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### Research Article

# Organizational Environment And Professional Identity Of Librarians

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine which domain of organizational environment best influences the professional identity of librarians. It has been found in the past that organizational environment has significant impacts on different facets of its employees' behaviour, may it be professional identity or otherwise. This issue was discussed in this study employing the descriptive-quantitative approach using the correlation technique. Universal sampling technique and regression analysis were used to gather data from 101 professional librarians employed in various organizations around Davao City. Results revealed that a significant relationship between organizational environment and professional identity exists; hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Among the indicators of organizational environment, guidance and support emerged as the domain that best influences the professional identity of librarians.

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## INTRODUCTION

Professional identity of librarians—as affected by the mass' negative perspective of the librarian's image—continues to be in a state of disarray. Complex reasons, including the absence of a fixed job description and the lack of understanding resulting to lack of support from the school administration, makes professional librarians feel undervalued, invisible in their own workplace, and even shamed by some of their peers who do not see the professional role of the librarian in the educational community (Nelson, 2011). Consequently, the effect of these issues makes it difficult for librarians to grasp a comprehensive professional identity because it affects the concepts that individual librarians affix to themselves in regards to what they do for a living (Scheirer, 2000).

The importance of professional identity is often overlooked as abstract in the everyday workings of an organization. It can be seen in a workforce in multiple ways, or in others, the lack of it can be felt. In retrospect, professional identity should be seen in the way a professional individual work, the way they address their clients, the way they value what they do, and the fact that they know why they are doing it (Caza & Creary, 2016). It is of utmost importance that the human resources of an organization possess a healthy professional identity for it is proven to be connected to workplace issues such as motivation, finding meaning in one's career, political perspective, teamwork, participation, and employee individuality among others. Hence, it is crucial to generate

professional identities in one's workforce (Alvesson et al., 2008).

Organizational environment is described as the factor that makes an organization. This composes of internal and external environments, wherein it is crucial that the two work and go hand-in-hand harmoniously for an organization to function efficiently (Mujeeb et al., 2011). In connection, Kira and Eijnatten (2009) stated that organizations nowadays have recently become intricate due to the increasing differences among its workforce, may it be cultural, racial, generational, gender or work roles—making it more complex for employees to grasp their professional identities in the midst of a varied organizational environment. Due to this, providing a complimentary working environment for everyone continuously proves to be a challenging task for administrators, for an organization needs a secure environment for its personnel to keep track of their career path and most importantly, stay true to their professional identity (Farooqi & Akhtar, 2014).

Within this perspective, the researcher deemed it remarkable to find out whether organizational environment influences librarians' professional identity as this could raise concerns and arguments to the intended beneficiaries of this research study. Through conducting a thorough examination of the organizational environment of libraries, it may provide insights on how it boosts or impact professional identity of librarians especially in this time and age of

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technological advancement. Moreover, in the search and perusal of studies and literature of the researcher, no similar study on organizational environment as it relates to professional identity of librarians has been found; hence, this research may shed light on library schools and school administrators on the importance of professional identification in a dynamic work environment.

This study aimed to determine which domain of the organizational environment best influences the professional identity of librarians by assessing the organizational

environment in terms of internal environment, professional development, teamwork, guidance and support, facilitations, participation and coordination, and rewards and benefits, as well as evaluating the professional identity of librarians in relation to knowledge of the profession, philosophy of the profession, professional roles and expertise, attitude, engagement behaviors, and interaction, while also examining the significant relationship between organizational environment and professional identity to identify the most influential domain.

## METHODS

This study utilized a non-experimental quantitative research design employing a descriptive-correlation technique to determine the significant relationship between the organizational environment and the professional identity of librarians. As described by Creswell and Plano-Clark (2018), quantitative research is used when investigating the relationship between multiple variables, utilizing computational, statistical, and mathematical tools to interpret data systematically. Additionally, Dudovskiy (2018) notes that descriptive research design involves using both closed-ended and open-ended survey questionnaires to capture respondents' perspectives on a given phenomenon. Since this study does not manipulate any variables, it is considered non-experimental, making this research design suitable for examining the relationship between organizational environment domains and librarians' professional identity.

