

Assessment of Work Management Skills among Non-Teaching Staff of Bohol Island State University: Basis for a Work Management Plan

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ABSTRACT

Non-teaching personnel sustain the administrative, technical, and client-service functions of higher education institutions, yet their work management needs are often underexamined. This study assessed the work management skills of non-teaching staff at Bohol Island State University and used the findings to develop a context-responsive Work Management Plan. A descriptive-correlational design with a qualitative thematic component was employed. Eighty non-teaching staff from the Main, Bilar, and Balilihan campuses completed an expert-reviewed and pilot-tested questionnaire covering planning and organization, communication and interpersonal skills, leadership and delegation, problem-solving and decision-making, self-perceived performance, official Individual Performance Commitment and Review ratings, and an open-ended question. Frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations were used for the quantitative data, while open-ended responses were thematically analyzed. Respondents reported very high planning and organization ($M = 4.313$, $SD = 0.637$), communication and interpersonal skills ($M = 4.276$, $SD = 0.600$), problem-solving and decision-making ($M = 4.219$, $SD = 0.557$), and self-perceived performance ($M = 4.259$, $SD = 0.614$), and high leadership and delegation ($M = 4.188$, $SD = 0.662$). Ninety percent received Very Satisfactory performance ratings. All five domains were positively related to performance ($r = .54-.71$, all $p < .001$), with planning and organization showing the strongest association. Qualitative themes included work overload, deadline pressure, manpower shortages, role ambiguity, communication barriers, process inefficiencies, stress, adaptability, creativity, and professional growth. The proposed plan therefore combines competency development with role clarification, workload review, communication protocols, digital process improvement, client-service support, and staff wellness. Sustained institutional support is necessary to translate strong individual skills into more efficient, resilient, and responsive administrative services.

Keywords: work management skills, non-teaching staff, job performance, higher education, work management plan

INTRODUCTION

Non-teaching staff perform the administrative, financial, records, procurement, information technology, library, health, maintenance, and client-service functions that allow higher education institutions to operate. Although these employees do not deliver classroom instruction, their work directly affects the timeliness of student services, the reliability of institutional records, the use of public resources, and the ability of academic units to meet their objectives. The growing complexity of university operations has made planning, prioritization, communication, delegation, problem-solving, and adaptation increasingly important workplace competencies.

Work management skills refer to the competencies used to organize responsibilities, allocate time and resources, coordinate with colleagues, respond to emerging problems, and complete tasks to the expected standard. Time-management research indicates that perceived control over time and deliberate scheduling are associated with lower strain and stronger work outcomes (Claessens et al., 2007; Macan, 1994). Goal-setting research similarly shows that specific, challenging, and attainable goals focus attention and increase

persistence (Locke & Latham, 2002). Within universities, these competencies matter because employees routinely manage simultaneous deadlines, public-facing requests, compliance requirements, and interdependent processes.

The present study was anchored in complementary theoretical perspectives. Goal-Setting Theory explains how clear targets support planning and task completion, while Management by Objectives connects individual commitments to institutional priorities (Drucker, 1954; Locke & Latham, 2002). Time Management Theory emphasizes prioritization, scheduling, and perceived control over time (Macan, 1994). Self-Determination Theory proposes that autonomy, competence, and supportive relationships sustain motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Role Theory adds that unclear or conflicting expectations can reduce effectiveness and intensify stress, whereas role clarity supports accountability and coordination (Biddle, 1986; Kahn et al., 1964). Together, these perspectives suggest that performance reflects both individual capability and the organizational systems in which employees work.

This dual emphasis is particularly relevant in Philippine public higher education. Republic Act No. 7722 established the Commission on Higher Education and the national framework for higher education development, while Republic Act No. 11032 requires government institutions to streamline procedures and deliver efficient, responsive services. For university administrative units, these mandates make workload design, role clarity, digital processes, and client-service standards institutional concerns rather than merely personal productivity issues.

Bohol Island State University operates across several campuses and relies on non-teaching personnel to sustain diverse support services. Preliminary institutional observations indicated variation in how staff prioritized workloads, delegated tasks, communicated across offices, and responded to time pressure. Digitalization and blended service delivery also introduced new coordination and competency demands. However, empirical work focusing specifically on the management skills of Philippine university non-teaching staff remains limited, and locally grounded intervention plans are scarce.

