

GOVERNANCE PRACTICES, LEADERSHIP STYLES, AND PERCEIVED INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN MISAMIS ORIENTAL: A SEQUENTIAL EXPLANATORY MIXED-METHODS STUDY

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ABSTRACT: Local community colleges (LCCs) in the Philippines operate at the intersection of local political authority, national quality regulation, and community development. This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study examined associations among governance practices, leadership styles, and perceived institutional performance in seven LCCs governed by local chief executives in Misamis Oriental. The quantitative phase surveyed 57 administrators and faculty members; follow-up focus group discussions were used to explain the statistical patterns. Governance practices ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.58$) and perceived institutional performance ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.54$) were rated high. Governance was strongly associated with performance ($r = .745$, $p < .001$), as was transformational leadership ($r = .740$, $p < .001$), whereas passive leadership was negatively associated with performance ($r = -.375$, $p = .004$). In the regression model, governance practices ($B = .412$, $\beta = .441$, $p < .001$) and transformational leadership ($B = .385$, $\beta = .423$, $p < .001$) were significant positive predictors, and the model explained 65.9% of the variance. Qualitative analysis identified relational autonomy within political embeddedness, compliance and accreditation as quality mechanisms, transformational leadership as enabling vision, and LGU partnerships as resource and employability levers. The integrated findings indicate that perceived performance is higher where governance is systematized and leaders combine strategic direction with accountable autonomy. Because the study was cross-sectional, self-reported, and based on a small non-random sample, the results support contextual association rather than causal influence.

Keywords: educational governance; institutional performance; local community colleges; mixed methods; transformational leadership

INTRODUCTION

Higher education governance increasingly combines academic authority, public accountability, stakeholder participation, and managerial control. Greater autonomy can create room for strategic action, but it can also intensify accountability pressures and ambiguity over who is responsible for institutional outcomes [1].

This tension is pronounced in Philippine local community colleges. The Local Government Code authorizes local government units (LGUs) to establish and support local colleges [2], while the Higher Education Act assigns the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) responsibility for regulating academic quality [3]. Local chief executives may consequently occupy influential governing roles, creating an institutional arrangement in which academic decisions, public financing, and local politics intersect [4].

Leadership is central to how institutions operate within this arrangement. Transformational leadership may strengthen educational management through vision, motivation, and organizational innovation [5]. Institutional and resource-dependence perspectives further suggest that colleges adapt to regulatory demands while negotiating access to funding, personnel, partnerships, and political support [6]. Governance and leadership should therefore be examined together rather than as independent administrative concerns.

The literature also emphasizes sustainable governance, access, and organizational capacity. Technology-enabled and stakeholder-oriented leadership may support institutional transformation [7], while Philippine access reforms have expanded the responsibilities of public higher education institutions [8]. Yet resource scarcity, resistance to change, and uneven administrative capacity continue to constrain good university governance, accreditation, and research productivity [9]. These pressures are especially salient for small LGU-funded institutions outside major urban centers.

Leadership style may differentiate how colleges respond to these pressures. Transformational leadership emphasizes shared vision, empowerment, and intellectual stimulation [10]. Passive or laissez-faire leadership is generally

associated with weaker organizational engagement [11], whereas contextually responsive leadership has been linked with stronger academic performance in higher education settings [12]. However, leadership effects are unlikely to be independent of governance structures, fiscal capacity, and regulatory context.

Institutional performance is multidimensional. Employability reflects the alignment of academic preparation with labor-market opportunity [13], while stakeholders may judge quality through curriculum relevance, accreditation, faculty development, and institutional responsiveness [14]. For local colleges, these indicators may depend on municipal economies and LGU partnerships as much as on internal academic processes.

Research on Philippine local universities and colleges has described variability in program quality and institutional performance [15], but limited empirical work has integrated governance practices, leadership styles, and performance within LCCs governed directly by local chief executives. Evidence is particularly limited in Northern Mindanao. Existing studies rarely combine statistical patterns with participants' explanations of how political embeddedness, resource mobilization, quality assurance, and local partnerships operate in practice. This study addresses that gap by examining both the strength of the relationships and the contextual mechanisms through which they are experienced.

