

The Nexus of Organizational Culture and Work Performance: The Mediating Role of Organizational Politics in Local Government Setting

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ABSTRACT: This study explores the relationship between organizational culture, organizational politics, and work performance in local government units (LGUs) in the Philippines, focusing on the mediating role of organizational politics. Data was collected from 263 LGU employees with at least three years of experience. Mediation analysis was conducted using validated instruments to measure organizational culture, politics, and work performance. Statistical methods, including the Sobel-Z test, were applied to examine mediation effects. The results show that organizational politics partially mediates the relationship between organizational culture and work performance. A positive culture significantly enhances employee performance, but internal politics mediate this effect. The Sobel-Z test confirmed the significance of the mediation ($z = 3.403$, $p < 0.05$), with organizational politics accounting for 15.1% of the total effect. This study advances organizational behavior research by highlighting the mediating role of politics in LGUs. It offers practical insights, recommending that LGUs promote strong organizational cultures and transparent governance to reduce the adverse effects of internal politics, thereby improving employee performance and public service delivery.

Keywords: organizational culture, work performance, organizational politics, local government unit, mediation analysis

INTRODUCTION

Work performance evaluation is essential for determining the effectiveness of Local Government Units (LGUs) in the Philippines, as it assesses the quality of public service delivery (Nekvinda, 2024). However, many LGUs face challenges in regulating their employees' performance and productivity due to issues such as poor supervision, uneven workloads, and a lack of capacity-building initiatives, which hinder the achievement of local development objectives (NEDA, 2023). A significant obstacle is excessive paperwork, which impedes service delivery to the public and demoralizes employees, who often spend too much time on formalities rather than focusing on their assigned tasks (Gabriel & Castillo, 2020). Consequently, there is an urgent need for an improved performance management program that emphasizes employee growth, responsibilities, and work efficiency (Choudhary & Kunte, 2024). By addressing these issues, LGUs can create a more supportive environment and cultivate a culture of improvement and governance transparency, ultimately enhancing service delivery and governance efficiency. Serving as the foundation of decentralized governance, LGUs aim to bring government services closer to the people by addressing local needs and concerns, and the Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act No. 7160)



establishes the legal framework for this decentralization, granting LGUs increased autonomy in managing their affairs (Bueno, 2018).

Evaluating the performance of LGUs is vital for promoting good governance and accountability. By confronting existing challenges and implementing recent reforms, LGUs can significantly contribute to national development and resilience. The pandemic has revealed both strengths and weaknesses in LGU governance. While many LGUs demonstrated effective crisis management and service delivery, some struggled due to resource limitations and governance inefficiencies. Therefore, evaluating LGU performance is essential for ensuring that local governments can effectively serve their communities.

In public administration, employee performance is a critical parameter for the functionality of LGUs. Employee performance directly influences service delivery quality and timeliness (Fauzy, Chin, & Nadlifatin, 2022). Efficient and high-performing employees are essential for delivering effective services, thereby enhancing citizens' confidence in government. Current research indicates that high-quality work positively correlates with public service outcomes, which influences citizens' participation and trust in local authorities (Vandenabeele, 2020). An efficient and effective workforce is vital for implementing organizational goals and objectives, increasing efficiencies, reducing waste, and improving productivity (Alonso & Lewis, 2021). Assessing employee performance in terms of accountability is crucial, as well-performing civil servants play a key role in combating corruption within local administration.

Several studies have explored the factors affecting work performance in various organizations, with many focusing on how organizational culture and politics impact performance. However, previous research has not sufficiently examined the role of organizational politics as a mediating factor in the relationship between organizational culture and work performance. For instance, a study by Ahmad et al. (2016) explored how emotional intelligence can mitigate the negative effects of organizational politics on job performance. Additionally, Albloush et al. (2019) highlighted the significance of perceived training opportunities as a buffer against the detrimental effects of organizational politics on performance. These findings emphasize the crucial role organizational politics plays in mediating the relationship between culture and performance. They suggest that effectively managing political dynamics is essential for optimizing employee outcomes.

This study aims to investigate the complex relationships among organizational culture, organizational politics, and work performance, providing insights that can enhance the efficiency and accountability of LGUs in the Philippines.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Competing Values Framework Theory

This study is based on the Competing Values Framework theory (Cameron & Quinn, 2001), which categorizes organizational culture into four types: Clan, Advocacy, Market, and Hierarchy. Each culture type impacts work performance differently; Clan fosters teamwork, Advocacy drives innovation, Market focuses on results, and Hierarchy ensures efficiency. Each type significantly influences individual and group performance. Organizational culture shapes employee values and practices, affecting productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness (Leitão, Pereira, & Gonçalves, 2019).