The study therefore assessed the respondents' demographic profile; determined their levels of planning and organization, communication and interpersonal skills, leadership and delegation, problem-solving and decision-making, and self-perceived performance; described their official Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR) ratings; tested the relationship between each work management domain and performance; explored their experiences and challenges; and developed a Work Management Plan based on the combined quantitative and qualitative findings. The null hypothesis stated that work management skills were not significantly related to performance at the .05 level.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study used a descriptive-correlational design supplemented by a qualitative thematic component. The descriptive analysis characterized the respondents and summarized their perceived work management skills and performance. Pearson correlation assessed the direction and strength of the association between each work management domain and IPCR-based performance. The open-ended component provided contextual information about how staff experienced and managed their responsibilities. The design was cross-sectional; therefore, the associations were interpreted without causal claims.

Setting and participants

The study was conducted at the Main, Bilar, and Balilihan campuses of Bohol Island State University in the Province of Bohol, Philippines. Eligible participants were current non-teaching employees who had institutional work experience and voluntarily agreed to participate. Administrative, human resource, finance, budget, cashier, registrar, library, records, secretarial, procurement, supply, technical, medical, utility, and other support personnel were represented. All eligible personnel were invited, and 80 completed questionnaires were included: 32 from the Main Campus and 24 each from the Bilar and Balilihan campuses.

Instrument

A structured questionnaire contained four parts. The first gathered demographic and employment information. The second contained 22 statements rated from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree): five items for planning and organization, five for communication and interpersonal skills, four for leadership and delegation, four for problem-solving and decision-making, and four for self-perceived performance. Domain means were interpreted as Very Low (1.00-1.80), Low (1.81-2.60), Moderate (2.61-3.40), High (3.41-4.20), or Very High (4.21-5.00). The third part recorded the respondent's most recent official IPCR performance category. The fourth asked respondents to describe their experiences and challenges in managing work responsibilities. The questionnaire underwent expert evaluation and pilot testing to improve clarity, relevance, and appropriateness before administration.

Data collection and ethical safeguards

Institutional authorization and ethical clearance were obtained from the relevant review authorities before data collection. Eligible staff received information about the study's purpose, voluntary nature, confidentiality protections, and intended use of the data. Informed consent was obtained before participation. The final questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms and printed copies to accommodate participant access and preference. Returned questionnaires were reviewed for completeness; incomplete or erroneous responses were excluded. Identifying information was not used in the analysis or reporting.

Data analysis

Frequencies and percentages summarized demographic characteristics and IPCR categories. Means and standard deviations summarized the five work management domains. Before Pearson correlation, the data were checked for linearity, approximate normality, and influential outliers. The scatterplot showed an approximately linear positive trend, the normality test was non-significant ($p = .124$), and no extreme outliers were detected. Pearson's r was then interpreted at a two-tailed alpha level of .05. Values reported as .000 by the statistical software are presented as $p < .001$.

Open-ended responses were analyzed thematically following a systematic process of familiarization, coding, grouping related codes, reviewing themes, and interpreting patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The developing themes were reviewed for internal coherence and distinctiveness. An experienced researcher reviewed the thematic descriptions, and member checking was used to confirm that the findings adequately represented participants' experiences.

RESULTS

Respondent profile

The respondents represented a relatively young and stable workforce. Most were women (73.8%), 77.5% were younger than 40, 81.3% were college graduates, and 81.3% held permanent appointments. Nearly half (43.8%) had one to three years of service. All respondents followed standard office hours. The largest named occupational groups were human resources (11.3%) and supply staff (10.0%); 28.7% reported other specialized support positions not represented by the listed categories.

Table 1: Selected Profile Characteristics of Respondents (N = 80)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Campus	Main	32	40.0
	Bilar	24	30.0
	Balilihan	24	30.0
Gender	Male	21	26.3
	Female	59	73.8

Age	20-29 years	32	40.0
	30-39 years	30	37.5
	40-49 years	12	15.0
	50 years and above	6	7.5
Marital status	Single	35	43.8
	Married	44	55.0
	Widowed	1	1.3
Educational attainment	College level	6	7.5
	College graduate	65	81.3
	Postgraduate	9	11.3
Employment status	Permanent	65	81.3
	Contractual	10	12.5
	Casual	3	3.8
	Job order	2	2.5
Years of service	Less than 1 year	5	6.3
	1-3 years	35	43.8
	4-7 years	21	26.3
	8 years and above	19	23.8
Work schedule	Standard office hours	80	100.0

Levels of work management skills

Four domains were rated Very High and one was rated High. Planning and organization obtained the highest mean ($M = 4.313$), followed by communication and interpersonal skills ($M = 4.276$), self-perceived performance ($M = 4.259$), and problem-solving and decision-making ($M = 4.219$). Leadership and delegation received the lowest domain mean but remained High ($M = 4.188$). Item-level results identified task prioritization, active listening, collaboration, adaptability, and perceived contribution to office goals as strengths. Comparatively lower items involved following realistic schedules consistently, resolving conflicts, assigning tasks according to staff strengths, and accurately identifying work-related problems.