The study was conducted in libraries located in Mindanao, specifically in Davao City, which is known as the "Land of Promise" and one of the major cities in the Philippines. Davao City, with over 1.4 million residents, is considered a prime choice for the study due to its numerous libraries within various organizations and institutions employing licensed librarians. The city is home to 45 private and public higher education institutions and over 600 primary and secondary schools, making it an ideal setting for gathering data from practicing librarians. Davao City, the largest city in the Philippines by land area, is part of Region 11 and is divided into three congressional and administrative districts, encompassing a total of 182 barangays.

This study involved a total of 101 librarians from Davao City, including 16 from school libraries, five from public libraries, 77 from academic libraries, and three from special

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libraries. The universal sampling technique was employed to select respondents, as it minimizes bias and ensures fair representation by providing equal opportunities for selection (Osgood et al., 2012). The chosen librarians were deemed suitable due to their professional certification and ability to comprehend and interpret the survey questionnaire based on their work environment and professional identity. Non-librarian professionals were excluded from the study since they lack the professional identification required for this research focus. A minimum sample size of 100 was deemed adequate for statistical analysis, as recommended by Noordzij et al. (2010).

The research instrument used was a contextualized and modified standardized questionnaire based on existing literature and validated sources. The first part, assessing the organizational environment, was adapted from the Organizational Environment Scale (OES) by Farooqi and Akhtar (2014), while the second part, evaluating professional identity, was based on Woo's (2012) Professional Identity Scale in Counseling (PISC). Both parts were reviewed by experts and achieved high internal consistency, with Cronbach Alpha values of .914 for organizational environment and .912 for professional identity, indicating strong reliability. The data gathered were interpreted using a five-point Likert scale to determine the levels of organizational environment and professional identity, ranging from "Very Low" to "Very High."

The researcher followed a systematic process to collect data for the study, starting with formal written communication to validators for reviewing the research instruments. After gathering feedback and conducting a pilot test to ensure validity, the researcher proceeded with data collection by seeking permission from school directors or presidents, endorsed by the Graduate School dean. Upon approval, the researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to librarians with the assistance of library personnel, allowing respondents ample time to complete them. Data collection took place during the second semester of the 2018-2019 school year. The collected data were consolidated and analyzed using statistical tools, including Mean to determine levels of organizational environment and professional identity, Pearson  $r$  to assess their relationship, and Regression Analysis to identify the most influential domain.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. The researcher ensured voluntary participation, maintaining privacy and confidentiality, and obtained informed consent from respondents. Participants were made aware of their rights to withdraw, seek clarification, or critique the process. The study upheld transparency, with no instances of plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, conflict of interest, or deceit. Additionally, permissions were obtained from relevant authorities before data collection, and no monetary or material compensation was offered to participants. The researcher also ensured that the data were accurate, unbiased, and presented based on the respondents' genuine inputs.

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## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Organizational Environment of Librarians

Shown in Table 1 are the responses of librarians on their level of organizational environment. The cited overall mean score of 4.11 or high, with a standard deviation of 0.52 was obtained from the computed mean scores of the indicators. The highest mean score was from internal environment with a rating of 4.29 or very high, followed by 4.25 or very high for teamwork, and third highest is 4.20 or very high for professional

development. This indicates that the librarians work in an environment which is supportive and conducive, that teamwork is appreciated in their organization, and enough opportunities for professional development were present. The rest of the indicators obtained lower mean ratings ranging from 3.60 to 4.17, still described as high, for the indicator organizational environment.