Social Exchange Theory

Employees who feel supported and appreciated will likely improve their performance (Ahmad, et al., 2023). In organizational settings, this theory implies that employees are likely to perform well and stay committed when they feel their contributions are valued and reciprocated with fair rewards (e.g., recognition, and career advancement). A positive organizational culture fosters a favorable work environment, enhancing job satisfaction and commitment (Jina Kim, 2022). Such a culture drives employees to deliver optimal results (Lapshun, 2020) and attracts talented personnel (Olson, McGuire, & Crawford, 2020).

Public Organization Theory

According to Public Organization Theory by Hal G. Rainey (Rainey, 1983), political behavior and power dynamics significantly influence public organizations. Employees in public organizations are often driven by a desire to serve the public good, which can impact their engagement and performance (Christensen, 2019).

The theories and ideas discussed strongly suggest a connection between organizational culture, its political aspects, and employee performance. In other words, the realms of culture and politics within an organization are closely linked and impact how individuals work. Recognizing and navigating these connections is crucial for fostering a positive and efficient workplace.

The study aims to explore several key relationships within the context of local government units. Specifically, it seeks to determine the direct effect of organizational culture on work performance, providing insights into how cultural elements influence employee effectiveness. Additionally, the study examines the influence of organizational culture on the prevalence of organizational politics, aiming to understand whether cultural practices within the organization can reduce or exacerbate political behavior. Furthermore, it evaluates the impact of organizational politics on employee work performance, investigating how political dynamics within the workplace affect overall productivity and efficiency. Lastly, the research explores the mediating role of organizational politics in the relationship between organizational culture and work performance, seeking to determine whether political factors serve as a conduit through which cultural influences affect employee outcomes.

The study proposes several null hypotheses to test the relationships among organizational culture, organizational politics, and work performance within local government units.

H0₁: There is no significant direct effect of organizational culture on work performance in local government settings.

H0₂: Organizational culture does not significantly influence the level of organizational politics within local government units.

H0₃: Organizational politics does not significantly affect employee work performance in local government settings.

H0₄: Organizational politics does not mediate the relationship between organizational culture and work performance.

The conceptual framework of the study, illustrated in Figure 1, identifies the organization's structure—including leadership, employee management, and organizational cohesion—as the primary variable. Organizational politics—covering behaviors related to "going along to get ahead" and policies on pay and promotions—serves as a mediating factor. In contrast, work performance encompasses task, contextual, and productive work behaviors. This study examines how these elements together shape employee performance in local government units.

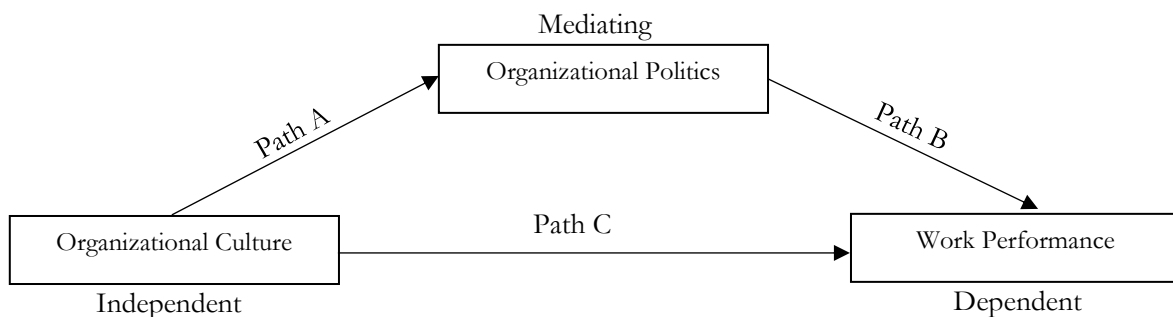


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

An organization's culture embodies its values, assumptions, and interactions, creating a distinct social and psychological environment. Key components include defining identity, leadership that aligns shared goals, employee management to enhance performance, organizational glue fostering unity, strategic priorities driving focus, and success criteria that gauge achievement (Lamprou & Vagiona, 2022).

Organizational politics refers to the use of tactics and behaviors by individuals or groups to gain power and influence decisions. These behaviors often serve personal interests, align with power structures for advancement, and shape policies related to pay and promotions (Litman, et al., 2020).

Work performance, a critical indicator of organizational effectiveness, reflects the extent to which individuals contribute to achieving organizational goals. This is measured through task performance, which assesses the efficiency and accuracy of specific job-related tasks, contextual performance, which evaluates how employees support organizational objectives beyond their immediate duties, and productive work behavior, which captures overall contributions to organizational success (Voordt & Jensen, 2023).

While the relationship between culture, organizational dynamics, and employee effectiveness is acknowledged, research on politics as a mediator between culture and performance is lacking. This study aims to assess whether organizational politics mediates the connection between culture and employee performance, particularly in local government.

The research objectives include describing the organizational culture in local governments, outlining the level of politics, and assessing employee performance. It explores how culture affects performance, the impact of politics on productivity, and the mediating role of politics. This study is significant as it aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8 and 11, promoting economic growth and enhancing local governments' service delivery for resilient communities.

