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Organizational Inertia, Ambidexterity, and Organizational Climate as Predictors of School Effectiveness in Higher Education Institutions: A Path Analysis

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Index Terms:

ambidexterity, change receptivity, higher education, organizational climate, organizational inertia, path analysis, school effectiveness, tertiary teachers

Abstract. School effectiveness in higher education depends on how institutions respond to change, balance innovation with efficiency, and sustain supportive working environments, yet these conditions are seldom examined together in Philippine tertiary institutions. This study determined the levels of organizational inertia, ambidexterity, organizational climate, and school effectiveness as perceived by tertiary teachers in Kidapawan City, Philippines, tested their relationships, and identified the best-fitting path model among them. A descriptive-correlational design with path analysis was used. Two hundred full-time teachers from public and private higher education institutions, selected through stratified random sampling, answered adapted five-point questionnaires (α = .73–.77). Teachers reported high levels of all four constructs. Change receptivity, the inverse of organizational inertia (r = .335), ambidexterity (r = .311), and organizational climate (r = .448) were positively correlated with school effectiveness (p < .001). Organizational climate (β = .346) and change receptivity (β = .157) were significant unique predictors, whereas ambidexterity was not (β = .092); together, the three variables explained 23.6% of the variance. Among five path models, Model 5, in which ambidexterity partly transmitted the effects of change receptivity and climate, showed the best comparative fit (NFI = .969, CFI = .972), although its RMSEA (.143) indicated inadequate absolute fit. The findings suggest that cultivating an innovation-supportive climate and turning teachers' support for change into active participation may strengthen institutional effectiveness.

Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are expected to produce graduates who can meet the demands of a changing society while maintaining quality in instruction, research, and service. In the Philippines, this expectation is formalized through quality-assurance policies that ask HEIs to demonstrate outcomes rather than inputs alone (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2012). Educational effectiveness research has long sought to identify the school-level conditions that distinguish institutions that achieve their goals from those that do not, and it has moved from lists of correlates toward models that treat effectiveness as the product of interacting organizational processes (Reynolds et al., 2014). Much of this work, however, has been conducted in basic education and in Western or East Asian systems, and less is known about the organizational conditions that teachers in provincial Philippine HEIs associate with an effective institution.

This gap matters because Philippine higher education is highly diverse. Public state universities and local colleges operate alongside a large private sector, and institutions outside the major metropolitan centers often work with more limited resources while facing the same regulatory expectations. Outcomes-based quality assurance requires these institutions to adapt curricula, teaching practices, and support systems continually (CHED, 2012). How well they do so depends not only on policy and resources but also on the organizational conditions that shape how faculty respond to change and pursue improvement. Local research in Cotabato has called for context-sensitive instructional materials and supportive, low-pressure learning environments in higher education (Osumo, 2024; Villaver et al., 2026), and has shown that proper communication channels and transparent, accountable leadership shape whether community stakeholders engage with

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local programs and policies (Osumo et al., 2025). Three organizational conditions are especially relevant to this adaptive work: organizational inertia, organizational ambidexterity, and organizational climate. This article first reviews these conditions and the theories that link them to school effectiveness, then describes the methods used, presents the results for each objective, discusses their meaning, and closes with conclusions and implications.

Research Problem

Although organizational inertia, ambidexterity, and climate have each been linked to organizational outcomes, they have rarely been examined together, and the ways in which they might relate to one another in predicting effectiveness have not been tested in Philippine HEIs. It is plausible, for instance, that teachers' receptivity to change and the climate of their institution influence effectiveness partly through the institution's capacity for ambidexterity. Without evidence on these relationships, administrators of provincial HEIs have little guidance on which conditions to prioritize when seeking to improve effectiveness. The study therefore addressed the following questions: What are the levels of organizational inertia, ambidexterity, organizational climate, and school effectiveness as perceived by tertiary teachers? Which of these conditions are related to, and uniquely predict, school effectiveness? Which structural arrangement of their relationships best fits the data?

