

Connecting the Gap: Enhancing Faculty Performance through Interpersonal Skills



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ABSTRACT: Considering that people are an organization's most valuable resource, understanding how they can contribute to the organization in a way that it is productive, efficient, and effective is important (Jala, J.V.M. and Gaid, Joshua T.). This study dwells on enhancing the faculty performance through interpersonal skills within one of the most prominent universities in Northern Mindanao. The study employed a quantitative research design focusing on descriptive correlational approach.

In addition, the study utilizes Pearson correlation to compute the association and measure the strength of the linear relation between two variables. The research was designed to captivate a total population of 603 participants, which carefully scrutinizes data using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

The study shows that the overall measure of interpersonal skills to strategic function is ($r=0.515$, $p<0.005$), while the core function is ($r=0.487$, $p<0.005$) and support function is ($r=0.441$, $p<0.005$) respectively. This result reveals a strong positive correlation with all facets of faculty performance which is limited to strategic functions, core functions and support functions.

Moreover, the overall measure of interpersonal skills to overall faculty performance is ($r=0.481$, $p<0.005$). This emphasized the overall significance of interpersonal skills in propelling positive faculty performance. Thus, Interpersonal skills, specifically cognitive, behavioral, and communication skills, positively influenced numerous indicators of faculty performance, including strategic functions, core functions, and support functions. This means that higher levels of interpersonal skills can result to improved faculty performance outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Interpersonal skills, Cognitive skills, Behavioral skills, Communication skills, Faculty performance, Strategic functions, Core functions and Support functions

I. INTRODUCTION

An employee plays a significant role in every success of the organization (Jala, J. V. M. and Bation, N. D., 2023). This is because human resources are vital as it serves as a competitive advantage in today's business world (Jala, J. V. M. and Bation, N. D., 2023), as it affects organizational performance. Organizational performance is distinguished as an organizations capability to attain goals in a way of constant change. (Jala J. V., 2024).

In the academe, organizational performance is highly affected by faculty performance. This means that the success of schools and universities is dependent on faculty performance. Faculties are employees and the main performer in an academic institution. They have an integral role in delivering high-quality education to students (Dwivedi, T. et al., 2024). The faculty plays a crucial role in putting education into practice. This is because faculties have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and the standard of education (Baker D. & Reyes, P.B. 2020; Chalim S., et al., 2020).

The concentration on faculty performance as a source of competitive advantage has changed the importance of belongingness and relationship with peers in the organization. The performance of a teacher has a great impact on the success of the entire organization by producing good future leaders and a competent school image as well.

Faculty or teacher performance is the accomplishment of the faculty that has been evaluated at the end of the semester to check whether the prescribed set of plans is being achieved. The KBV theory supports realizing teacher and faculty performance by improving each person or team's capacity to oversee teaching abilities in educational organizations in a more systematic manner. (Suparsa, I. et al., 2021). Faculty performance is categorized into three, the strategic functions, core functions and support functions. Strategic function is defined as one of the criteria of faculty performance in a quality assurance activity like the strategy to motivate students to perform in the class. In addition, core function is defined as the main task of faculties in providing education to learners,

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especially in delivering instructional services, development, and production. Furthermore, support function defines the making and submission of the monthly report that will support actual accomplishment and performance. It also includes several pieces of training and seminars attended for the entire semester that helps with career development.

In line with the growth of teaching performance, it is associated with the interpersonal skills of the teachers. Interpersonal skill is referring to a person's capacity for effective communication and interpersonal interaction. The totality of a person's interpersonal abilities determines how well they can communicate with others (Brinzea, N. 2022).

According to Wibowo, et al., (2022), interpersonal skills, or the capacity to comprehend the thoughts, attitudes, and actions of others, are what enables a person to interact with others in a social setting. Interpersonal skill is defined as the ability of the faculty to effectively interact, mingle, connect, and cooperate with stakeholders on campus and community whether they are individuals or groups. It is supposed that by including collaborative and cooperative learning practices into the lessons of faculty and teachers, they can foster interpersonal skills in their students. (Abid N. et al., 2022). Moreover, there are three types of interpersonal skills: cognitive skills, behavioral skills and communication skills. Cognitive skill is defined as the mental ability of the faculties to carry out difficult activities that is directly related to learning and problem-solving. In addition, behavioral skill is defined as the ability of the faculty to interact, handle and navigate their external and internal environment, which includes colleagues, students, other people, places, and situations on how faculties will handle the situations and build connections. Furthermore, communication skill is defined as the ability of the faculty to communicate with students, peers, and stakeholders to express thoughts, emotions, or what is going on around them.