METHODS

In this research, a total of 263 employees from the local government were selected as participants. Specifically, individuals with at least three years of experience were chosen to ensure a thorough understanding of the organization's operations and internal dynamics. Those with less than three years of experience were excluded from upholding the study's credibility by focusing on individuals who were well acquainted with government processes. Employees with a minimum of three years of experience were selected to ensure participants had substantial exposure to the organization's operations, culture, and internal dynamics. This criterion was designed to gather insights from individuals who have had ample time to understand and navigate the complexities of the local government unit (LGU) processes, thus providing richer and more reliable data. The precise number of participants was determined using the Raosoft sample size calculator, which considers factors such as size, margin of error, confidence level, and response distribution. This approach provides a scientifically justified sample size, ensuring that the results are statistically significant and reliable. The method helps capture the diverse perspectives of employees from various functional areas, ensuring that the findings are comprehensive and not skewed by overrepresentation or underrepresentation of any specific group. By distributing the sample proportionally based on the number of employees in each department, the method ensures that the sample reflects the actual structure of the LGU workforce. This enhances the generalizability of the findings to the entire organization. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents could decline without compensation or benefits. They also had the right to withdraw their consent without facing any penalties, and their involvement did not impact on their legal rights or procedures. Participants were selected through a technique known as stratified random sampling. This approach is widely used in data collection, where individuals are chosen randomly but with a predetermined probability of being selected (Taherdoost, 2019). This method drew samples from different departments within the LGU. It distributed them proportionally based on the number of employees in each department, ensuring that all groups were represented (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, & Nigam, 2018).

Ethical considerations were addressed according to the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (UMERC) guidelines under Protocol No. UMERC-2024-190. Participant confidentiality and voluntary involvement were prioritized, ensuring compliance with the Data Privacy Act. Consent was obtained from both the organization and individuals (Jamaluddin, 2025), and the recruitment process was designed to respect respondents' autonomy.

The research adhered to ethical standards, avoiding practices such as plagiarism and falsification. Approval was secured from the local government unit, and pilot testing was conducted for alignment with

research objectives. The rights of authorship were established, with the researcher as the corresponding author and the adviser as the co-author.

The research was conducted in Santo Tomas, Davao del Norte, Philippines. Santo Tomas was selected as the research location because of LGU's recognition and awards for its dedication to delivering outstanding service. This made Santo Tomas an interesting case study for exploring the performance of government employees. Furthermore, other LGUs could see Santo Tomas as a model for governance practices, further highlighting its significance as the focus of this research.

Materials and Instrument

The research employed tools obtained online to assess factors such as politics, organizational culture, and job performance. These tools were modified based on the works of [Kacmar and Ferris \(1991\)](#), [Cameron and Quinn \(2001\)](#), and [Koopman et al. \(2014\)](#). The research employed a scale to assess the extent of culture, workplace dynamics, and employee performance. This scale spans from low (1.0 - 1.79) to exceptionally high (4.20 - 5.00), with corresponding descriptions and interpretations for each category. A score falling within the high range signifies that these characteristics are consistently observed and displayed, while a score in the low range indicates that they are never evident. The intermediate ranges represent the degrees of frequency and significance of these attributes.

Design and Procedure

This research employs a methodology that uses mediation analysis to explore the connections between variables. This approach is suitable for the study, enabling a structured examination through statistical, mathematical, or computational methods ([Mohajan, 2020](#)). A non-experimental framework is particularly appropriate, as it outlines relationships without manipulating the variables ([Takona, 2024](#)), often needed when ethical or practical limitations restrict interventions ([Aguinis & Edwards, 2021](#)).

The correlational approach helps identify patterns among factors like workplace dynamics, organizational values, and employee performance without implying causation ([Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2019](#)). It is commonly used in administration to assess attitudes in interacting environments ([Friedman, Wyatt, & Ash, 2022](#)).

Additionally, the study investigates how one variable influence another through mediation. Mediating factors bridge the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y). ([MacKinnon, 2012](#)), mediation analysis reveals how a predictor variable impacts an outcome via a mediator (M). This research explores the relationship between culture (X) and employee performance (Y) through organizational politics (M).

Data analysis utilized statistical tools such as the mean, standard deviation, and the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) to examine connections among the variables. The Sobel-Z test was also used to assess how organizational politics mediates the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance. Meanwhile, a review article consists of study design, search strategy, eligibility criteria, data extraction, and data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preliminary testing and validation were conducted in the neighboring Municipality of Talaingod, still in the Province of Davao del Norte, Philippines, to confirm their dependability and accuracy. The organizational culture tool comprised six metrics, boasting a Cronbach alpha of .937, reflecting consistency. The organizational politics tool featured three metrics, with a Cronbach alpha of .880, indicating internal consistency. The employee performance tool consisted of three metrics, showing a Cronbach alpha of .914, further underscoring internal consistency.

