



## Organizational Culture of State Universities: Cultivating Through the Lens of Faculty

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### Abstract

Organizational culture is an important concept in understanding the dynamics and management of the performance of any organization. This study sought to reexamine the implications of organizational culture to the academic community of two state universities in Bukidnon, Philippines. The study employed a descriptive-cross-sectional method design with the use of descriptive statistics and qualitative data analysis. The results revealed that generally, the organizational culture of the two state universities in terms of involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission traits were high. The faculty suggested a plan of action to cultivate the organizational culture which included: constant cascading of information to all stakeholders to develop mission traits; future thinking that anticipates future demands should be implemented to cultivate adaptability; building stronger employee relationships that provides opportunities to express opinions, provide concrete processes so that decision making would be easier for the top management, and designate school officials to be guided by the law.

### Introduction

The majority of organizations today are dynamic, which presents opportunities and difficulties for top management and decision-makers. Especially in the Philippines, institutions like state universities are not exempt from this tendency. To provide Filipinos with a high-quality education that meets both national and international standards, it must be dynamic. The management of performance and productivity within an organization is largely concerned with organizational dynamics, which may be very effectively understood and contextualized in terms of organizational culture. The organizational culture notion aids in comprehending and examining the factors that cause educational

organizations like universities to become structured, evolve, and function (Lacatus, 2013). It also enables the development of enhancement, reform, and management improvement plans for universities and schools. In the same vein, Erickson (2020) has made it abundantly evident that a poisonous culture repels talent while the appropriate culture attracts talent and helps to overcome internal obstacles and external shocks. He added that although it is unlikely to be included in a strategic plan, culture can be a strategy in and of itself. The most successful companies are frequently recognized for their strong, uplifting cultures. A study by Batugal (2019) further indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational

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culture. A study by Racelis (2005) on organizational culture in Philippine businesses revealed that certain industries may share similar cultural traits along the organic-mechanistic and integration differentiation continuums. Some of these similarities may be explained by similarities in the competitive environments, customer demands, and societal expectations of these industries.

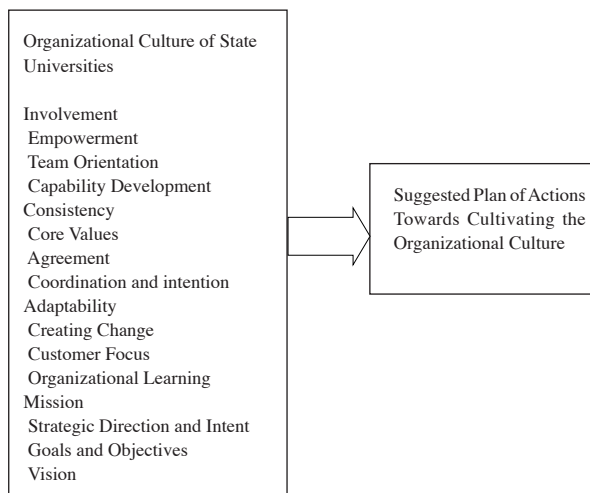
In recent years, state universities are identified by their unique culture as part of their mandate and branding. In the study of Villanca (2019) on select Philippine higher education institutions, it was revealed that the performance of faculty is greatly influenced by cultural consistency and work motivation. But it is also in the same context that any organization like state universities cannot be spared from organizational issues brought relatively by different factors including the dynamics of operation. Common issues with organizational culture include ambiguity, poor communication, and inconsistent behavior (McMahon, 2022). He continued by saying that they can contribute to a hostile and unpleasant work environment, which can reduce employee loyalty and may exacerbate problems like harassment, bullying, and high turnover. It has been noted that some government programs were rather inconsistently executed at these two state universities under study. The policies adopted by the various governing boards and the demographic settings of the schools, whether they are the main campus or satellite campuses, clearly differ from one another.

The researcher has been interested in identifying various ambiguities and contradictions in the current cultural phenomena based on this premise. In doing so, it is hoped that this research project will provide a solid foundation for addressing the current issues state universities are facing regarding their responsibilities to the general public and, more importantly, in assisting in the development of organizational culture for the benefit of the people in state universities.