This research intends to examine how to enhance faculty performance through interpersonal skill within one of the most prominent universities in Northern Mindanao. Additionally, it also aims to determine the factors that affect faculty performance, such as strategic functions, core functions, and support functions and on interpersonal skills on the factors of cognitive skill, behavioral skill and communication skill by referencing in one of the leading universities in Northern Mindanao. As a result, this research intends to make a theoretical input by filling the research gap, as no previous studies have studied the relationship between faculty performance and interpersonal skill.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study used a quantitative research design focusing on descriptive correlational design. Combining descriptive and numerical data allows descriptive research to emphasize particular facets of various approaches, communicate information through numbers, and provide variable degrees of event detail. Descriptive-correlational approach is utilized to build static representations of circumstances and show relationships between faculty performance and interpersonal skill. This kind of research design is specifically beneficial in answering questions about what, when, where, and how rather than why.

In addition, the study utilized stratified random sampling. Stratified random sampling is a technique for sampling from a population wherein the population is divided into units and subgroups. In this technique, sample components are chosen from each stratum after the population is divided into several non-overlapping strata or subpopulations. This sort of sampling is known as stratified random sampling because the item chosen from each stratum is based on the simple random sampling approach in the entire sample process, which first involves stratification and then simple random sampling (Mishra & Alok, 2022).

The population of this study has 603 full-time regular and contract of service faculties who have rendered at least one year in service in School Year 2022-2023. Using the Cochran formula to decide the sample size of the population with a 0.05 level of error or 5% margin of error and 95% level of confidence. It shows that 235 can represent the sample of the entire population.

On the research instrument, the researcher adapted and modified survey questionnaires which was used to determine the relationship of faculty performance and interpersonal skills.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Faculty assessment on their interpersonal skill in terms of Cognitive Skills, Behavioral Skills and Communication Skills

Table 1 shows the summary of the mean distribution of faculty assessment of their Interpersonal Skills showed an overall mean of 3.21 described as "High Interpersonal Skills". Cognitive skills got the high average mean of 3.36 described as "Very High Interpersonal Skills" and Behavioral skills got the lowest average mean of 3.06 described as "High Interpersonal Skills".

Table 1. Summary of Mean Distribution of Faculty Assessment of their Interpersonal Skills

Indicators	Ave. Mean	Std. Dev	Description	Interpretation
Cognitive Skills	3.36	0.56	Excellent	Very High Interpersonal Skills
Behavioral skills	3.06	0.66	Very Good	High Interpersonal Skills
Communication skills	3.21	0.64	Very Good	High Interpersonal Skills
Overall mean	3.21	0.64	Very Good	High Interpersonal Skills
<i>Legend: 1.00-1.75 (Poor) 1.76-2.50 (Fair) 2.51-3.25 (Very Good) 3.26-4.00 (Excellent)</i>				

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Table 1 shows the assessment of respondents' interpersonal skills in terms of cognitive skills. The data revealed that the average means for the respondents' interpersonal skills in terms of cognitive skills is 3.36 with an SD of 0.56 or "Very High Interpersonal Skills". The result implies that the respondents have very high confidence in their cognitive skills based on the result of average means. According to (Hanushek, 2019) there is a strong relationship between faculty cognitive skills and student achievement across countries. This means that faculty who possess strong cognitive skills tend to have better performance in the classroom, which translates to better academic performance for their students. Additionally, Hanushek et al., (2019) found that an increase in faculty cognitive skills is associated with an increase in student performance. Therefore, it is essential for faculty to continuously improve their cognitive skills to enhance their performance and, ultimately, their students' academic success. Professional Learning Board (2023) suggests that cognitive skills can be improved with training, which includes repetition, new activities, progressive drills, and feedback. Effective cognitive skill training requires focused attention and immediate feedback in a one-to-one setting.

Moreover, table 1 presents the assessment of respondents' interpersonal skills in terms of behavioral skills. The data revealed that the average means for the respondents' interpersonal skills in terms of behavioral skills is 3.06 with an SD of 0.66 or "High Interpersonal Skills". The result implies that the respondents have a high level of behavioral skills based on the result of average means. According to a review of studies (Zhang, 2022), positive faculty-student relationships can have a significant impact on academic achievement. Positive emotional factors, such as a sense of belonging, can mediate this relationship. Interpersonal skills (Finkbeiner, 2017), including effective communication and relationship-building, play a crucial role in developing positive faculty-learner relationships. In this regard, faculty credibility, which refers to students' perceptions of their faculty's trustworthiness and believability, is an essential aspect of faculty-student relationships (Xie & Derakhshan, 2021). Therefore, a faculty's interpersonal skills can enhance their overall performance and contribute to improved learning outcomes.