Organizational Culture

The research findings highlight a strong organizational culture within the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Santo Tomas, with an average score of 4.04 and a standard deviation of 0.64. Scores ranging from 4.0 to 4.08 indicate that cultural aspects are consistently present in LGU's operations, fostering unity, shared values, and dedication.

Table 1. Level of Organizational Culture in the Local Government Setting

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Dominant Characteristics	0.65	4.00	High
Organizational Leadership	0.76	4.00	High
Management of Employees	0.74	4.08	High
Organizational Glue	0.72	4.05	High
Strategic Emphases	0.76	4.07	High
Criteria of Success	0.70	4.06	High
Overall	0.64	4.04	High

Source: Survey Data, SPSS Output

Employee management received the highest score of 4.08, reflecting effective practices in communication, teamwork, and decision-making. Such management enhances morale, productivity, and public trust (Reina & Scarozza, 2021). Leadership qualities scored 4.0, suggesting strengths but indicating room for more inclusive and forward-thinking approaches (Huang, Sindakis, Aggarwal, & Thomas, 2022).

Cohesion, averaging 4.05, shows that employees feel connected through shared goals, while attention to strategic priorities (4.07) and success metrics (4.06) illustrates the LGU's commitment to its mission of public service. Overall, the LGU of Santo Tomas demonstrates a strong organizational ethos that promotes loyalty, enhances performance, and improves citizen satisfaction (Virani & Van der Wal, 2023).

Organizational Politics

Notably, compensation and promotion policies received the highest average score of 3.68, while employee behavior scored the lowest at 3.11, categorized as "moderate." These results suggest that government employees see policies as significant in determining salary increases and promotions.

Table 2. Level of Organizational Politics in the Local Government Setting

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
General Political Behavior	1.22	3.11	Moderate
Go Along to Get Ahead	0.79	3.49	High
Pay and Promotion Policies	0.73	3.68	High
Overall	0.76	3.43	High

Source: Survey Data, SPSS Output

Research on the political dynamics within the Santo Tomas Local Government Unit (LGU) indicates that political actions and attitudes are significantly present, with an average score of 3.43, classified as "high." Employees recognize politics as an important aspect of their work environment. Organizational politics can negatively impact work performance, morale, and overall efficiency (Khan, Abbas, Kumari, & Najam, 2024).

The salary and advancement policies scored a mean rating of 3.68, suggesting that employees feel strongly about the influence of politics on pay and promotion decisions. This indicates that reward systems may be influenced by factors that affect employee behavior. High ratings in this area highlight the importance of transparency and fairness in fostering employee satisfaction and retention (Cotterill, 2019).

Conversely, the aspect of behavior received the lowest rating of 3.11, categorized as "moderate." This suggests that political conduct may not be as widespread or harmful. While some political behavior is inevitable in bureaucratic structures, the LGU appears to have measures to prevent it from becoming detrimental (Sharma, 2020).

The indicator "go along to get ahead" received an average score of 3.49, indicating that employees may feel pressured to conform to workplace politics for career advancement. Such behavior can hinder innovation and compromise service quality (Khaw, Alnoor, & AL-Abrow, 2023).

Therefore, politics influences salary and promotion decisions within the LGU of Santo Tomas, affecting perceptions of fairness and meritocracy. Addressing these dynamics is critical for maintaining a culture of transparency and accountability, essential for public trust and effective governance (Aitalieva, 2023). Leaders must recognize these issues and implement strategies to ensure objective decision-making processes.

Work Performance

Table 3 indicates that the area receiving the rating of 4.24 is performance, while the domain with the mean score of 4.11, classified as high, is productive work behavior. These results imply that government employees often take on responsibilities in their roles.

Table 3. Level of Work Performance in the Local Government Setting

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Task Performance	0.58	4.23	Moderate
Contextual Performance	0.58	4.24	High
Productive Work Behavior	0.61	4.11	High
Overall	0.53	4.19	High

Source: Survey Data, SPSS Output

Research on job performance in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Santo Tomas shows that employees excel in key areas, with an average score of 4.19 and a standard deviation of 0.53. This indicates effective fulfillment of responsibilities, which is essential for addressing citizen needs and building public trust (Sanchez-Marco, 2021).

Contextual performance, which received a notable average score of 4.24, involves employees exceeding job duties to support the organization. Such behaviors enhance teamwork and adaptability within the government, reflecting values of public service, accountability, and civic responsibility (Clack, 2021).

Work behavior scored slightly lower at 4.11 but remains high, suggesting room for improvement in efficiency and resource utilization. Factors like limited resources and external pressures can impact productivity, yet employees generally perform well despite these challenges (Virani & Van der Wal, 2023).

Task performance also ranks high at 4.23, emphasizing the effectiveness of employees in carrying out technical and administrative responsibilities. This directly affects the quality and timeliness of services provided to citizens.