### Conceptual Framework

Organizational culture is the atmosphere that pervades the interior of a company or association. Theories of organizational culture aim to describe the phenomena that affect people and their surroundings. This study is based on Tierney's (1988) concept which explains why organizational culture is a useful concept for understanding management and performance in higher education and outlines attempts to define culture in higher education.

Correspondingly, the study of Denison's Organizational Culture Model (Denison, et. al (2006) looks into an organization by identifying, codifying, and understanding organizational culture in terms of four cultural traits, namely: Mission, Involvement, Adaptability, & Consistency. Each of these traits is further broken down into three indices for a total of twelve. The mission is the degree to which the organization is crystal clear about its business direction. Involvement is the degree to which individuals at all levels are truly engaged in and "own" the business direction, and the degree to which they are positioned to help the business succeed. Adaptability is the degree to which the organization understands the customers' needs, can change in response to changing demands and can learn new skills and technologies to support business success. Consistency is the degree to which the organization has shared values, systems, and processes that support the achievement of the business mission and goals. Such culture is further explained with the interpretations and perspectives of higher education faculty through their suggested plan of action.



**Figure 1** The schematic diagram of the study

### Objectives

This study aimed to explore the organizational culture of two state universities in Bukidnon Philippines, namely: Bukidnon State University and Central Mindanao University during the school year 2018-2019. This research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the prevailing organizational culture of state universities in terms of the following traits:

- a. Involvement; b. Consistency;
- c. Adaptability, and d. Mission?

2. What suggested plan of action can be developed to cultivate the organizational culture of state universities?

## Research Methodology

This study made use of descriptive-cross sectional and qualitative research approaches. It used the descriptive-cross-sectional method since it describes the prevalent traits of organizational culture in two state universities. It also used qualitative data analysis in codifying the responses of the participants from the answered opinionnaire. This study was conducted on one hundred twenty-four college faculty of two (2) state universities in Bukidnon, Philippines. The participants were delimited only to those who are occupying regular plantilla positions and who have been in service for 3 years or more to minimize heterogeneity.

The instrument used in this study was a survey questionnaire with opinionnaire translated into a google form. The cover page contained the letter request asking for consideration from the identified participants to answer the questionnaire. This also included the informed consent form where the participant has to affirm favorably indicating permission to participate in the study. It is a modified questionnaire adapted from Denison (1990) which was construct-validated and found highly reliable as indicated by its Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.958 (Denison, et. al (2006). To answer question number 1, it employed descriptive statistics while for question number 2, it made use of qualitative data analysis to codify and thematize the significant statements.

## Results and Discussion

### Organization Culture of Higher Education Institutions

Organizational culture is the set of shared values, beliefs, and norms that influence the way employees think, feel and behave in the workplace. It constitutes four main aspects such as involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission (Denison, 1990).

Table 1 presents the organizational culture of higher education institutions in terms of their involvement trait which is described qualitatively as *high*. This indicates that the situations relating to the involvement of the personnel and other stakeholders among higher educational institutions are *manifested most of the time*.

The standard deviation shows homogeneity among the responses of the faculty in these higher education institutions.

This finding implies that the present set-up of higher education institutions, particularly the state universities, has shown great cohesiveness and team efforts in the management of these institutions.

**Table 1** Organizational Culture of State Universities in Involvement Trait

Statements	x	s.d.	QD
Team Orientation	4.01	0.66	High
Empowerment	3.81	0.71	High
Capability Development	3.78	0.76	High
Over-all	3.87	0.71	High

State universities are expected to be highly cohesive and empowered since they are public institutions whose mandates are to provide access and quality tertiary education to poor but deserving students. As such, the involvement of concerned stakeholders, most especially the faculty and the administration key officials, should be evident in all its programs, projects, and activities. This corroborates with the concept of Boyer (2017) that working in teams enables employees to be quicker and more effective in their work, as compared to people who work on projects on their own. Collaborating also makes employees more responsible, which goes a long way in raising their motivation levels, especially when teams work virtually. As emphasized by Hofstede (1980) that organizational culture is a collective process that could be the means of keeping employees in line and exhilarating them toward organizational objectives.