**Table 1. Organizational Environment of Librarians**

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
<i>Internal Environment</i>	0.66	4.29	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Teamwork</i>	0.64	4.25	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Professional Development</i>	0.60	4.20	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Guidance and Support</i>	0.75	4.17	<i>High</i>
<i>Facilitations</i>	0.57	4.16	<i>High</i>
<i>Participation and Coordination</i>	0.64	4.08	<i>High</i>
<i>Rewards and Benefits</i>	0.94	3.60	<i>High</i>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>4.11</b>	<b>High</b>

The librarian's overall perception of their organizational environment is very high. This can be attributed to their very high discernment of their organization's internal environment, teamwork, and professional development opportunities. The librarians in their institutions experience working in an environment where their immediate supervisors trust them in library affairs; encourage them to interact with their colleagues, and provide them with enough opportunities for professional development.

These manifestations therefore increase the sense of positive organizational environment for librarians, and support the statements of various authors (Half, 2017; Oh, 2002; Subramaniam et al., 2015), wherein they stated that when enabling conditions—such as creative chaos, employee freedom, alignment of vision, and development support, among others—is present in a working environment, it promotes general workplace relations and improve the organization's overall environment.

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## Professional Identity of Librarians

Presented in Table 2 are the data on the level of professional identity of librarians with an overall mean score of 4.40 described as very high, with a standard deviation of 0.40. The highest indicator is philosophy of the profession, with 4.68 mean rating or very high, followed by professional roles and expertise, with a mean score of 4.67 or very

high, then knowledge of the profession, and attitude, garnering the same mean score of 4.54 or very high. The rest of the indicators obtained lower mean ratings between 3.72 and 4.27, still described as high and very high respectively indicating that improvements can still be made to further develop their professionalism, especially in terms of interaction and engagement behaviors.

**Table 2. Professional Identity of Librarians**

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
<i>Philosophy of the Profession</i>	0.49	4.68	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Professional Roles and Expertise</i>	0.42	4.67	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Knowledge of the Profession</i>	0.54	4.54	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Attitude</i>	0.49	4.54	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Interaction</i>	0.66	4.27	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Engagement Behaviors</i>	0.81	3.72	<i>High</i>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>4.40</b>	<b>Very High</b>

The very high level of professional identity among librarians of region XI is due to the very high ratings given on their philosophy of the profession, professional roles and expertise, knowledge of the profession, and attitude. The librarians in their organization are steadfast in the knowledge of their professional roles which they gained from the belief that their profession provides a unique and valuable service to society. They also got practical skills and professional standards that are expected to perform their roles successfully. These results are in consonance with the statements of Berggren (2013) and Emerson (2010) that a professional with a strong sense of professional identity shows a vast knowledge about the profession he/she belongs to and

possesses a high understanding of the different roles and functions that he or she performs.

## Significance on the Relationship between Organizational Environment and Professional Identity of Librarians

Illustrated in Table 3 are the results of the test of significance on the relationship between the variables involved in the study. The overall correlation had a computed r-value of 0.391 with a probability value of  $p < .05$  or significant. Doing an in-depth analysis, it could be seen that the indicators of organizational environment, when correlated with the indicators of professional identity of librarians, revealed overall

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r-values ranging from 0.065 to 0.474 with probability values of less than  $p < .05$  which is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis

which states that there is no significant relationship between organizational environment and professional identity of librarians was rejected.

