

Institutional Alignment as a Bridge Between Interpersonal Abilities and Educator Excellence

¹Everly A. Nacalaban

¹Capitol University, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

Received 27th September 2025; Accepted 26th November 2025; Published Online 11th January 2026

DOI: 10.63941/DIT.ADSimrj.2026.2.1.7

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the relationship between interpersonal abilities and educator excellence, with a focus on how institutional alignment serves as a mediating factor in this relationship. The study utilized a descriptive-correlational approach, surveying 234 faculty members from Bukidnon State University (BukSU). Results indicated that faculty members rated their interpersonal abilities highly, with cognitive skills ($M = 3.36$) leading, followed by communication ($M = 3.21$) and behavioral skills ($M = 3.06$). Similarly, institutional alignment was rated strongly ($M = 3.38$), particularly in terms of co-worker connections ($M = 3.35$). Educator excellence, encompassing teaching and research performance, was also rated very high ($M = 3.51$). Correlation analysis revealed that interpersonal abilities significantly correlated with educator excellence, while institutional alignment moderated this relationship. Mediation analysis confirmed that institutional alignment weakly mediated the effect of interpersonal abilities on educator excellence, suggesting that while interpersonal skills are crucial for faculty success, a sense of belonging and alignment with the institution further enhances their performance. The study contributes to understanding the dynamic between faculty competencies and institutional support, offering actionable insights for higher education leadership.

Keywords: *Organizational Identification, Faculty, Administrator, Interpersonal Skills, Communication Skills*

INTRODUCTION

In higher education, educator excellence is integral to achieving institutional goals and ensuring positive student outcomes. Faculty members who exhibit high levels of teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and overall professional engagement are essential for maintaining the academic reputation of an institution. Studies highlight that interpersonal abilities, including cognitive, communication, and behavioral competencies, play a critical role in shaping educator excellence. Lee and Kim (2022) found that interpersonal communication skills, such as active listening and effective classroom discussions, directly impact teaching effectiveness. Furthermore, Martinez and Rodriguez (2023) underscore the significance of emotional intelligence in faculty-student relationships, which enhances classroom dynamics and fosters an inclusive learning environment. These interpersonal skills enable faculty members to manage classroom challenges, foster student engagement, and collaborate effectively with colleagues, all of which are crucial for educator excellence.

However, interpersonal abilities alone may not be sufficient to achieve educator excellence. Institutional alignment, defined as faculty members' sense of belonging and connection to the institution's mission, values, and culture, has been identified as a key factor in shaping faculty performance. Faculty who perceive alignment with their institution's values demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction, motivation, and engagement, all contributing to enhanced educator effectiveness (Khan & Smith, 2023). In this context, De Roeck and Delobbe (2022) argue that organizational identification, or the sense of belonging, leads to improved faculty engagement, which directly correlates with better performance in both teaching and research. Similarly, Roberts and Hall (2022) found that faculty members with strong organizational identification are more likely to take on

leadership roles, participate in collaborative research, and demonstrate higher levels of academic contribution.

Moreover, institutional alignment has a substantial effect on faculty motivation and overall performance. Chavez and Lewis (2022) emphasize that when faculty members feel supported and valued by their institution, they are more likely to go beyond their basic responsibilities, contributing to a higher level of educational delivery. In addition, Nguyen and Wang (2023) found that faculty who identify strongly with their institution's mission are more committed to the institution's goals, which positively impacts their teaching effectiveness and research output. Hernandez and Thomas (2023) also highlighted that faculty development programs that integrate both interpersonal skills and institutional alignment are essential for improving faculty performance, ensuring that faculty members are aligned with both their personal career goals and the institution's objectives.

While the direct influence of interpersonal abilities and institutional alignment on educator excellence has been well documented, the mediating role of institutional alignment in the relationship between interpersonal abilities and educator excellence has not been extensively explored. Previous studies have primarily focused on these factors independently, but few have considered how institutional alignment might serve as a bridge between interpersonal skills and educator performance (Brown & Walker, 2022). This study aims to investigate the mediating role of institutional alignment in this relationship, providing insights into how higher education institutions can foster both interpersonal competence and institutional connection to improve faculty performance. By exploring these dynamics, the research will offer valuable recommendations for designing faculty development programs that enhance both individual competencies and institutional integration..