Overall, employees not only meet their obligations but often take on extra responsibilities, indicating a positive work culture and alignment with organizational goals. These findings reinforce the significance of employee performance in achieving good governance and improving public service delivery.

To maintain this positive trend, fostering a supportive workplace culture that recognizes contributions and offers growth opportunities is essential. Regular performance assessments and training can enhance overall performance, ensuring the LGU continues to effectively serve its community.

Significance of the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Work Performance

Table 4 depicts the relationship between organizational culture and job performance. It shows a significant correlation with an r-value of .491 and a p-value of .000, below the threshold of .05 established for this study. This indicates a positive, strong, and meaningful link between the two variables, suggesting that a positive organizational culture is linked to employee effectiveness in a government context. Consequently, the null hypothesis is disproven.

Table 4. Significance of the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Work Performance

Organizational Culture	Work Performance			Overall
	Task Performance	Contextual Performance	Productive Work Behavior	
Dominant Characteristics	.417** .000	.406** .000	.393** .000	.448** .000
Organizational Leadership	.338** .000	.344** .000	.369** .000	.388** .000
Management of Employees	.377** .000	.432** .000	.417** .000	.453** .000
Organizational Glue	.353** .000	.391** .000	.436** .000	.437** .000
Strategic Emphases	.312** .000	.377** .000	.403** .000	.404** .000
Criteria of Success	.439** .000	.434** .000	.453** .000	.490** .000
Overall	.418** .000	.447** .000	.464** .000	.491** .000

Source: Survey Data, SPSS Output

The relationship between the work environment and job performance in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Santo Tomas shows a significant positive correlation, with a correlation coefficient of .491 and a p-value of .000. This indicates that a strong organizational culture is closely linked to improved employee performance, which is vital for effective service provision and governance compliance.

Key cultural elements, such as shared values, leadership style, and management strategies, positively impact employee performance. For instance, shared values among employees correlate .448, enhancing teamwork and collaboration. Effective leadership, with a correlation of .388, improves performance by providing guidance and motivation.

Employee management strategies, indicated by a correlation of .453, are also crucial for performance enhancement, particularly in overcoming bureaucratic challenges. The bonds among employees, or "glue," correlate strongly with performance at .437, promoting camaraderie and collaboration.

Moreover, well-defined success criteria, with a correlation of .490, significantly predict work performance, emphasizing the importance of clear expectations. Cultivating a positive environment within LGUs can enhance employee effectiveness and overall service quality. This research underscores that a culture fostering collaboration, strong leadership, and clear objectives can significantly improve performance and the efficacy of public governance in LGUs.

Significance of the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Organizational Politics

Table 5 analyzes the relationship between organizational culture and organizational politics, showing a calculated r-value of .284 and a p-value of .000. This p-value is significantly lower than the threshold of .05 established for this study. The findings indicate a correlation between the two factors, suggesting that promoting a culture can help reduce negative organizational politics in a government context. This, in turn, can result in improved governance and service provision in local government settings, leading to the rejection of the hypothesis.

Table 5. Significance of the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Organizational Politics

Organizational Culture	Organizational Politics			Overall
	General Political Behavior	Go Along to Get Ahead	Pay and Promotion Policies	
Dominant Characteristics	.009 .884	.345** .000	.458** .000	.272** .000
Organizational Leadership	-.024 .701	.385** .000	.467** .000	.271** .000
Management of Employees	-.030 .627	.367** .000	.466** .000	.261** .000
Organizational Glue	-.021 .729	.360** .000	.484** .000	.269** .000
Strategic Emphases	-.054 .384	.269** .000	.403** .000	.194** .002
Criteria of Success	-.023 .711	.349** .000	.451** .000	.253** .000
Overall	-.028 .651	.390** .000	.512** .000	.284** .000

Source: Survey Data, SPSS Output

In conclusion, politics significantly impacts salary and promotion decisions within the LGU of Santo Tomas, influencing fairness and perceptions of meritocracy. Addressing these dynamics is essential for fostering transparency and public trust (Aitalieva, 2023). Leaders should implement strategies for objective decision-making.

Research indicates that LGU employees perform well, achieving an overall average score of 4.19. Notably, contextual performance, with a score of 4.24, highlights employees exceeding job expectations, which contributes to teamwork and civic responsibility (Clack, 2021). Task performance also ranks high at 4.23, indicating effective execution of responsibilities, while productive work behavior scores 4.11, suggesting areas for improved efficiency (Virani & Van der Wal, 2023).

The relationship between organizational culture and work performance shows a strong correlation (r-value of .491, p-value of .000), indicating that a positive culture enhances employee effectiveness. Key elements like shared values and leadership significantly influence performance, reinforcing the importance of a supportive workplace for good governance and public service delivery. To sustain this positive trend, regular assessments and growth opportunities are essential.