As further shown in Table 1, state universities put a premium on the value of teamwork among the key players of the institutions. The indicator which received the highest mean qualitatively is team orientation, which is very important so that everybody knows what to contribute to the team efforts from the start. This means that team orientation is very important so that all people in the organization should know the need to be team players to achieve the mandates of the institution collaboratively. This is reinforced by the next highest indicator of empowerment which shows that the faculty are highly empowered in ensuring accomplishments for the organization.

Capability development came last but was still rated qualitatively as high. This is evident in the rigorous implementation of different programs, projects, and activities. This indicates that these indicators are

*manifested most of the time.* The standard deviations of these indicators have shown a little spread among the responses of the participants. Nonetheless, it still shows how teamwork is important in making sure that the mandates of these institutions are successfully attained. This supports the concept of Ghorbanhosseini (2013) that teamwork has a significant effect on the organizational commitment which enables the organization to accomplish tasks faster and more efficiently than tackling projects individually. Cooperating on various tasks reduces workloads for all employees by enabling them to share responsibilities or ideas. Teamwork also reduces the work pressure on every worker, which allows him to be thorough in the completion of the assigned roles. In sharing ideas or responsibilities, every employee should have a role that suits his specialization.

Table 2 shows the organizational culture of higher education institutions in terms of consistency traits which is qualitatively described as *high*. This indicates that the consistency traits of these organizations *are manifested most of the time*. The standard deviation shows that the responses of the participants are somewhat close to the mean. The result implies that coordination and integration among employees on matters that pertain to the mandates of the institution are well coordinated from top management down to the rank and file. Consistent with the vision and mission of the institution, it is observed that people render their functions and responsibilities in consonance with the general mandates of the institution coupled with its core values as guiding principles in serving the general public including the internal stakeholders.

It is a common practice of state universities and universities to articulate their core values, apart from their mission and vision, which serve as guiding anchorage for all the employees to live by. This way, all its performance targets are guided and properly aligned with its mandates.

**Table 2** Organizational Culture of State Universities in Consistency Trait

Statements	x	s.d.	QD
Core Values	3.84	0.69	High
Agreement	3.69	0.54	High
Coordination and Integration	3.56	0.60	High
Over-all	3.70	0.61	High

This supports the study of Zhang, Li, & Wei, (2008). that consistency between organizational culture and the external environment was found positively

associated with organizational performance. Consistency in the core values, agreement and coordination, and integrations was a crucial step to ensure that everybody works in a single vision and mission guided by shared values. Working to establish a workplace in which policies, procedures, and practices are consistent, however, has its benefits. There are several reasons why consistency is a goal toward which you should work. As also emphasized by Tucker (2017) consistency helps employees feel secure about their work responsibilities and workplace demands. Without a consistent work environment, the faculty will continually be second-guessing every move they make. It is argued by Huber (1991) that consistency helps an organization interpret new information across all units. In the case of state universities and colleges, consistency in the application of laws (particularly the CHED Memorandum Orders) helps the institutions communicate to concerned stakeholders of the same breadth of information, thus, avoiding misinterpretations and misunderstanding.

Table 3 shows the organizational culture of higher education in terms of adaptability traits. It generally registered a high extent among indicators that are under adaptability trait. This indicates that these situations are *manifested most of the time*. The standard deviation shows little homogeneity among the responses of the participants. This result indicates that the adaptability trait among employees of these institutions have a high extent showing how the employees and world easily adapt especially in organizing learning and creating change for the betterment of the organization. Higher education institutions are expected to adapt since it is inherent in its nature to continuously improve. The need to adapt is demanded by the world body of higher education or just a constructive comment and recommendation from the stakeholders. Change is inevitable which is why all members of the organization must have a deep understanding of customer wants and needs.