Table 2: Summary of Work Management Skill Domains

Domain	M	SD	Interpretation
Planning and organization	4.313	0.637	Very High
Communication and interpersonal skills	4.276	0.600	Very High
Leadership and delegation	4.188	0.662	High
Problem-solving and decision-making	4.219	0.557	Very High
Self-perceived performance	4.259	0.614	Very High

IPCR-based performance

Official performance categories were concentrated at the upper end of the scale. Seventy-two respondents (90.0%) were rated Very Satisfactory, seven (8.8%) were rated Satisfactory, and one (1.3%) was rated Outstanding. No respondent was classified in the lower performance categories. The distribution is presented using the official category labels recorded in the compiled dataset.

Table 3: Distribution of IPCR Performance Categories

Performance category	n	%
Outstanding	1	1.3
Very Satisfactory	72	90.0
Satisfactory	7	8.8
Total	80	100.0

Relationship between work management skills and performance

All five work management domains had statistically significant positive relationships with performance. Planning and organization showed the strongest association ($r = .71$), followed by problem-solving and decision-making ($r = .67$), communication and interpersonal skills ($r = .63$), self-perceived performance ($r = .58$), and leadership and delegation ($r = .54$). All relationships were significant at $p < .001$. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected for every domain.

Table 4: Correlations Between Work Management Skill Domains and Performance

Domain correlated with performance	r	p	Interpretation
Planning and organization	.71	< .001	Strong positive
Communication and interpersonal skills	.63	< .001	Moderately strong positive
Leadership and delegation	.54	< .001	Moderate positive
Problem-solving and decision-making	.67	< .001	Strong positive
Self-perceived performance	.58	< .001	Moderate positive

Note. Two-tailed Pearson correlations; values displayed as .000 by the software are reported as $p < .001$.

Experiences and challenges

Ten themes were developed from the open-ended responses. Several were structural: work overload, insufficient manpower, unclear responsibilities, slow processes, and cross-office coordination problems. Others described daily operational pressure, including overlapping deadlines, public-facing demands, communication barriers, and emotional or physical fatigue. Respondents also described strengths that could support improvement: adaptability, willingness to learn, creativity, initiative, and growing trust in teamwork and delegation.

Illustrative comments described 'multitasking without having an assistant,' handling tasks outside formal deliverables, and offices staffed by only two people. Staff also reported learning to manage simultaneous urgent tasks, adapting to new responsibilities, and remaining committed to meaningful outputs despite pressure. These responses show that strong self-rated skills coexist with constraints that individual effort alone cannot resolve.

Table 5: Qualitative Themes and Organizational Implications

Theme	Indicative experience	Institutional implication
Work overload and multitasking	Overlapping tasks, duties outside formal deliverables, limited assistance	Review workloads and align assignments with job descriptions.
Time management and deadlines	Peak periods, last-minute requests, simultaneous urgent tasks	Use shared calendars, priority protocols, and workload forecasting.
Lack of manpower and resources	Small teams, temporary staffing, inadequate operational support	Conduct staffing and resource audits based on service demand.
Communication and interpersonal challenges	Diverse clients, language and accessibility barriers, conflict	Provide inclusive communication, conflict-resolution, and client-service training.
Adaptability and professional growth	Learning from experience, flexibility, willingness to acquire skills	Create continuous learning, mentoring, and career-development pathways.
Role clarity and delegation	Undefined scope, unclear expectations, difficulty assigning tasks	Update job descriptions and establish delegation and accountability protocols.
Client service and public-facing duties	Walk-in requests, service delays, concurrent front- and back-office work	Improve queuing, scheduling, cross-training, and service standards.
Emotional and physical stress	Rushing, exhaustion, burnout risk, administrative pressure	Institutionalize wellness support and monitor psychosocial workload risks.