Significance of the Relationship between Organizational Politics and Work Performance

Table 6 depicts the relationship between politics and job performance, showing a calculated r-value of .380 and a p-value of .000, below the significance threshold of .05 established for the study. This indicates a correlation between the two variables. Additionally, it suggests that positive organizational politics, like fostering collaboration and equity, are linked to improved job performance in the context of government. Therefore, the null hypothesis is dismissed.

Table 6. Significance of the Relationship between Organizational Politics and Work Performance

Organizational Politics	Work Performance			Overall
	Task Performance	Contextual Performance	Productive Work Behavior	
General Political Behavior	.074	.108	.183**	.136*
	.234	.080	.003	.028
Go Along to Get Ahead	.338**	.366**	.447**	.426**
	.000	.000	.000	.000
Pay and Promotion Policies	.421**	.432**	.487**	.495**
	.000	.000	.000	.000
Overall	.292**	.324**	.409**	.380**
	.000	.000	.000	.000

Source: Survey Data, SPSS Output

Additionally, it was noted that the link between compensation and advancement policies and the area of work behavior received the highest rating with a correlation coefficient (r-value) of .487 and a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicating a substantial and noteworthy relationship. Conversely, the association between behavior and job effectiveness showed the lowest r-value of .074 and a p-value of .234, suggesting that in environments, there is limited evidence to support a significant impact of behavior on job performance.

The relationship between politics and job performance in LGU of Santo Tomas unveils dynamics that impact employee effectiveness in a politically charged setting. The research shows a significant positive correlation between organizational politics and work performance with a computed r-value of .380 and a p-value of .000. This suggests that aspects of organizational politics—when handled appropriately—can improve job performance within the LGU. The results disprove the hypothesis, confirming that organizational politics influences employee actions and performance.

The most notable discovery in the study is the significant link between compensation and advancement policies and employees' work performance. A correlation coefficient of .487 and a statistical significance of .000 indicate that their productivity levels noticeably increase when workers perceive fairness and transparency in pay and promotions. In a sector with limited opportunities for advancement and budget constraints on salary increases, ensuring that these processes are viewed as fair is essential for sustaining high employee engagement and motivation. When employees believe their hard work will be acknowledged and rewarded relatively, they are more likely to be productive, leading to improved organizational results and enhanced public service delivery.

Conversely, the dimension of behavior shows the weakest connection to performance, with an r-value of .074 and a p-value of .234. This indicates that behavior characterized by actions for personal gain does not significantly influence how employees carry out their tasks within the LGU context. It suggests that employees remain unaffected despite being involved in or observing behavior. This finding is noteworthy as it suggests that while workplace politics may impact broader aspects of employee conduct, like engagement or overall productivity, it also impacts the execution of tasks. In a setting where task performance is crucial for achieving governance goals, this insight underscores employees' ability to focus on their responsibilities amidst political influences.

The concept of "going along to get ahead" positively correlates with aspects of job performance. This includes task performance ($r = .338$), contextual performance ($r = .366$), and productive work behavior ($r = .447$). Employees who embrace this approach—aligning themselves with organizational politics for career gain—tend to excel in certain areas. This behavior highlights the significance of networking, building relationships, and possessing skills when navigating local government units. In public sector organizations, where formal promotion routes and career progression may be more structured, engaging in behavior can serve as a means to achieve professional growth. However, while this strategy may boost individual job performance, it could also perpetuate a culture where political maneuvering is perceived as essential for success. This perception could pose challenges in promoting merit-based advancements and decision-making in the long run.

Furthermore, the significant link between salary and advancement policies and job performance ($r = .432$) highlights the significance of equitable payment structures in motivating employees to exceed their core job duties. Job performance encompasses actions that foster a broader organizational setting, such as assisting coworkers in taking on responsibilities and promoting a positive work environment. In the realm of administration, where budgetary limitations may restrict monetary incentives, alternative forms of acknowledgment, such as promotions or opportunities for professional growth, can be instrumental in inspiring employees to make broader contributions towards achieving organizational success.

The research findings underscore the influence of politics, particularly concerning compensation and advancement practices, on job performance within the context of local government units. Favorable political dynamics prioritizing fairness, transparency, and collaboration can boost employee involvement, efficiency, and effectiveness. On the other hand, detrimental behavior driven by interests may not significantly impact task execution but could have repercussions for the organization's culture and employee morale. In public administration, navigating organizational politics through established policies and open decision-making processes is crucial to fostering performance and keeping employees dedicated to providing public services efficiently.

Mediation Analysis of the Three Variables

The information was presented to MedGraph following an examination. The mediation analysis focuses on how a variable influences the relationship between two other variables. Mediation analysis involves a series of steps to establish a variable as a mediator. Table 7 outlines these steps, labeled as Steps 1 through 4. Step 1 demonstrates the impact of organizational culture on work performance. In Step 2, organizational culture is shown to influence organizational politics, which serves as the mediator (M). Step 3 reveals that organizational politics significantly predicts employee performance within the local government context.