Conceptual orientation and research questions

The study treats governance practices and leadership styles as organizational conditions associated with perceived institutional performance. Governance includes autonomy and political influence, stakeholder engagement, policy

implementation, research innovation, and resource mobilization. Leadership includes transformational, transactional, and passive styles. Institutional performance includes faculty development, graduate employability, curriculum quality, accreditation outcomes, and entrepreneurship or innovation integration. The qualitative strand explains how these relationships are enacted within LGU-dependent institutions.

The study addressed five questions:

1. What is the level of governance practices in the participating LCCs?
2. What is the level of perceived institutional performance?
3. How are governance practices and leadership styles associated with institutional performance, and which variables make unique statistical contributions?
4. Which leadership styles are dominant, and how are they enacted within LCE-governed colleges?
5. How do qualitative accounts explain the quantitative results and differences across institutions?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was used [16]. Quantitative data were collected and analyzed first to describe the constructs and examine their relationships. Qualitative focus group discussions (FGDs) were then used to explain, elaborate, and contextualize the quantitative findings. Integration occurred through connecting the qualitative inquiry to the statistical results, comparing convergence and divergence, and constructing mixed-methods inferences.

Setting and participants

The study involved seven LCCs in Misamis Oriental: Tagoloan Community College, Salay Community College, Opol Community College, Magsaysay College, Gingoog College, Initao College, and City College of El Salvador. These institutions share a governance arrangement in which a municipal or city mayor serves as chair of the governing board. The quantitative sample consisted of 57 administrators and faculty members selected purposively on the basis of regular appointment, at least one year of service, and direct exposure to governance processes. Faculty members constituted 68.4% of respondents, and 63.1% had four to ten years of service.

Instrument and data collection

A 63-item self-administered questionnaire measured governance practices, leadership styles, and institutional performance using a five-point response scale. Items were adapted from governance, stakeholder-participation, and leadership measures identified in the original study and contextualized for Philippine LCCs. Three specialists in educational administration reviewed the instrument for content relevance and clarity. A pilot test involving 15 participants who were excluded from the main study yielded an overall Cronbach's alpha of .92. The manuscript should identify the item distribution and reliability coefficient for each subscale and document permission or adaptation procedures for proprietary instruments before submission.

Data analysis and mixed-methods integration

Means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages summarized the quantitative data. Pearson product-moment correlations assessed bivariate associations with institutional

performance. Multiple linear regression using the enter method examined the unique contributions of governance practices and leadership styles. Linearity, residual normality, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, and independence of errors were evaluated. The exact statistical package and version should be reported:

FGD transcripts were analyzed inductively through familiarization, initial coding, theme development, review, definition, and reporting. Member checking and comparison with the quantitative findings were used to strengthen credibility. Integration focused on whether the qualitative themes confirmed, expanded, or qualified the statistical patterns. A joint display was used to make the resulting meta-inferences explicit.

Ethical considerations

Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and responses were treated confidentially. Participant and college codes were used in reporting quotations. The following details must be inserted before submission:

RESULTS

Governance practices

Table 1. Governance practices reported by administrators and faculty

Construct	M	SD	Interpretation
Autonomy and political influence	3.92	.71	High
Stakeholder engagement	4.05	.68	High
Policy implementation	4.12	.63	High
Research innovation	3.68	.79	High
Resource mobilization	3.85	.74	High
Composite governance practices	3.92	.58	High

M = mean; SD = standard deviation. Verbal interpretations follow the original instrument.

Governance practices were rated high overall ($M = 3.92$, $SD = .58$). Policy implementation received the highest mean ($M = 4.12$), followed by stakeholder engagement ($M = 4.05$). Research innovation obtained the lowest mean ($M = 3.68$) and the largest dispersion among the governance dimensions ($SD = .79$), indicating comparatively uneven capacity for research funding, incentives, and institutional support.

Perceived institutional performance

Table 2. Perceived institutional performance

Construct	M	SD	Interpretation
Faculty professional development	3.98	.66	High
Graduate employability	4.15	.59	High
Curriculum quality	4.08	.62	High
Accreditation outcomes	3.89	.81	High
Entrepreneurship and innovation	4.02	.70	High
Composite institutional performance	4.02	.54	High

Perceived institutional performance was high overall ($M = 4.02$, $SD = .54$). Graduate employability was rated highest ($M = 4.15$), followed by curriculum quality ($M = 4.08$). Accreditation outcomes had the lowest mean ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.81$) and greatest variability, suggesting differences in

institutional maturity, documentation systems, and resource readiness across the seven colleges.