Creativity and initiative	Ownership, problem-solving, innovative and meaningful outputs	Recognize staff-led improvements and provide room for responsible autonomy.
Institutional support and structure	Slow technology adoption, complex processes, coordination gaps	Streamline workflows, digitize appropriate processes, and clarify inter-office roles.

DISCUSSION

Work management strengths and performance

The quantitative findings indicate that the non-teaching staff generally possessed a strong foundation for managing administrative responsibilities. Planning and organization emerged as the highest-rated domain and the domain most strongly related to performance. This result is consistent with evidence that structured goals, deliberate prioritization, and perceived control over time help employees direct effort and manage competing responsibilities (Claessens et al., 2007; Locke & Latham, 2002; Macan, 1994). For university support personnel, these practices are particularly important because records, procurement, finance, scheduling, and student-service processes often depend on timely completion of interrelated tasks.

Problem-solving and decision-making had the second strongest relationship with performance. This pattern underscores that effective administrative work requires more than routine compliance. Staff must interpret incomplete information, adjust to changing plans, and respond to unexpected client or workflow issues without creating additional delays. The high adaptability item supports this interpretation, although the lower score for accurate problem identification suggests that training should emphasize root-cause analysis and evidence-based decision processes rather than only rapid response.

Communication and interpersonal skills were also positively related to performance. Active listening and clear instructions were prominent strengths, which can improve coordination and reduce rework. However, conflict resolution and negotiation received comparatively lower ratings, and qualitative responses described difficulties serving clients with varied language and accessibility needs. Self-Determination Theory helps explain why relational support matters: when employees experience competence, autonomy, and constructive relationships, motivation and discretionary effort are more likely to be sustained (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Leadership and delegation received the lowest mean and the weakest correlation, although both remained positive and significant. This result is understandable because many participants held non-supervisory positions and had fewer opportunities for formal leadership. Nevertheless, qualitative findings show that unclear delegation and workload concentration affected efficiency. Informal leadership, peer mentoring, task matching, and explicit accountability can therefore improve collective performance even when employees do not occupy managerial roles. Management by Objectives is relevant here because shared targets and regular feedback make responsibility more visible and reduce duplication (Drucker, 1954; Rodrigues, 2001).

Individual competence and organizational conditions

The qualitative themes qualify the very high self-ratings. Staff may be capable and committed while still experiencing delays, stress, or service problems because the surrounding system is under-resourced or poorly coordinated. Work overload, limited manpower, undefined duties, and slow technology adaptation are organizational constraints that cannot be corrected solely through personal time-management training. Role Theory predicts this pattern: ambiguity, conflict, and overload weaken performance by making expectations difficult to prioritize, even when employees are motivated and skilled (Biddle, 1986; Kahn et al., 1964).

The findings also reveal a risk of normalizing high performance achieved through unsustainable effort. Ninety percent of respondents received Very Satisfactory IPCR ratings, yet some described rushing, exhaustion, and burnout risk. The recovery paradox suggests that employees facing the greatest stressors may have the least opportunity to recover, which can gradually undermine well-being and performance (Sonnentag, 2018).

Consequently, performance ratings should be interpreted alongside workload, staffing, service-demand, and wellness indicators.

At the same time, adaptability, creativity, and willingness to learn represent important assets. These strengths provide a practical foundation for organizational improvement. When staff are invited to propose workflow changes, trained to use digital systems, and recognized for responsible initiative, the institution can convert individual knowledge into process-level learning. The key implication is that the university should combine capacity building with structural reform, consistent with public-sector expectations for efficient and responsive service under Republic Act No. 11032.

Proposed Work Management Plan

The proposed plan translates the integrated findings into coordinated interventions. It prioritizes the weaker survey items while also addressing the structural themes that limited staff effectiveness. Implementation should be incorporated into the university's human resource development calendar, coordinated across campuses, and reviewed through quarterly staff feedback, biannual workload analyses, annual IPCR-based performance audits, and continuous stay or exit interviews. Departments may adapt operational details while retaining university-wide standards.