Further analysis using MedGraph is critical to assess the mediation effect, given the correlation between paths a, b, and c. This includes conducting a Sobel-Z test. Complete mediation occurs when the independent variable's impact on the dependent variable becomes statistically insignificant during analysis, indicating that the mediator fully explains the effect.

The Sobel-Z test result of 3.403, with a significance level of $p < 0.05$, confirms that the mediation effect is statistically significant. Mediation accounts for 15.108737% of the overall impact. Additionally, the ratio of the mediated effect to the direct effect is 0.177.

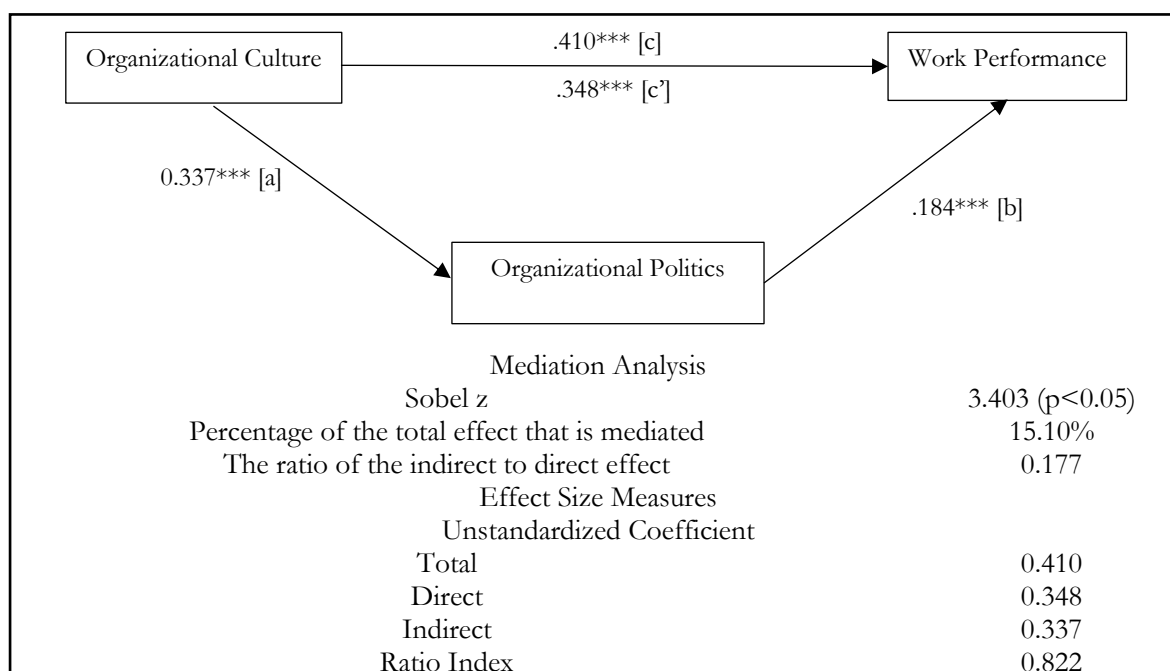


Figure 2. Medgraph Showing the Variables of the Study
Source: Survey Data, SPSS Output

Table 7 depicts the effect size calculated for the mediation analysis involving three variables, which indicates how organizational culture influences performance through an indirect pathway. The overall impact value of 0.410 reflects this influence, while the direct impact value is 0.348, showing the relationship between culture and performance when accounting for organizational politics. The indirect impact value, calculated as $a \times b$ (where "a" is the path from culture to politics and "b" is from politics to performance), is 0.337.

The ratio of the indirect impact to the total effect is 0.822 ($0.337/0.410$), suggesting that about 82.2% of culture's influence on performance operates through politics. This analysis reveals a strong direct connection between organizational culture and work performance, with a coefficient of 0.410, which decreases slightly to 0.348 when politics is considered.

The examination includes two pathways: Path A shows how culture impacts organizational politics (coefficient of 0.337), while Path B illustrates the influence of politics on job performance (coefficient of 0.184). A Sobel test validates the mediating role of politics, with a significant z value of 3.403476 at $p < 0.05$. The mediation effect accounts for 15.1% of the overall impact, indicating that direct influences remain stronger.

In conclusion, the mediation analysis underscores the importance of fostering a strong organizational culture to enhance work performance, even in the presence of internal politics. Addressing both culture and politics can help organizations develop strategies to improve performance by promoting positive cultural traits and minimizing negative political behaviors.