**Table 3. Significance on the Relationship between Organizational Environment and Professional Identity of Librarians**

Organizational Environment	Professional Identity						Overall
	KOTP	POTP	PROE	ATTI	ENGA	INTE	
<i>Internal Environment</i>	.204*	.227*	.267**	.267**	.226*	.209*	<b>.326**</b>
	(.041)	(.022)	(.007)	(.007)	(.023)	(.036)	<b>(.001)</b>
<i>Professional Development</i>	.299**	.220*	.188	.337**	.137	.242*	<b>.326**</b>
	(.002)	(.027)	(.060)	(.001)	(.172)	(.015)	<b>(.001)</b>
<i>Teamwork</i>	.184	.164	.133	.377**	.215*	.221*	<b>.307**</b>
	(.065)	(.102)	(.184)	(.000)	(.031)	(.027)	<b>(.002)</b>
<i>Guidance and Support</i>	.166	.320**	.270**	.482**	.335**	.414**	<b>.474**</b>
	(.097)	(.001)	(.006)	(.000)	(.001)	(.000)	<b>(.000)</b>
<i>Facilitations</i>	.162	.252*	.238*	.308**	.078	.204*	<b>.274**</b>
	(.106)	(.011)	(.017)	(.002)	(.438)	(.041)	<b>(.005)</b>
<i>Participation and Coordination</i>	.187	.385**	.258**	.319**	.174	.246*	<b>.356**</b>
	(.062)	(.000)	(.009)	(.001)	(.082)	(.013)	<b>(.000)</b>
<i>Rewards and Benefits</i>	-.146	.137	.059	.140	.055	.043	<b>.065</b>
	(.144)	(.171)	(.560)	(.161)	(.587)	(.669)	<b>(.521)</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>.175</b>	<b>.319**</b>	<b>.259**</b>	<b>.414**</b>	<b>.230*</b>	<b>.291**</b>	<b>.391**</b>
	<b>(.080)</b>	<b>(.001)</b>	<b>(.009)</b>	<b>(.000)</b>	<b>(.021)</b>	<b>(.003)</b>	<b>(.000)</b>

\*Significant at 0.05 significance level

#### Legend:

Professional Identity Indicators

KOTP- Knowledge of the Profession

POTP- Philosophy of the Profession

PROE- Professional Roles and Expertise

ATTI- Attitude

ENGA- Engagement Behaviors

INTE- Interaction

Analyzing further, six of organizational environment's indicators showed a significant correlation with professional identity. Internal environment and professional development were significantly

related to librarian's professional identity with both garnering identical scores of .326 r-values and 0.001 probability values. Also, teamwork was significantly connected to professional identity with an r-value of .307

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and p-value of .002. Other indicators found significant to professional identity were facilitations, and participation and coordination, with .274 r-value and .005 p-value, and .356 r-value and .000 probability value, respectively. This implies that the majority of organizational environment's indicators have a significant relationship with professional identity. This means that the higher the organizational environment, the higher the professional identity of the librarian-respondents.

The test of the relationship between variables revealed a significant relationship between organizational environment and professional identity of librarians. The indicators that contributed in the overall positive significant relationship are internal environment, professional development, teamwork, guidance and support, facilitations, and participation and coordination. This implies that a strong presence of a supportive organizational environment cultivates a climate of professional identity enhancement. When an organization has higher-ups that are ready to listen and encourages creative thinking, then librarians are more open to believe that they are supported and appreciated in what they do. It also showed that engagement of professional librarians tend to be higher when they are in an organization where professional development is effectively practiced.

This result is in congruence to the statement of Kristof (1996) wherein it was verified that employees experience more satisfaction, give better work performance, exercise longer job

tenure, and render improved effectiveness, when individual professional identities and organizational environments are compatible. For according to the person-environment fit paradigm, compatibility between individuals and their organization's environment occurs when they share similar fundamental characteristics, and provide one another's needs.

### **Significance on the Influence of the Domains of Organizational Environment on the Professional Identity of Librarians**

Displayed in Table 4 are the regression coefficients to test the significant influence of the overall organizational and  $p < 0.000$  or significant. This means that the organizational environment of librarians significantly influences their professional identity. The  $R^2$  value of 0.251 implies that 25.1 percent of the variability of the dependent variable, professional identity is due to the variability of the independent variable, organizational environment. The indicator, guidance and support have unstandardized coefficient of 0.246, standardized coefficient of 0.462, t-value of 3.298, and p-value of 0.001 or significant.