Furthermore, table 1 shows the interpersonal skills in terms of communication skills. The data revealed that the average means for the respondents' interpersonal skills in terms of communication skills is 3.21 with an SD of 0.64 or "High Interpersonal Skills". The result implies that the respondents have a high level of communication skills based on the result of average means. Faculty who possess strong interpersonal skills, particularly communication skills, tend to be more effective educators (TeachMint, 2021). Positive teacher-learner interpersonal relationships are expected to influence learners' educational performance (Zhang, 2022). Effective communication skills are important for a faculty in transmitting education, classroom management, and interaction with students in the class (Khan, 2017). Interpersonal skills include communication, empathy, positive motivation, body language, and humor. To develop these skills, faculty should make an effort to speak with more people, understand individuals' interests, and set desired outcomes.

Faculty assessment on their performance in terms of Strategic Functions, Core Functions and Support Functions

Table 2 is the summary of the mean distribution of faculty assessment of their performance showing an overall mean of 3.51 described as "Very high performance". Strategic functions got the highest average mean of 3.52 described as "Very high performance" and Core functions got the lowest average mean of 3.47 described as "Very high performance".

Table 2. Summary of Mean Distribution of Faculty Assessment of their Performance

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description	Interpretation
Strategic functions	3.52	0.56	Excellent	Very High Performance
Core functions	3.47	0.56	Excellent	Very High Performance
Support functions	3.53	0.59	Excellent	Very High Performance
Average	3.51	0.57	Excellent	Very High Performance
<i>Legend: 1.00-1.75 (Poor) 1.76-2.50 (Fair) 2.51-3.25 (Very Good) 3.26-4.00 (Excellent)</i>				

Table 2 discusses the assessment of respondents' performance in terms of strategic functions. The data revealed that the average means for the respondents' performance in terms of strategic functions is 3.52 with an SD of 0.56 or "Very High Performance". One factor that can affect employees' assessment of their performance in terms of strategic functions is the extent to which they understand and are aligned with the organization's strategic goals and objectives. When employees have a clear understanding of the organization's strategic direction and how their work contributes to achieving those goals, it can lead to increased motivation and commitment to performing their job effectively. If an employee understands that their work is a key component of the organization's strategic plan and directly contributes to the achievement of the organization's goals, they are more likely to feel a sense of ownership and accountability for their work. This understanding can lead to increased motivation to perform well in their

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job and contribute to the organization's success. This high level of performance in strategic functions is crucial for creating an effective educational experience that fosters student growth and success (Johnson, L. & Davis, K., 2023).

In addition, table 2 outlines the assessment of respondents' performance in terms of core functions. The data revealed that the average means for the respondents' performance in terms of core functions is 3.47 with an SD of 0.56 or "Very High Performance". Employees' assessment of their performance in terms of core functions can be affected by the clarity of job expectations and performance standards. When employees have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in their role, including their core functions and performance standards, it can lead to increased motivation and commitment to performing their job effectively. When employees are unclear about job expectations and performance standards, it can negatively impact their assessment of their performance in terms of core functions. This lack of clarity can lead to confusion, uncertainty, and even anxiety about their job performance, which can ultimately result in decreased performance. This high level of performance in core functions is vital for promoting student voice, critical thinking, and creativity (Smith & Johnson, 2023).

Furthermore, table 2 illustrates the assessment of respondents' performance in terms of support functions. The data revealed that the average means for the respondents' performance in terms of support functions is 3.53 with an SD of 0.59 or "Very High Performance". One factor that can affect a faculty's assessment of their performance in terms of support functions is the level of support and resources provided by the school administration. When faculty feel supported and have access to the necessary resources to perform their support functions effectively, it can lead to increased motivation and job satisfaction. This finding highlights the respondents' efficiency and reliability in fulfilling administrative responsibilities. By submitting these required reports promptly, the respondents demonstrate their commitment to organizational processes and compliance with established protocols. This high level of performance in support functions has several implications. It ensures accurate record-keeping, facilitates smooth administrative operations, and contributes to organizational transparency and accountability (Johnson R. & Smith M., 2023). Additionally, timely submission of reports enables effective decision-making, resource planning, and evaluation of individual and organizational performance.