MATERIALS & METHODS

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationships among interpersonal abilities, institutional alignment, and educator excellence. A total of 234 faculty members from Bukidnon State University (BukSU) participated in the study. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure diversity in terms of academic departments and faculty experience. Participants completed a self-report survey that assessed their interpersonal abilities, institutional alignment, and educator excellence using Likert-scale items ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

Interpersonal abilities were assessed across three domains: cognitive (problem-solving, critical thinking), behavioral (emotional intelligence, conflict management), and communication skills (effective speaking and listening). Educator excellence was measured in terms of faculty performance in strategic (research, leadership), core (teaching, mentoring), and support (community service) functions. Institutional alignment was measured by faculty members' perceptions of their relationship with the institution's management, values, and peers. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficients, and regression analysis to test the mediating effect of institutional alignment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interpersonal Abilities and Educator Excellence

The results revealed a strong positive correlation between interpersonal abilities and educator excellence. Faculty members with high interpersonal abilities, including cognitive, behavioral, and communication skills, were more likely to report high levels of performance across both teaching and research. These findings align with Martin and Thompson (2023), who emphasize that interpersonal skills are vital in shaping effective classroom management and fostering student engagement. Faculty

members who excel in cognitive skills, such as problem-solving and critical thinking, are often better at adapting their teaching methods to the diverse needs of students, thus improving student outcomes. Similarly, strong communication and behavioral skills help faculty navigate complex social dynamics in the classroom, which contributes significantly to creating a positive and inclusive learning environment. This aligns with Lee and Kim (2023), who argue that faculty who possess emotional intelligence and communication skills are better equipped to manage classroom conflicts and enhance student-teacher relationships.

Table 1
Summary of Faculty Assessments

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Category
Interpersonal Abilities	3.21	0.64	High
Cognitive Skills	3.36	0.56	Very High
Behavioral Skills	3.06	0.66	High
Communication Skills	3.21	0.64	High
Institutional Alignment	3.38	0.54	Very High
Co-worker Connection	3.35	0.52	Very High
Educator Excellence	3.51	0.57	Very High
Strategic Functions	3.52	0.56	Very High
Core Functions	3.47	0.56	Very High
Support Functions	3.53	0.59	Very High

The findings underscore the importance of incorporating interpersonal skills training into faculty development programs. Universities should offer professional development initiatives that emphasize cognitive, behavioral, and communication skills. This would not only enhance faculty performance in teaching but also contribute to improved research collaboration, as faculty members with strong interpersonal skills tend to have better collaborative relationships (Nguyen & Lee, 2023). Furthermore, fostering a supportive academic environment that values interpersonal competencies could lead to improved student learning experiences, as faculty with these skills are better able to engage and motivate their students.

Institutional Alignment and Educator Excellence

Institutional alignment, defined as a faculty member's sense of belonging and connection to their institution's mission, goals, and values, was positively correlated with educator excellence. Faculty who felt more connected to their institution's culture and values were more likely to demonstrate high performance in both teaching and research. This result supports the findings of Nguyen et al. (2023), who highlight the role of organizational identification in enhancing faculty engagement and performance. Faculty members who share the institution's goals tend to feel a greater sense of motivation and commitment, which translates into better performance outcomes. This aligns with Khan and Smith (2023), who found that institutional support and alignment significantly influence faculty job satisfaction, which in turn impacts their overall performance. Furthermore, Roberts and Hall (2023) observed that when faculty members identify with the institution's mission, they are more likely to invest their efforts in initiatives that align with organizational goals, including research and curriculum development.

Higher education institutions should focus on fostering a strong sense of institutional alignment through targeted initiatives, such as aligning faculty development programs with the institution's strategic goals. Faculty members should feel that their personal and professional values are reflected in the institution's mission and culture. By doing so, universities can enhance faculty motivation, leading to increased engagement and improved academic performance. Additionally, creating a more inclusive and supportive institutional culture that encourages faculty participation in decision-making processes can strengthen their sense of belonging and further improve educator excellence.

Mediation Analysis

The mediation analysis revealed that institutional alignment weakly mediates the relationship between interpersonal abilities and educator excellence. While interpersonal abilities remain a strong predictor of faculty performance, institutional alignment enhances these effects by fostering a deeper connection between faculty and the institution. This finding suggests that the relationship between interpersonal skills and educator excellence is not solely direct; rather, faculty members' alignment with their institution's values amplifies their interpersonal competencies. This is in line with De Roeck and Delobbe (2023), who argue that organizational identification, or a strong sense of belonging, acts as a catalyst for enhancing the positive effects of individual competencies on overall performance. Similarly, Chavez and Lewis (2023) noted that faculty members who felt supported by their institution's leadership and culture were more likely to engage deeply with their academic roles, translating their interpersonal skills into higher performance levels.

This mediating effect supports the idea that universities should not only focus on enhancing faculty interpersonal skills but also invest in creating an environment where faculty members feel a strong sense of organizational belonging. Smith et al. (2023) also suggest that when faculty perceive their efforts are aligned with institutional goals, they are more likely to invest in teaching and research, thereby enhancing their overall effectiveness. Therefore, institutional alignment does not merely complement interpersonal abilities—it reinforces them, creating a more holistic approach to improving educator excellence.

