supporting these observations, Torres and Mejía (2022) found that respectful and inclusive work environments in higher education significantly enhance staff engagement and retention. Likewise, Ahmed and Abbas (2023) emphasized that inclusive leadership and value-driven practices directly increase job satisfaction and institutional commitment. These findings align with participant experiences, affirming that core values centered on respect and inclusivity are essential in building morale and fostering productive, harmonious academic workplaces.

Enhancing Employee Competency and Engagement through Training and Development. Training and

development initiatives reflect the institution's commitment to nurturing its workforce through continuous learning and value alignment. These programs reinforce core values while simultaneously enhancing employee competency and engagement. In local government colleges, professional development activities play a crucial role in sustaining a responsive and mission-driven organizational culture.

Faculty Participant 6 emphasized that activities such as seminar-workshops, recollections, and spiritual programs contribute to shaping a holistic and ethical work environment. Faculty Participant 7 noted the importance of regular faculty and staff orientations that reinforce institutional practices and values, fostering a sense of shared understanding and consistency. Staff Participant 8 added that performance-based evaluation systems encourage accountability and growth, aligning daily efforts with institutional goals. According to Staff Participant 7, when the culture promotes ongoing professional development, it empowers faculty to enhance their teaching and support student achievement. These observations highlight that professional development, grounded in core values, boosts not only competence but also engagement and alignment with the institution's mission.

"Recollections, seminar-workshops, symposiums, monthly masses, and acts of mercy are some of the initiatives I know that help shape the work environment." (FP6)

"The common practice is a series of orientations for faculty and staff at the start of each semester. It helps the employees become fully aware of the common practices." (FP7)

"Another common practice is the use of performance-based evaluation systems." (SP8)

"From the faculty's viewpoint, when the organizational culture supports continuous improvement and professional development, it helps them stay motivated to improve their teaching methods, which ultimately benefits students' learning outcomes." (SP7)

Supporting this, Mercado and Santos (2022) reported that faculty development initiatives rooted in institutional values significantly improve engagement and instructional quality in Philippine HEIs. Similarly, Villanueva et al. (2023) emphasized that value-based training enhances employee motivation and contributes to a strong culture of continuous improvement. These findings affirm the participants' experiences, underscoring the critical role of development programs in cultivating both competence and commitment among staff and faculty.

This implied that the leadership style adopted in local government colleges plays a pivotal role in embedding integrity, accountability, and transparency into institutional practices. When leaders model ethical behavior and uphold core values, they create a culture of trust and fairness that permeates governance structures and daily operations. This underscores that ethical leadership is not only instrumental in strengthening organizational culture but also in ensuring that governance remains responsive, inclusive, and aligned with the broader goals of public service, thereby reinforcing the legitimacy and effectiveness of these institutions.

Ethical Leadership and Inclusive Governance Amid Structural and Communication Barriers

Ethical leadership in local government colleges is essential for navigating complex institutional structures and addressing communication barriers that hinder organizational cohesion. When grounded in integrity, transparency, and accountability, leadership fosters trust and inclusive participation among stakeholders. Despite bureaucratic challenges and fragmented communication systems, ethical leaders can bridge gaps through consultative processes, collaborative governance, and value-based decision-making. These practices not only enhance operational efficiency but also promote a culture of fairness, empathy, and responsiveness. Ultimately, ethical leadership becomes a stabilizing force that drives inclusive governance, even in the face of structural and systemic constraints.

The sub-themes formulated for this theme are the following: *(1) communication and inclusion challenges; (2) leadership and well-being awareness; and, (3) the undermining impact of political and structural interference on ethical governance.*

Communication and Inclusion Challenges. In the context of local government colleges, communication and inclusion remain critical yet persistent challenges that can impact institutional efficiency and stakeholder

engagement. Breakdowns in communication channels and limited involvement of stakeholders, particularly students and non-administrative staff, can hinder the realization of inclusive governance. Ethical leadership must therefore address these gaps to ensure a participatory and transparent academic environment.

According to Faculty Participant 6, communication gaps between the administration and employees often result in unclear expectations and organizational friction. Faculty Participant 8 highlighted that students may feel disengaged when their voices are not included in governance, which can lead to apathy and reduced morale. Faculty Participant 11 emphasized the need for effective communication not just within the institution, but also with broader city governance structures, recognizing the interdependence of internal and external systems. Staff Participant 2 added that poor interdepartmental communication contributes to misunderstandings and delays, weakening the integrity of decision-making. These insights suggest that communication challenges erode transparency, reduce collaboration, and compromise the inclusive intent of ethical governance.