**Table 3** Organizational Culture of State Universities in Adaptability Trait

Statements	x	s.d.	QD
Organizational Learning	4.00	0.57	High
Creating Change	3.65	0.54	High
Customer Focus	3.64	0.53	High
Over-all	3.69	0.55	High

This is emphasized by Reeves & Deimler (2011) that organizations, therefore, need to create an environment that encourages the knowledge flow, diversity,

autonomy, risk-taking, sharing, and flexibility on which adaptation thrives. Contrary to classical strategic thinking, strategy follows *organization in adaptive* companies. Confronted with the demand to align with global standards, state universities have to remain relevant by being adaptive to change and by embracing the 21<sup>st</sup> century lifelong learning competencies.

Also shown in Table 3 is the indicator of organizational learning which says that learning is an important objective in our day-to-day work. This ranked highest among the indicators of adaptability which is described qualitatively as *high*. This means that this situation is *manifested most of the time*. This clearly shows that the faculty being the source of knowledge and wisdom for the students has to ensure that learning will take place optimally in their day-to-day responsibility of teaching and sharing their knowledge with the students. This is considered to be the basic commodity in any learning institution such as state universities and colleges.

Table 4 shows the organizational culture of higher education institutions in terms of their mission traits. The overall mean reveals a qualitative description of *high* extent which indicates that indicators under mission trait are *manifested most of the time*. Its standard deviation also indicates that the responses of the participants are closer to the mean. The result indicates that the mission of the higher education institution has made the guiding principle in directing the governance and management of the organizational mandates.

**Table 4** Organizational Culture of Higher Education Institutions in Mission Trait

Statements	x	s.d.	QD
Goals and Objectives	4.0	0.65	High
Strategic Direction and Intention	3.87	0.60	High
Vision	3.74	0.56	High
Over-all	3.81	0.60	High

This result is highlighted by the statement on goals and objectives stating that there is a closer mission that gives meaning and direction to the work of the personnel. In two state universities under this study, it ranked highest among the indicators which are described qualitatively as *high*. This clearly shows that this situation is *manifested most of the time* as shown in the scoring among the participants.

It generally expresses that the existence of this higher education institution is heavily reliant on its mission and vision which is usually translated into its mandated programs, projects, and activities as contained

explicitly in their respective laws creating the institutions for the said purpose.

As a state institution, it is primarily mandated to provide quality tertiary education that is accessible and affordable to students who are considered poor but deserving to attend college education. It has become the culture of the university or college to ensure that all its programs, projects, and activities are very much aligned with its vision, mission, goals, and objectives. As emphasized by Parscale (2013) on the importance of having a clear mission and vision for a school. The faculty needs to remember and keep reviewing the school's vision and mission statements. For sure the school's mission and vision will be the main focus to motivate the teachers to follow in the right direction. This result is further confirmed by the last two statements which singled out that the strategic direction of the organization is clear to the personnel, especially the faculty members, and that short-term thinking seldom achieve the long-term plan. Correspondingly, it is obvious that the strategic directions of these institutions are clear to all the personnel including the other stakeholder, in addition, short-term thinking makes it difficult to achieve the long-term plan of the institution.

Table 5 shows the summary of organizational culture considering the four traits, namely involvement, mission, adaptability, and consistency. It generally shows that the overall mean is described qualitatively as *high*. This indicates that these four traits of organizational culture are *manifested most of the time*. Its overall standard deviation shows homogeneity among the means of these four traits.

**Table 5** Summary of Organizational Culture of State Universities in Bukidnon

Statements	x	s.d.	QD
GI involvement	3.87	0.71	High
Mission	3.81	0.61	High
Adaptability	3.69	0.55	High
Consistency	3.62	0.60	High
Over-all	3.75	0.62	High

This finding reveals that the organizational culture of these higher education institutions particularly the two state universities under study is highly observable in all its traits. This goes to show that these institutions are working collaboratively in attaining their mandates of providing access and quality to tertiary education among students who deserve no less than the best education they could from these learning institutions. As Hofferberth and Urich (2011) have argued that with a strong



organizational culture, employees do things because they believe it's the right thing to do and feel they will be rewarded for their actions. In understanding organizational culture, it is very important to know all its elements. According to Schein (2004) and Zhang, Li, & Wei, (2008) that the culture of an organization refers to the behavior patterns and standards that bind it together. With the mission and vision in place for each state university, no wonder everyone was obliged to render services according to standards and prescribed policies.