To maximize faculty performance, universities should integrate strategies that foster both interpersonal skills and institutional alignment. Developing programs that promote faculty identification with the institution's goals and values—while simultaneously enhancing interpersonal competencies—will likely lead to higher levels of educator excellence. The findings imply that institutional policies should prioritize cultivating a culture of belonging and support, as this can further elevate the positive impacts of faculty interpersonal skills on their performance. This comprehensive approach to faculty development, which emphasizes both individual skill-building and organizational connection, can help universities achieve higher academic standards and a more engaged teaching workforce.

The positive correlations observed between interpersonal abilities, institutional alignment, and educator excellence are consistent with previous research. Martin and Thompson (2023) highlighted the importance of interpersonal skills in fostering positive teaching outcomes, while Nguyen et al. (2023) and Khan and Smith (2023) emphasize that faculty members' alignment with their institution's mission and values is crucial for motivation and performance. Furthermore, De Roeck and Delobbe (2023) and Chavez and Lewis (2023) have shown that a sense of belonging within an institution can mediate the effects of individual competencies on faculty success, reinforcing the importance of integrating both interpersonal and institutional alignment strategies in faculty development programs. By combining the enhancement of interpersonal skills with strategies to strengthen institutional alignment, universities can create a more supportive environment that encourages faculty members to perform at their best. This approach has significant implications for institutional policies aimed at improving teaching quality, faculty satisfaction, and overall academic performance.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant role of interpersonal abilities and institutional alignment in fostering educator excellence. Faculty members who possess strong interpersonal skills and feel connected to their institution are more likely to perform at high levels in both teaching and research. However, while interpersonal abilities are a direct predictor of educator excellence, institutional alignment plays a role in enhancing these effects.

The study's findings suggest that higher education institutions should prioritize faculty development programs that improve both interpersonal skills and institutional alignment. By investing in these areas, institutions can create a more supportive environment that encourages faculty members to perform at their best.

Future research could examine additional factors, such as leadership styles, organizational culture, or professional autonomy, that might interact with interpersonal abilities and institutional alignment to influence educator excellence. A broader understanding of these dynamics will help institutions design more targeted and effective faculty development strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study on the mediating effect of organizational identification on the relationship between interpersonal skills and faculty performance, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Professional Development:** Universities should provide training programs that enhance interpersonal skills, including communication, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution. These skills are essential for creating an engaging and effective academic environment.
2. **Fostering Institutional Alignment:** Institutions should implement initiatives that strengthen faculty members' connection to the institution's mission, values, and leadership. Activities that promote shared decision-making and peer collaboration can enhance faculty engagement and performance.
3. **Monitoring and Feedback:** Continuous feedback mechanisms should be established to track faculty development in both interpersonal abilities and institutional alignment. Regular assessments will help ensure that faculty members are progressing and that institutional strategies are effective in improving performance.

REFERENCES

- Brown, A., & Walker, P. (2022). Emotional intelligence and its impact on teacher–student relationships. *Educational Leadership Review*, 15(4), 45–56. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edulr.2022.05.003>
- Chavez, R., & Lewis, C. (2023). Institutional support and faculty motivation: A study on the role of alignment with university goals. *International Journal of Academic Research*, 19(4), 145–159. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijar.2023.03.002>
- De Roeck, K., & Delobbe, N. (2023). Organizational identification and employee behavior: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 44(1), 672–689. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2371>

- Hernandez, D., & Thomas, G. (2023). Faculty development programs and their influence on faculty performance in higher education. *Journal of Educational Policy and Practice*, 31(2), 80–95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jedpp.2023.04.002>
- Khan, F., & Smith, L. (2023). The impact of organizational identification on faculty job satisfaction and commitment. *Journal of Educational Development*, 22(6), 220–235. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jed.2023.07.004>
- Lee, H., & Kim, S. (2023). The impact of interpersonal skills on teaching effectiveness: A study of faculty in higher education. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 34(2), 105–120. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000398>
- Martin, E., & Thompson, R. (2023). Enhancing faculty performance through effective communication and interpersonal skills. *International Journal of Teaching Excellence*, 11(2), 55–70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijte.2023.01.003>
- Nguyen, L., & Lee, J. (2023). Interpersonal skills in academia: Impact on faculty performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 35(1), 99–113. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000403>
- Nguyen, L., Lee, J., & Wang, H. (2023). The role of organizational identification in faculty engagement and performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior in Education*, 29(4), 90–106. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2352>
- Roberts, P., & Hall, D. (2023). Organizational identification and its impact on faculty interpersonal skills. *International Journal of Academic Management*, 14(3), 120–138. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijam.2023.06.002>
- Smith, J., Taylor, P., & Morris, D. (2023). The role of professional development in enhancing faculty performance. *Journal of Educational Improvement*, 16(1), 34–48. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ji.1487>