"I think the challenge I see is the lack of communication between the school's employees and the administration." (FP6)

"Students may feel excluded from the governance process, and a culture of 'just getting by' can develop when they perceive that their concerns are not being heard or addressed."(FP8)

"This requires effective communication within the entire school community and across the city."(FP11)

"Communication gaps between departments can lead to misunderstandings and delays in decision making. Without clear and open communication, it becomes difficult to maintain transparency, which is essential for an ethical work environment." (SP2)

Recent studies affirm this, including the work of Reyes and Dizon (2022), who found that communication breakdowns in public educational institutions hinder organizational trust and reduce stakeholder participation. Additionally, Garcia and Mendoza (2023) emphasize that inclusive governance can only be achieved when leaders implement consistent, two-way communication strategies that promote shared accountability and voice across all institutional levels.

Leadership and Well-being Awareness. Leadership in local government colleges extends beyond administrative efficiency—it encompasses the holistic well-being of all stakeholders. Ethical leaders are expected to be attuned to the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of students, faculty, and staff. By recognizing and responding to these needs, leaders can cultivate a healthier, more resilient academic environment that supports both performance and morale.

According to Faculty Participant 7, leadership must prioritize the overall well-being of the school community to sustain a supportive and balanced institutional culture. This idea is echoed by Staff Participant 1, who emphasized the importance of addressing the diverse well-being dimensions to maintain a healthy learning and work environment. Faculty Participant 9 added that a major challenge for leaders is to uphold respect and composure even under stress or when facing disrespect, highlighting the emotional intelligence needed for ethical leadership. These accounts illustrate that leadership grounded in compassion and self-awareness can greatly influence the organizational climate.

"Leaders must also be aware of the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of the students, faculty, and staff, so that everyone can maintain a healthy life and environment."(FP7)

"The challenges they face are to continue showing respect to others, even when they are not respected, and to stay calm as if nothing wrong is happening."(FP9)

"Leaders must also be aware of the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of the students, faculty, and staff, so that everyone can maintain a healthy life and environment." (SP1)

Recent literature supports this view—Santos and Villanueva (2022) found that well-being-centered leadership improves job satisfaction and reduces burnout among faculty in public colleges. Similarly, Cruz et al. (2024) emphasized that leaders who practice emotional regulation and empathy promote a culture of mutual respect,

which in turn enhances organizational trust and collaboration. As mental health awareness continues to gain traction in educational governance, ethical leadership must proactively champion well-being as a pillar of institutional success.

The Undermining Impact of Political and Structural Interference on Ethical Governance. Political and structural factors often play a significant role in shaping the functioning of local government colleges. While core values ideally guide ethical governance, political interference and bureaucratic hurdles can undermine these values and disrupt effective decision-making. The challenge lies in maintaining ethical standards when external influences conflict with institutional integrity and governance practices.

According to Faculty Participant 10, the influence of politics can sometimes overshadow core values, leading to compromised decision-making. Faculty Participant 12 shared that local government colleges often face constraints such as limited funding and bureaucratic delays, which hinder the implementation of ethical policies and practices. Staff Participant 9 emphasized that political instability, particularly frequent changes in leadership, disrupts the continuity needed for maintaining a stable ethical framework. These insights indicate that external pressures, including political and financial factors, can directly impede ethical governance, leading to inefficiencies and a weakened institutional culture.

"Core values are sometimes a good factor in influencing organizational culture. However, when politics comes into play, it can cause us to forget or overlook these core values."(FP10)

"Local government colleges often face challenges such as limited funding, political interference, and bureaucratic delays, which hinder ethical decision-making and organizational efficiency." (FP12)

"Political instability can cause frequent leadership changes, leading to shifts in priorities and direction. This lack of continuity in leadership can create confusion and disrupt the ethical framework that the institution has worked hard to establish." (SP9)

Research by Lim and Fernandez (2023) supports these findings, noting that political interference in public institutions often results in short-term decision-making that neglects long-term ethical priorities. Similarly, Villanueva and Santos (2024) highlighted that unstable leadership due to political shifts can erode trust in institutional governance, making it harder for values-based decisions to take root. Therefore, ethical governance requires resilience to external pressures to preserve institutional integrity and long-term goals.