This aligns with the emphasis made by Xiong (2012) reiterating the need to maintain a strong culture in any organization. When an organization has a strong culture, it keeps its employees actively and passionately engaged. A strong culture impacts the values and norms of an organization. It creates and supports the mission, vision, and values. This is similar to the study of [18] which attempted to understand the importance of organizational culture. He concluded that organizational culture is an important condition that operates in every organization, though mostly invisible to the members of the organization or external environment.

Organizational culture is the set of shared values, beliefs, and norms that influence the way employees think, feel and behave in the workplace. It constitutes four main aspects such as involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission (Denison, 1990). Table 5 shows the organizational culture considering the aforementioned four traits. The result shows that it is qualitatively described as high. This indicates that these four traits of organizational culture are manifested most of the time. This finding reveals that the organizational culture of these higher education institutions is highly observable in all its traits.

### **Suggested Plan of Action to Cultivate the Organizational Culture**

The concerned faculty were also asked through an open-ended question opinionnaire, informal interviews, and focus group discussions on what is their suggestions and recommendations to cultivate the organizational culture of the organization they are part of. The faculty through their perspectives have expressed their thoughts on how to further develop their desired set of values and practices that could somehow help them attain a better performance as members of the academic community.

Frame 1 shows the suggested plan of action

toward cultivating the mission trait of the organization. For the state universities to be true to their mission, the faculty suggested that the state universities must constantly cascade information and management decisions from top to bottom including to the rank-and-file employees. The faculty emphasized that any institutional effort should be done for the improvement of the organizational processes and not just for compliance purposes only. It is further emphasized that every member of the university must understand the mission and the goals of the university to align the organization's goals and know what to prioritize.

**Frame 1** Suggested Plan of Action to Cultivate Culture Mission

- *Constant cascading of information and management decision from top to bottom or rank and files employees.*
- *Being true to its commitment and ensure that its operation at different levels is cascading from the SUC VMGO and values. It is also important that any institutional effort is done for its improvement and not for compliance only.*
- *The mission of the university should cascade properly to every organization, department, and office under the university. Every member of the university must understand the mission and the goals of the university to align the organization's goals and know what to prioritize.*
- *Encourage employees to have international and local research presentations.*
- *It should be a bottom-up endeavor. The rank and file should participate in participating the future plans of the organization. The mission should be towards adapting the latest technology the state university could adopt.*

As a state university mandated to focus more on research endeavors, they also recommended that the employees (faculty) have international and local research presentations which would usher them to live up to the expectations of the academic community to be more vigorous in the research field. The faculty has to emphasize in one of their suggested plan of action that the state universities should endeavor to make use of a bottom-up approach by which the rank-and-file employees should participate in crafting the plans of the organization. They further espoused that the mission of the organization should be towards adapting the latest technology the state university could adopt.

Frame 2 presents the faculty's suggestions and recommendations to further cultivate the adaptability trait of state universities. The faculty knowing the current and future demands suggest that future thinking should be adapted to anticipate future demands of the marketplace and the external environment. This is to engage the employees in the fast-changing demand of the world. The faculty expressed further that for the state

universities to remain relevant and responsive, they must take steps to know the current trends and needs of the community where it belongs to further cater to their needs. Organizations must be vigilant and observant of their surroundings to keep abreast with the trends and demands. They further suggested that there must be continuing capacity building and development training and seminars for faculty to further upgrade their adaptability skills. The faculty proposed even further to strengthen the networking and linkage of the state universities to the different stakeholders and to strengthen the value of effective and efficient responses to the emerging demands of the society.

**Frame 2** Suggested Plan of Action to Cultivate Culture Adaptability

- Decision making would be easier for top management and that faculty in position will be guided in accordance to what is given in the process.
- Have the system and process be widely disseminated and ensure that everyone is aware of the existing policies and procedure. Being more aware of these will encourage compliance and better results.
- Create a two-way communication to provide reinforcement between employees and leader.
- The need to integrate it into our curriculum is a wise idea. Other than that, core values must be cultivated in students' mind and heart through constantly reminding them that they play an integral role/part of the organization making them as tools to achieve the organizational goal as a whole.
- Communication regarding the cascading of information should be improved to enhance the consistency of information. The university might consider using online platforms like Google Drive to have a better communication across departments and offices.
- Must focus more on the intangibles like values, systems, processes, intellectual capital, etc. to create a more sustainable future.