Relationship between Faculty Performance and Interpersonal Skills

Table 3 demonstrates the significant relationship between the respondents' faculty performance and interpersonal skills. The data revealed that respondents' interpersonal skills have a significant positive relationship with faculty performance, having an overall mean of ($r=0.481$, $p<0.001$).

Table 3. Test of Significant relationship between Interpersonal Skills and Faculty Performance

Interpersonal Skills	Faculty Performance									Overall Faculty Performance		
	Strategic Functions			Core Functions			Support Functions			r	p-value	Decision on Ho
	r	p-value	Decision on Ho	r	p-value	Decision on Ho	r	p-value	Decision on Ho			
Cognitive Skills	.57 5**	.000	reject	.45 7**	.000	Reject	.43 1**	.000	Reject	.46 0**	.000	reject
Behavioral Skills	.46 1**	.000	reject	.49 2**	.000	Reject	.36 9**	.000	Reject	.46 8**	.000	reject
Communication Skills	.49 8**	.000	Reject	.35 0**	.000	Reject	.43 7**	.000	Reject	.42 5**	.000	reject
Overall Interpersonal Skills	.51 5**	.000	Reject	.48 7**	.000	Reject	.44 1**	.000	Reject	.48 1**	.000	reject
<i>Significant if p-value < 0.05</i>												
<i>Legend: Ho is rejected if Significant</i>												
<i>Ho is accepted if Not Significant</i>												

According to (Zhang, 2022), there is a strong core correlation between a faculty's interpersonal skills and the academic success of their students. As a result, there is increasing interest in the relationship between teaching techniques and academic achievement, with more attention being paid to the interpersonal relationships between faculties and students. Therefore, it can be concluded that a faculty's interpersonal skills have a significant impact on their overall performance and the success of their students. Similarly, high performance was the outcome of effective communication since it allows for the proper and collaborative resolution of any issues that emerge. To increase learning outcomes, faculties who have clear voices, appropriate intonation, and good expression

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encouraged students to listen and pay attention to the substance of their conversations. This is another way, in which the quality of communication can be realized, Basir & Basir, (2020). Additionally, a decent spark plug contribution can be inferred from the findings of the consistency of each sign of interpersonal communication. It is clear from the influence of interpersonal contact, which has a positive and large direct impact on faculty performance, that a faculty's performance can be raised. Faculties who struggle with communication, on the other hand, do not favor raising performance.

Prita et al., (2022) show that faculty performance is the accomplishment of a faculty, the outcome of their labor in completing all responsibilities assigned to them based on their skills, experience, sincerity, and punctuality following the aims of the organization, which are crucial to achieving educational goals.

Moreover, the study by Kazmi & Javaid, (2022) entitled *Antecedents of organizational identification: implications for employee performance* revealed that individual's identification with their organization has an impact on faculty's performance since it forges a bond between them and could further strengthen the relationship between the organization's actions and faculty outcomes. People who feel a strong sense of loyalty to the organization are concerned about its future success. When faculties closely identify with their workplace, their sense of survival was correlated with that of the organization. Faculties were expected to act naturally in the organization's best interests when they represent it in this way.

A study revealed that faculty performance and interpersonal skills were essential because they impact interpersonal communication relations and production. Additionally, interpersonal communication improved worker performance (Bel et al., 2018). Teacher and faculty performance is positively influenced by interpersonal communication, it means that having good interpersonal communication improves teaching effectiveness. (Govindaraju, V. 2021).

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings derived from the study, it is found that there is a significant positive relationship between interpersonal skills and faculty performance. Interpersonal skills such as cognitive skills, behavioral skills and communication skills were positively correlated with faculty performance on the factors of strategic functions, core functions and support functions. This suggests that schools and universities that effectively enhance interpersonal skills are more likely to result a better faculty performance.

In conclusion, enhancing faculty performance by the development of interpersonal skill is significant for nurturing a positive educational environment as well as cultivating student outcomes. Teachers and faculties who are proficient in communication, collaboration and empathy are better equipped to involve students, contribute to an organized academic community and steer conflicts. Giving priority to the development of interpersonal skills, together with traditional professional competencies, guarantees that teachers and faculties can bear the all-inclusive development of their students and adjust to varied classroom dynamics. Finally, capitalizing in interpersonal skills is an asset in the long-term success of both students and faculties, generating a more helpful and effective educational experience.

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