Organizational Inertia and Change Receptivity

Organizational inertia is the tendency of organizations to persist in established structures and routines even when their environments demand change (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). At the level of individual members, inertia is visible as low readiness, openness, and commitment to change. Resource dependence theory adds that organizations embedded in demanding external environments must adapt to secure the resources on which they depend (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978); HEIs that resist change risk losing legitimacy, students, and support. Research on organizational change has also shown that inertia and change resistance are related to whether organizations learn and unlearn (Woelders, 2020). In this study, inertia was measured through teachers' readiness, openness, and commitment to change, so that higher scores represent greater change receptivity, that is, lower inertia.

Organizational Ambidexterity

Organizational ambidexterity is the capacity to pursue exploration, or the search for new knowledge and practices, and exploitation, or the refinement of existing competencies, at the same time (March, 1991; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013). Ambidexterity has been linked to performance across many sectors, and it has more recently been studied in education. A nationwide study of German principals found that school leaders differ in how they balance exploitation and exploration and that this balance matters for how schools respond to reform (Pietsch et al., 2022). Organizational conditions that foster ambidexterity include adaptability, tolerance of ambiguity, supportive and connected structures, and shared goals (Chang & Hughes, 2012).

Organizational Climate

Organizational climate refers to members' shared perceptions of the policies, practices, and behaviors that their organization rewards and supports (Schneider et al., 2013). In schools, climate encompasses relationships, teaching and learning, safety, and the institutional environment, and reviews have consistently linked a positive climate to teacher and student outcomes (Thapa et al., 2013). A climate that supports innovation, characterized by shared values, supportive leader behaviors, trusting relationships, and dedicated resources for new ideas, is increasingly seen as essential for educational institutions (Danks et al., 2017).

School Effectiveness

Frederick (1987) proposed that school effectiveness should be assessed through qualitative as well as quantitative indicators, and identified strong administrative leadership, an orderly and safe environment, emphasis on quality instruction, and systematic evaluation of performance as characteristics of effective schools. Contemporary reviews of educational effectiveness research add that effectiveness is dynamic and multilevel, that school-level conditions typically explain a modest but meaningful share of differences in outcomes, and that their influence often operates indirectly through teachers' professional learning and classroom practice (Reynolds et al., 2014). These insights are relevant to HEIs, where faculty enjoy greater autonomy than basic-education teachers and where institutional effectiveness depends heavily on how faculty members perceive and engage with the organization. Teachers' perceptions of their institution are therefore a legitimate, though partial, window on effectiveness.

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Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study was to determine which organizational conditions predict school effectiveness in HEIs in Kidapawan City, Philippines, and how these conditions relate to one another. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. describe the levels of organizational inertia, ambidexterity, organizational climate, and school effectiveness as perceived by tertiary teachers;

2. determine the relationship of organizational inertia, ambidexterity, and organizational climate with school effectiveness;

3. identify which of the three organizational conditions significantly predict school effectiveness; and

4. evaluate which of five hypothesized path models best fits the relationships among the variables.

Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that the respondents answered the questionnaire honestly and on the basis of their actual experience in their institutions; that the adapted instrument, after expert validation and reliability testing, measured the four constructs adequately; that teachers' perceptions provide a meaningful indicator of the organizational conditions of their institutions; and that the relationships among the variables are approximately linear, as required by correlation, regression, and path analysis.

Conceptual Framework

The study draws on three complementary theories. Resource dependence theory holds that organizations depend on their environments for critical resources and must adapt to environmental demands in order to survive (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Organizations that fail to adapt, whether because of entrenched routines or because members resist change, fall out of alignment with their environments and lose effectiveness (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). For HEIs, the relevant environment includes government regulators and accrediting bodies, students and their families, and employers, and faculty readiness, openness, and commitment to change are the individual-level manifestations of an institution's capacity to adapt. Hence, the first hypothesis (H1) was that change receptivity, the inverse of organizational inertia, is positively related to school effectiveness.