Associations and regression model

Governance practices were strongly and positively associated with institutional performance ($r = .745, p < .001$). Transformational leadership showed a similarly strong positive association ($r = .740, p < .001$), whereas passive leadership was negatively associated with performance ($r = -.375, p = .004$). These coefficients indicate covariation, not causal influence. No mediation analysis was conducted; transformational leadership should therefore be interpreted as an independent correlate and predictor rather than a mediator.

Table 3. Multiple regression predicting perceived institutional performance

Predictor	B	SE	beta	t	p
Constant	.840	.389	-	2.16	.035
Governance practices	.412	.112	.441	3.68	<.001
Transformational leadership	.385	.098	.423	3.93	<.001
Transactional leadership	.124	.087	.142	1.43	.161
Passive leadership	-.089	.063	-.118	-1.41	.164

$N = 57$. $R^2 = .659$. Using $N = 57$, four predictors, and $R^2 = .659$ gives $F(4,52) = 25.11$ and adjusted $R^2 = .633$. Authors must verify these values against the original software output before submission.

The model explained 65.9% of the variance in perceived institutional performance. Governance practices ($\beta = .441, p < .001$) and transformational leadership ($\beta = .423, p < .001$) made significant positive contributions. Transactional and passive leadership were not significant after the other predictors were controlled. The standardized coefficients indicate relative association within the model; $\beta = .441$ does not mean that governance independently explains 44.1% of performance variance.

Qualitative explanatory themes

Four cross-cutting themes explained the quantitative results. First, autonomy was experienced as relational rather than absolute. Colleges negotiated operational space through fiscal arrangements, enterprise activities, transparent procedures, and continuing relationships with LGUs. A Tagoloan participant described a separate trust fund that insulated selected operations from general-fund fluctuations. Second, compliance and accreditation functioned as quality infrastructure. CHED monitoring prompted syllabus alignment, faculty training, policy manuals, remedial programs, and documentation systems. However, consultation did not always confer decision authority; one participant observed that external representatives “were not the decision makers.”

Third, transformational leadership operated through enabling vision, accountable delegation, and visible support. A participant recalled the mayor's message: “If you're president, you'll have accountability,” illustrating autonomy accompanied by responsibility. Leaders also aligned program development with municipal priorities and mobilized resources for accreditation and infrastructure.

Fourth, LGU partnerships supported employability and resource mobilization, but benefits varied with local economic conditions. Colleges reported direct placement, mock interviews, labor education, and job fairs. Research innovation remained the clearest capacity gap; a participant

summarized the constraint as, “They approve everything, but the problem is the budget.”

Table 4. Joint display of quantitative and qualitative findings

Quantitative pattern	Qualitative explanation	Integrated inference
Governance high; policy implementation highest.	Compliance triggered training, manuals, and internal reforms.	Systematized compliance may convert external regulation into organizational learning.
Stakeholder engagement high.	Participation existed, but influence over decisions varied.	Representation and consequential participation are not equivalent.
Governance and transformational leadership predicted performance.	Strategic alignment, resource mobilization, and accountable delegation enabled action.	Governance and leadership appear complementary, but causal direction is untested.
Employability highest; accreditation most variable; research innovation lowest.	LGU job pathways were active, while accreditation and research depended on resources and maturity.	Performance strengths are locally embedded and uneven across institutional functions.

DISCUSSION

The high governance rating is best understood as evidence of perceived administrative strength rather than full institutional independence. Academic autonomy can coexist with public accountability when roles, resources, and decision processes are sufficiently clear [17]. In these LCCs, autonomy was relational: colleges remained politically embedded but developed procedural and fiscal mechanisms that protected selected academic functions.

Stakeholder engagement was also high, yet qualitative accounts showed a distinction between presence and influence. Partnership research demonstrates that external actors can contribute resources and implementation capacity, but the value of engagement depends on whether stakeholder input affects decisions [18]. LCCs should therefore move beyond symbolic representation toward documented feedback loops and shared accountability.