Even within environments challenged by bureaucratic constraints, limited resources, and communication gaps, ethical leadership serves as the cornerstone for fostering inclusivity and accountability. In the context of local government colleges, this highlights the need for leaders who not only model integrity but also actively bridge barriers to participation, collaboration, and transparency. The implication is that ethical leadership can transform structural and communicative limitations into opportunities for shared decision-making and inclusive governance, thereby strengthening both institutional trust and the delivery of public education.

Values-Driven Organizational Culture as a Catalyst for Academic Excellence and Service Quality

A values-driven organizational culture plays a crucial role in fostering an environment conducive to academic excellence and service quality. By aligning institutional practices with core values such as integrity, respect, and collaboration, schools create a foundation for consistent improvement in both teaching and administration. A strong values framework empowers faculty and staff to uphold high standards, encouraging a culture of accountability and continuous learning. Moreover, when values such as empathy and transparency are integrated into the governance structure, it enhances the overall quality of service provided to students and the community. Ultimately, this values-based approach not only elevates educational outcomes but also builds a sense of pride and commitment within the entire school community.

There are two sub-themes formulated for this theme: *(1) positive organizational culture enhances academic performance and service delivery; and (2) organizational culture promotes proper behavior, values, and role modelling.*

Positive Organizational Culture Enhances Academic Performance and Service Delivery. A positive organizational culture fosters an environment where academic performance and service delivery are prioritized and enhanced. When values such as integrity, professionalism, and collaboration are embedded within the culture, they serve as a strong foundation for effective teaching and service quality. The alignment of leadership with these core values can create a motivating and productive atmosphere, benefiting both faculty and students.

According to Faculty Participant 2, strong leadership within a positive organizational culture leads to better academic outcomes and improved service quality. This view is supported by Faculty Participant 3, who emphasized that a values-driven culture enhances soft skills, job satisfaction, and service delivery. Faculty Participant 12 and 15 highlighted that faculty, staff, and students all recognize the positive impact of organizational culture on both academic performance and the overall service experience. Similarly, Faculty Participant 16 and Staff Participant 9 noted that values such as integrity and excellence encourage faculty members to uphold high academic standards and strive for continuous improvement. These responses underline the importance of a positive culture in achieving high standards of academic and service outcomes.

"A positive culture, marked by strong leadership, leads to better outcomes, while a lack of support and poor communication can negatively impact academic achievement and the quality of service provided."(FP2)

"They perceive it as significantly influencing academic performance and service delivery, as it enhances the soft skills of faculty, job satisfaction outcomes, and service quality." (FP3)

"Faculty, staff, and students often see organizational culture as a major factor in academic performance and service delivery. A positive and values-driven culture motivates everyone to do their best and work together."(FP12)

"Faculty, staff, and students see organizational culture as key to academic performance and service delivery. A strong and positive culture enhances motivation, teaching quality, and support services." (FP15)

"Faculty members typically feel that a culture of integrity, professionalism, and excellence encourages high academic standards and continuous improvement." (FP16)

"I see how values like compassion and excellence are reflected in the way the leadership makes decisions. By promoting these values, decisions are made with consideration for others, and there is a focus on delivering quality work and results in service to the community." (SP9)

Recent research by Mendoza and Castillo (2023) further supports this by showing that organizational culture directly impacts both faculty engagement and student learning outcomes. Additionally, a study by De Luna and Tan (2024) found that a positive work culture enhances the overall satisfaction of both staff and students, leading to improved institutional performance.

Organizational Culture Promotes Proper Behavior, Values, and Role Modelling. Organizational culture plays a critical role in shaping proper behavior, promoting core values, and setting examples through role modeling. By aligning employees with the institution's vision, mission, and core values, the culture encourages ethical behavior, accountability, and a sense of responsibility. It also fosters a supportive environment where everyone works together towards common goals while upholding the standards set by the organization.

According to Faculty Participant 4, adhering to the organization's vision and goals allows individuals to teach others not just knowledge, but also good practices, thus reinforcing positive behavior. Faculty Participant 9 emphasized that when employees align with the organizational culture, it improves overall performance by following established protocols and adhering to government directives. Faculty Participant 11 and 13 both highlighted that effective communication is crucial in ensuring that core values are reflected in everyday behavior, creating an environment where everyone works toward a common goal. Faculty Participant 14 and Staff Participant 8 also noted that core values help foster trust and cooperation within the institution, contributing to a positive work environment. The responses indicate that organizational culture is instrumental in guiding behavior and shaping the work environment.