Organizational ambidexterity theory, grounded in March's (1991) distinction between exploration and exploitation, proposes that organizations perform best when they can refine existing competencies while also searching for new ones. Over-emphasis on exploitation traps organizations in obsolete practices, whereas over-emphasis on exploration produces costly experimentation without the benefits of mastery (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013). Schools and universities face this tension in balancing established curricula and teaching routines with pressures to innovate (Pietsch et al., 2022), and contextual ambidexterity depends on conditions such as adaptability, connectedness, and shared goals (Chang & Hughes, 2012). Hence, the second hypothesis (H2) was that ambidexterity is positively related to school effectiveness.

Social learning theory proposes that people acquire behaviors and norms by observing and modeling others and by attending to the consequences that follow those behaviors (Bandura, 1977). In organizations, climate is the shared perception of which behaviors are expected, supported, and rewarded (Schneider et al., 2013). A climate that values innovation, in which leaders coach and give feedback, colleagues collaborate, and resources are made available for new ideas, signals to teachers that effective and innovative practices are expected and provides models for them to follow (Danks et al., 2017). Hence, the third hypothesis (H3) was that organizational climate is positively related to school effectiveness.

Finally, the three conditions are not expected to be independent. Faculty who are receptive to change and who work in a climate that supports innovation are more likely to engage in both exploration and exploitation, suggesting that ambidexterity may transmit part of the influence of change receptivity and climate on school effectiveness. Because theory does not fully specify the structure of these relationships, five alternative path models were compared (Figure No. 1). The fourth hypothesis (H4) was that the three conditions jointly predict school effectiveness and that at least one of the hypothesized path models fits the data adequately.

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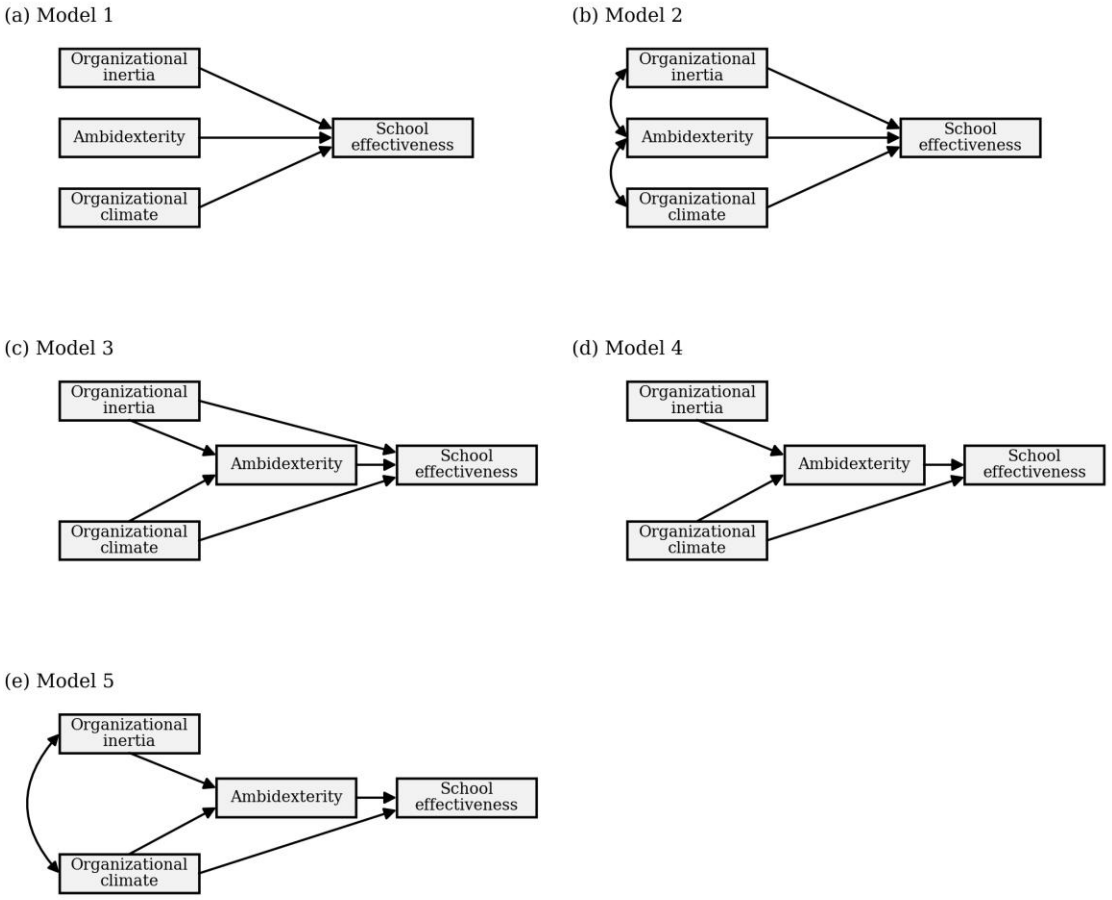