Table 7. Path Estimation Results

Step	Path	B	S.E.	β
1	c	.410	.045	.491***
2	a	.337	.070	.284***
3	b	.184	.038	.261***
4	c'	.348	.045	.417***

Note: * $p < 0.05$

Source: Survey Data, SPSS Output

Figure 2 illustrates the findings regarding the impact of organizational politics. The Sobel test results presented in Table 8 indicate a z-value of 3.40, with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. This finding suggests a partial mediation effect, meaning that when organizational politics are taken into account, the direct influence of organizational culture on work performance is reduced. The positive z-value further implies that organizational politics weaken the relationship between culture and work performance in the context of government organizations.

Table 8 provides detailed findings on the mediating effect of organizational politics. The analysis confirms a partial mediation effect in the relationship between organizational culture, politics, and work performance. The Sobel z-value of 3.40 is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), reinforcing the conclusion that organizational politics play a critical role in mediating the direct influence of culture on work performance.

Table 8. Statistical Result for Mediating Effect

Combination of Variables	Sobel z	p-value	Mediation
Organizational culture → organizational politics → work performance	3.403476	<0.05	Partial mediation

Note: * $p < 0.05$

Source: Survey Data, SPSS Output

The analysis reveals how organizational politics influence the relationship between culture and employee performance. The study shows a Sobel z value of 3.403476, indicating a significant mediating role of organizational politics. A z-value exceeding 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05 suggest that the impact of organizational culture on performance is partially mediated by politics.

This partial mediation means that while politics affects the connection between culture and job performance, organizational culture still plays a substantial role. In simpler terms, culture positively impacts performance, even with political considerations involved.

The findings of the study reveal that organizational politics partially mediates the relationship between organizational culture and work performance, indicating that the influence of culture on performance is, in part, channeled through political dynamics within the organization. This partial mediation confirms that organizational politics plays a significant role in the interaction between culture and employee outcomes. Consequently, the null hypotheses suggesting no significant effects or mediation are invalid, as the results demonstrate clear and meaningful relationships between these variables.

The results emphasize the importance of culture in enhancing job performance in politically charged environments. A strong organizational culture can protect performance from negative political influences, indicating that fostering a culture of values, employee involvement, and accountability can lead to better outcomes.

For leaders, these insights highlight the need to prioritize cultural initiatives. While it's essential to address organizational politics, a strong culture has a consistent and significant effect on performance. Ultimately, the findings suggest that politics alone cannot explain the relationship between culture and performance, underscoring the importance of culture in achieving organizational success.

Implications

This study enhances theoretical frameworks in organizational behavior by confirming the partial mediation role of organizational politics between organizational culture and work performance. It reinforces the Competing Values Framework and Social Exchange Theory, highlighting the dual pathways—direct and mediated—through which culture influences performance. For instance, research by [Khan et al \(2020\)](#) confirmed a positive and significant association between organizational culture, organizational politics, and employee performance, highlighting the mediating influence of organizational politics. Further, research by [Martinez, et al \(2015\)](#) discussed the impact of organizational culture on performance, aligning with the CVF's theoretical perspectives.

These findings deepen the understanding of internal dynamics within public organizations, particularly how political behaviors shape organizational outcomes, offering a more comprehensive perspective on the interplay between culture, politics, and performance.

The findings also have practical implications for local government units (LGUs) aiming to improve employee performance. By fostering a positive organizational culture that mitigates the adverse effects of internal politics, LGUs can create a more productive work environment. Suggested strategies include promoting transparent and participative governance, cultivating leadership that upholds ethical standards, and implementing performance management systems that reward merit over political maneuvering. Such measures can lead to a motivated workforce, reduced political tensions, and improved public service delivery.

Additionally, this study lays the groundwork for future research by emphasizing the need to explore the mediating role of organizational politics in diverse organizational and cultural settings. It encourages cross-sectoral and cross-cultural studies to validate and expand upon these findings, while also advocating for longitudinal research to capture the evolving dynamics of culture, politics, and performance over time. These avenues of inquiry can provide deeper insights and broader applications of the study's conclusions in public administration and organizational management.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that organizational culture has a significant direct impact on employee performance in local government settings, with organizational politics playing a partial mediating role. The results show that while a positive organizational culture enhances performance, the presence of organizational politics can influence this relationship by affecting both employee motivation and behavior. Despite the mediating effect of politics, the direct influence of culture on performance remains substantial.

The research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering empirical evidence on the partial mediation role of organizational politics between organizational culture and work performance. It

expands the understanding of public administration dynamics, particularly within local government units, and provides practical insights into how fostering a positive organizational culture can mitigate the negative effects of internal politics, ultimately improving employee performance and service delivery.

One limitation of this study is its focus on a single local government unit, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the cross-sectional design captures a snapshot in time, which might not reflect the long-term dynamics between organizational culture, politics, and performance. Self-reported data may also be subject to biases, such as social desirability or recall bias.

Future research should consider a comparative approach across multiple local government units to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Longitudinal studies are recommended to observe the evolving relationships between culture, politics, and performance over time. Moreover, incorporating qualitative methods could provide deeper insights into the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors influencing these dynamics, offering a richer understanding of the interactions at play.

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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