Cultivating the organizational culture through involvement is another important trait that state universities should look into. Frame 3 presents the suggestions expressed by the faculty to develop the organizational culture in terms of its involvement trait. The faculty notes the need to build stronger employee relationships and provide them with an environment that let their opinions be heard and considered. They also suggested creating more linkages with colleges and universities outside the country as being one of the requirements of quality assurance organizations.

In the context of those in the underserved and geographically isolated areas, the state university must endeavor to deploy faculty, staff, and students in innovative ways that expand the capacity of the concerned local government units in undertaking economic development and other purposeful projects in the locality. It is through creating more programs and activities that provide room for involvement among its

**Frame 3** Suggested Plan of Action to Cultivate Culture Involvement

- Future thinking should be adapted to anticipate future demands of the marketplace and the external environment.
- Engage employees to the up changing demand of the world.
- Must take steps to know the current trends and needs of the community where it belongs to further cater to their needs.
- Be vigilant and observant to our surroundings.
- Continue the capacity building and development trainings and seminars for faculty to further upgrade the adaptability skills.
- Strengthen the linkage of the SU to the different stakeholders of the community.
- Strengthen the value of effective and efficient responses of the emerging demands in our society.

members in the organization. A group from satellite campuses of a certain university even hinted to develop programs that encourage participation and cooperation between and among its campuses. The programs as desired must be based on strengthening social and human capital. One of which is that the teachers must be encouraged to pursue schooling to enrich their knowledge of certain subjects they are teaching.

Cultivating a culture of consistency is an important trait that state universities should seriously consider. Frame 4 presents suggestions from the faculty on how to develop consistency of culture in state universities. The faculty expressed that there must be concrete processes in place, so that decision-making would be easier for top management and that faculty in designated positions guided by what is given in the process. The organizations must ensure that the system and processes be widely disseminated so that everyone in the organization is aware of the existing policies, standards, and procedures. They further recommended creating two-way communication to reinforce employees

**Frame 4** Suggested Plan of Action to Cultivate Culture Consistency

- Build strong employee relationships and provide the employees with an environment to let their opinion be heard.
- Create more linkages (with MOAs and MOUs) with colleges and universities out of the country as this is one of the requirements in the PQA and QS
- Create more programs and activities to provide room for involvement among its members.
- Develop programs that encourage participation and cooperation between main campus and satellite campus.
- It must be based on strengthening social capital and human capital.
- Teachers must be encouraged to pursue schooling to enrich their knowledge on the certain subjects they are teaching.
- Employees and other stakeholders must have an active participation to strengthen organizational culture and to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization.
- Deployment of faculty, staff, and students in innovative ways that expand the capacity of local governments to undertake economic development & other projects.

and leaders. Communication regarding the cascading of information is improved significantly to enhance the consistency of information with the use of online platforms to have better communication across departments and offices. And finally, the faculty have expressed their recommendations that the organization must focus on the intangibles like values, systems, processes, and intellectual capital to create a more sustainable future.

### Suggestions

Based on the data gathered, the study revealed that the organizational culture of state universities was relatively *high*, manifesting the fact that all cultural traits registered the same level with involvement having the highest mean followed by consistency, adaptability, and mission. The faculty suggested plan of actions to cultivate an organizational culture which included: constant cascading of information to all stakeholders to develop mission trait; future thinking that anticipates future demands should be implemented to cultivate adaptability; build stronger employees relationship that provides opportunities to hear employee opinions, provide concrete processes so that decision making would be easier for the top management, and designate school officials to be guided by the law. State universities are encouraged to maintain a strong adherence to government rules and regulations to ensure the attainment of high performance of the personnel and the organization in general.

Since this study is only limited to two state universities which limits the conclusiveness of the result, further studies may be undertaken to cover a wider scope and dimensions of the issues in this study to increase the validity of the findings.

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