Table 6: Proposed Work Management Plan

Priority area	Key actions	Lead and timeline	Success indicators
Planning and organization	Workshop on prioritization and realistic scheduling; standardized weekly plans; shared calendars; align deliverables with IPCR commitments.	HR Office and unit heads; initial 1-2 months, then quarterly review	More structured plans; fewer duplicated tasks; reduced backlog; improved turnaround time
Communication and interpersonal skills	Training in conflict resolution, negotiation, inclusive communication, and client service; monthly inter-office coordination meetings.	HR Office, unit heads, and accessibility/resource persons; 1-3 months	Fewer complaints and unresolved conflicts; clearer instructions; improved client feedback
Leadership and delegation	Map staff strengths; use assignment and accountability protocols; coaching and peer-mentoring arrangements; regular feedback sessions.	Supervisors and HR Office; 1-3 months, then continuous	More equitable workload distribution; clearer ownership; fewer missed or duplicated tasks
Problem-solving and decision-making	Root-cause analysis workshops; decision flowcharts; case exercises; standardized issue documentation and escalation procedures.	HR Office, external trainer, and unit heads; 1-2 months	Faster issue resolution; fewer repeat errors; better documented decisions
Workload, role clarity, and staffing	Update job descriptions; conduct biannual workload and staffing audits; redistribute tasks; justify recruitment or cross-training based on service demand.	HR Office, administration, and campus management; 2-4 months, then biannual	Reduced overload and role ambiguity; balanced time-on-task; improved staff satisfaction
Records and digital processes	Standardize filing and retrieval; digitize suitable transactions; strengthen data protection; train staff on document and workflow systems.	Records Office, ICT Office, and administrative units; 2-4 months	Faster retrieval and processing; fewer missing records and manual errors; stronger compliance
Teamwork and coordination	Cross-functional committees for shared processes; collaborative dashboards; regular inter-office workflow reviews; targeted team-building.	Campus management and unit heads; launch within 2 months	Improved coordination; faster handoffs; reduced workflow duplication

Client service	Service standards, queuing and scheduling systems, frontline cross-training, feedback mechanisms, and clear service key performance indicators.	Frontline offices, HR Office, and ICT Office; 1-3 months	Shorter response times; higher client satisfaction; fewer service complaints
Well-being and resilience	Monitor psychosocial workload risks; wellness and mental-health support; recovery and break practices; referral pathways; recognition of constructive initiative.	HR Office and campus management; continuous	Lower burnout risk; improved morale and retention; sustained performance

Limitations

The study was conducted in three campuses of one state university and involved 80 respondents; transferability to other institutions should therefore be considered with caution. The cross-sectional design does not establish causation. Four skill domains and self-perceived performance were based on self-reports, which may be influenced by social desirability, while the concentration of IPCR ratings in one category may have restricted performance variability. Although the instrument was expert-reviewed and pilot-tested, future studies should report reliability coefficients for each scale, use raw IPCR scores with a single documented rating convention, and include supervisor, client, and process indicators. Multi-institutional and longitudinal studies would provide stronger evidence about how management interventions affect performance and well-being over time.

CONCLUSION

The non-teaching staff of Bohol Island State University demonstrated high to very high work management skills, and most received Very Satisfactory IPCR ratings. Planning and organization had the highest mean and the strongest relationship with performance, while problem-solving, communication, self-perceived performance, and leadership were also positively and significantly related to performance. These results support the rejection of the null hypothesis and indicate that structured work habits, adaptive decision-making, clear communication, and coordinated responsibility are important components of effective administrative service.

However, the qualitative findings demonstrate that individual competence operates within organizational constraints. Work overload, manpower shortages, unclear roles, client-service pressure, communication barriers, slow processes, and stress can limit the benefits of strong personal skills. The proposed Work Management Plan therefore combines training with workload review, role clarification, delegation protocols, digital process improvement, inter-office coordination, client-service systems, and wellness support. Embedding these measures in institutional planning and monitoring can help BISU develop a more efficient, responsive, and resilient non-teaching workforce.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future researchers are encouraged to expand the scope of the study by including multiple higher education institutions across different regions to enhance the generalizability and applicability of the findings. A longitudinal research design may also be employed to examine how work management training and institutional interventions influence the performance of non-teaching staff over time. Furthermore, incorporating the perspectives of supervisors, administrators, and service users is recommended to provide a more comprehensive and balanced assessment of the effectiveness and work performance of non-teaching staff

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Ethical Approval And Informed Consent

Institutional authorization and ethical clearance were obtained from the relevant review authorities before data collection. Participation was voluntary, all respondents provided informed consent, and confidentiality was maintained throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Conflict Of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

The data are not publicly available because they contain employee performance information and qualitative workplace responses. De-identified data may be made available by the corresponding author upon reasonable request and subject to institutional approval.

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