Transformational leadership was strongly associated with performance and remained significant in the multivariate model. Similar Philippine evidence from technical colleges links leadership style with institutional functioning [19]. The present study adds that transformational behaviors were expressed through context-specific practices—resource enablement, trust-based delegation, consultation, and alignment with municipal priorities—rather than through abstract vision alone.

These patterns are consistent with the view that higher education governance is a multi-issue and multi-actor process [20], [21]. The LCCs were accountable simultaneously to CHED, LGUs, governing boards, faculty, students, communities, and employers. Their performance therefore depended on the coordination of actors whose authority and interests were not always aligned.

The findings also suggest that governance works through organizational processes. Allocation of university functions and responsibilities can strengthen or weaken reform implementation [22], while universities often behave as

emergent organizations whose strategies develop through adaptation rather than linear planning [23]. This helps explain why the same formal LCE governance model produced different autonomy mechanisms and accreditation trajectories across colleges.

Oversight need not eliminate autonomy, but productive balance requires transparent boundaries and mutual trust [24]. The positive role of transformational leadership also aligns with Philippine evidence connecting visionary leadership, institutional culture, and faculty performance [25]. Nevertheless, high leadership ratings may partly reflect social desirability or shared-source measurement because respondents assessed both leadership and performance.

The findings further show that decentralization does not mean that the state or local authority has simply “stepped back”; rather, governance responsibilities are redistributed and renegotiated [26]. CHED monitoring and outcomes-based education requirements served as quality anchors, and accreditation readiness emerged as an indicator of institutional maturity [27]. Yet accreditation variability shows that uniform expectations may impose unequal burdens on colleges with different fiscal and staffing capacities.

Administrative leadership and entrepreneurial orientation may support tertiary-education performance when leaders can mobilize relationships and resources [28]. Knowledge transfer likewise becomes an institutional performance concern when research, industry engagement, and community partnerships are connected to usable outcomes [29]. In the present study, however, research innovation was the lowest governance dimension, indicating that employability partnerships had advanced further than research systems.

The added Philippine study of school principals during and beyond the pandemic emphasizes adaptive leadership, communication, care, and future-oriented planning under conditions of uncertainty [30]. Although that work concerns basic education, its insight is applicable to LCCs: effective leadership involves sustaining operations while learning from disruption, supporting people, and repositioning the institution for emerging demands. The current findings extend this logic to politically embedded higher education governance.

Limitations

Several limitations constrain interpretation. The 57 respondents were selected purposively from seven institutions, and responses were clustered within colleges, but the analysis treated individuals as independent. The sample is small for estimating a four-predictor model and is not representative of all Philippine LCCs. Governance, leadership, and performance were measured through the same self-report survey, increasing the risk of common-method bias and favorable institutional self-presentation. Institutional performance was perceptual rather than based on independent accreditation records, tracer data, research outputs, financial indicators, or student outcomes. The cross-sectional design cannot establish temporal or causal effects. Finally, the source manuscript did not report complete FGD sampling and procedural details, subscale reliability, or all statistical-output values. These matters must be completed and verified before submission.

Practical implications

The findings support four priorities: formal agreements that clarify LGU-board-college responsibilities; annual joint planning that links municipal development with academic priorities; differentiated capacity support for accreditation, research, and internal quality assurance; and leadership development for LCEs and college administrators focused on strategic communication, accountable delegation, stakeholder participation, and resource mobilization. Institutions should also triangulate perception data with objective performance indicators and document how stakeholder recommendations influence decisions.

CONCLUSION

Across seven LCCs in Misamis Oriental, stronger perceived governance practices and transformational leadership were associated with higher perceived institutional performance. Qualitative evidence showed that this relationship operated through relational autonomy, systematized compliance, enabling leadership, local partnerships, and resource mobilization. Employability and curriculum quality were perceived strengths, while research innovation and uneven accreditation readiness revealed capacity constraints. The findings do not establish that governance or leadership caused performance because the study was cross-sectional, non-random, and based largely on self-report. They nevertheless provide a contextually grounded explanation of how LCCs can pursue quality while remaining accountable to both local political structures and national academic regulation.

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