The analysis of the data shows that among the parameters of the organizational environment of librarians, only guidance and support significantly influence their professional identity. Over-all p-value is less than 0.05 or significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The result of the study showed the overall significant influence of organizational

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environment on the professional identity of librarians. The domain, guidance and support, of organizational environment best influence the professional identity of librarians. This result is consistent with the statement of Farooqi and Akhtar (2014), wherein they stated that guidance and support comes into an organization through the means of communication of every employee to the overall department. Through this, the professional is provided a channel wherein

professional practice is shared hence leading to development and maintenance of professional identity. Also, libraries with a strong practice of guiding and supporting their employees cultivate an environment of positivity that encourages professional identity growth through facilitation of talent development; career advancement; personal support; assistance and feedback; and increased teamwork (Ehrich & Hansford, 1999).

**Table 4. Significance on the Influence of the Domain of Organizational Environment on the Professional Identity of Librarians**

Organizational Environment (Indicators)		Professional Identity			
		<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Internal Environment</i>		.031	.051	.392	.696
<i>Professional Development</i>		.037	.055	.433	.666
<i>Teamwork</i>		-.006	-.010	-.073	.942
<i>Guidance and Support</i>		.246	.462	3.298	.001
<i>Facilitations</i>		-.034	-.049	-.345	.731
<i>Participation and Coordination</i>		.043	.069	.442	.659
<i>Rewards and Benefits</i>		-.067	-.156	-1.538	.128
R	.501				
R <sup>2</sup>	.251				
F	4.462				
P	.000				

Moreover, librarians who experience motivational reappraisal from their supervisors tend to have higher perception of their professional identity. Eickholt (2018) found in her study that positive relationships between career development through guidance and support from mentors and professional identification exist. This indicated evidence of an indirect effect of mentoring functions on a subordinate's

overall professional identity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. These results suggested that a personnel's perception of support is an important factor in enhancing employees' workplace experiences and that organizational leaders may consider fostering workplace environments in which employees are likely to identify with the organization (McKimm, et al., 2007).

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## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With considerations on the results of the study, conclusions are outlined in this section. The data gathered and analyzed demonstrated high levels of organizational environment among librarians as well as very high levels of professional identity. This means that the respondents experience the measures described in organizational environment majority of the times; and in professional identity, the measures described was manifested by the librarians at all times. A significant correlation between organizational environment and professional identity of librarians was also proven; hence, confirming that organizational environment affects the over-all perspective of librarians in regards to their professional identity. In line with this, a domain of organizational environment—guidance and support—was found to significantly influence the professional identity of librarians. This confirms that the connection between professional identity and organizational environment generates a sense of belongingness through which the characteristics and goals of the organization become increasingly integrated or congruent with those of the individual (Laniray, 2014).

The results of this study align with and confirm the proposition of Hartje (2007), which states that the individual's perception of compatibility with the atmosphere and culture of their organizational environment is related and interdependent to the prominence of their professional identity. This shows that the organizational environment affects the over-all perspective

of workers in regards to their identities as a professional. Therefore, employees with high perceptions of their organizational environment feel that they are positively influenced by their work and are further convinced that their professional identity is also growing.

In the light of the aforementioned results, the following recommendations are presented. The over-all high level of organizational environment of librarians is suggestive that most institutions employing professional librarians have proper enough practices. However, measures regarding guidance and support, facilitation, participation and coordination, and rewards and benefits have to be improved. The researcher suggests that organizations develop programs that will cater the fast-changing needs of professional employees such as rewards and benefits—for in this times of fast-paced globalization, rewards and benefit plans have to stay competitive in order to be relevant. In terms of guidance and support, facilitation, and participation and coordination, organizations have to maintain programs that keep employees motivated especially as it is crucial to their over-all well-being and professional identity.

For professional identity of librarians, the high result for the engagement behaviour of librarians indicates a need for improvement. Therefore, enhancement of professional engagement practices in terms of research should be looked into, for this is the field that

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appeared to be lacking in the professional practice of the librarians. It is recommended for libraries to expand their employee research conceptualization efforts in professional seminars, so that librarians will be encouraged to delve in the research field. Lastly, the researcher recommends that further studies on professional identity of

librarians and its effects on their work performance be conducted in the future, for in the study, it demonstrated significance. This might test whether the outputs of teamwork can positively or negatively encourage employees to excel more and be productive in their organizations.

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