"By participating and adhering to the vision, mission, and goals of the organization, they teach others good practices, not just knowledge, for the benefit of everyone." (FP4)

"They contribute by adhering to the organizational culture of local government colleges. It will improve if everyone does their work properly and follows what the government asks them to do." (FP9)

"A good approach to ensure that the core values of local government colleges are formed and reflected by everyone is by promoting the proper behaviors to follow. This requires effective communication within the entire school community." (FP11)

"The core values of local government colleges shape their organizational culture by guiding behavior and institutional priorities." (FP13)

"These values help build a positive work environment, fostering trust and cooperation." (FP14)

"I see how values like compassion and excellence are reflected in the way the leadership makes decisions. By promoting these values, decisions are made with consideration for others, and there is a focus on delivering quality work and results in service to the community." (SP8)

Recent research by Reyes and Santiago (2022) further affirms that a well-established culture that promotes ethical behavior enhances organizational commitment and cooperation. In a similar study by Cruz et al. (2023), it was found that values-driven leadership leads to improved employee satisfaction and ethical decision-making, reflecting a strong alignment with organizational goals. These findings highlight the critical role of ethical culture in shaping workplace dynamics and reinforcing employee loyalty. Moreover, organizations that consistently model integrity at all levels are more likely to sustain long-term success. As such, ethical leadership is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic advantage in today's competitive landscape.

The theme implied that when institutional practices are rooted in shared values, they create a strong cultural foundation that drives both academic and administrative performance. In local government colleges, this means that values such as integrity, accountability, and commitment to public service not only shape daily operations but also directly influence the quality of education and support services provided to students and communities. The implication is that embedding values at the core of organizational culture fosters a unified vision, enhances academic excellence, and elevates service quality, ultimately ensuring that these institutions remain responsive, relevant, and impactful in fulfilling their educational and social mandates.

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

This study explored the challenges of the employees on the organizational culture of the institution. Specifically, this answered the following questions: (1) How do the core values of local government colleges influence their organizational culture and decision-making processes? (2) What are the common practices that shape the work environment and administrative functions within local government colleges? (3) What challenges do local government colleges face in maintaining an effective and ethical organizational culture in public administration? (4) How do faculty, staff, and students perceive the impact of organizational culture on academic performance and service delivery in local government colleges?

The study utilized case study method. The participants were the 15 faculty and 15 staff in Tangub City who were selected using purposive sampling. Interview-guide questions were used in gathering the data which were analyzed using Yin's method of data analysis.

Findings

 The following were the findings of the study:

1.   *Core Values as the Foundation of a Unified, Ethical, and Purpose-Driven Organizational Culture.* Core values serve as the bedrock of a cohesive and ethically grounded organization, guiding behavior, strengthening purpose, and fostering a culture of integrity and shared commitment.

2. *Ethical Leadership and Core Values in Shaping Organizational Culture and Governance.* Ethical leadership, grounded in core values, shapes a transparent and accountable organizational culture that promotes trust, inclusion, and responsible governance.

3. *Ethical Leadership and Inclusive Governance Amid Structural and Communication Barriers.* Ethical and inclusive leadership becomes essential in navigating structural and communication barriers, ensuring that integrity, equity, and collaboration remain central to organizational governance.

4. *Values-Driven Organizational Culture as a Catalyst for Academic Excellence and Service Quality.* A values-driven organizational culture drives academic excellence and service quality by nurturing ethical conduct, continuous improvement, and collective responsibility.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following were the conclusions:

1. The integration of core values within organizational practices significantly strengthens unity, ethical conduct, and a shared sense of direction and purpose.

2. Ethical leadership anchored in core values enhances governance, cultivates a supportive and transparent environment, and boosts employee engagement and development.

3. Despite structural and communication barriers, ethical and inclusive leadership remains vital in upholding organizational integrity and employee well-being.

4. A strong values-based organizational culture serves as a key driver in improving academic performance and service delivery through ethical role modeling and behavioral consistency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings and conclusions, these are the recommendations:

1. Institutions should continuously reinforce core values through orientation, recognition programs, and everyday practices to promote a unified and purpose-driven culture.

2. Leadership development initiatives must prioritize ethical training and value-based decision-making to strengthen governance and employee engagement

3. Organizations should establish inclusive communication channels and address structural barriers to ensure ethical governance and employee well-being.

4. Schools and institutions should embed core values in performance standards and evaluation systems to sustain excellence in academics and service.

5. Future researchers are encouraged to explore the long-term impact of values-driven leadership and culture on institutional resilience and innovation across various organizational settings.

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