Figure No. 1. Hypothesized Path Models of School Effectiveness

Model 1 specified direct effects of the three exogenous variables on school effectiveness. Model 2 added covariances between organizational inertia and ambidexterity and between ambidexterity and organizational climate. Model 3 specified ambidexterity as an intervening variable, with organizational inertia and organizational climate predicting ambidexterity and all three variables predicting school effectiveness. Model 4 removed the direct path from organizational inertia to school effectiveness. Model 5 retained the structure of Model 4 and added a covariance between organizational inertia and organizational climate.

Methodology

This section describes the research design, locale, participants, instruments, data gathering procedure, data analysis, and ethical considerations of the study.

Research Design

The study used a quantitative, non-experimental descriptive-correlational design. A descriptive-correlational design fits the objectives because the study sought to describe the levels of naturally occurring organizational conditions and to examine how they relate to one another, without manipulating any variable. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the levels of the four constructs; Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression were used to examine relationships and identify significant predictors; and path analysis was used to compare five hypothesized models of the relationships among the variables. The three exogenous variables were organizational inertia, ambidexterity, and organizational climate, and the endogenous variable was school effectiveness. The main strength of the design is that it allows several competing structural explanations to be compared with the same data; its main limitation is that, being cross-sectional, it cannot establish the direction of causal influence.

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Research Locale

The study was conducted in public and private tertiary institutions in Kidapawan City, the capital of Cotabato province in Region XII, Mindanao, Philippines. Kidapawan City is a component city and provincial capital at the foot of Mount Apo, serving as the educational and commercial center for surrounding agricultural municipalities. Its tertiary institutions draw students from across the province and neighboring areas, and they include both publicly funded and privately owned colleges and universities that operate under the same national quality-assurance framework (CHED, 2012). The city was chosen because it concentrates the tertiary institutions of the province in one setting in which public and private HEIs face the same regulatory expectations.

Participants

The respondents were 200 full-time tertiary teachers from the participating institutions. Stratified random sampling with proportional allocation was used so that each participating institution was represented in proportion to the size of its teaching staff. Only full-time faculty members were included; part-time and visiting teachers were excluded because their involvement in institutional processes is more limited. A sample of 200 is adequate for path models with the small number of free parameters specified here (MacCallum et al., 1996).

Research Instruments

Data were collected with an adapted survey questionnaire consisting of four sections with a total of 120 items, each rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The first section measured organizational inertia through 24 items on readiness to change, openness to change, and commitment to change (eight items each), adapted from Woelders (2020). All items were worded in the direction of change receptivity (e.g., "I would consider myself open to changes"). Higher scores therefore indicate greater receptivity to change, that is, lower organizational inertia; for clarity, this variable is labeled *change receptivity* when results are interpreted. The second section measured ambidexterity through 32 items on adaptability and tolerance, formalization and connectedness, devotion and supportiveness, and goals and effort, adapted from Chang and Hughes (2012). The third section measured organizational climate through 32 items on values, behaviors, relationships, and resources, adapted from the Innovation Quotient instrument (Danks et al., 2017); the scale thus captures a climate supportive of innovation. The fourth section measured school effectiveness through 32 items on strong administrative leadership, orderly and safe environment, quality instruction, and performance evaluation, based on the dimensions described by Frederick (1987). Sample items include "I am willing to put energy into the process of change" (readiness to change), "I address the issues in the organization creatively, instead of narrowly defining tasks" (goals and effort), "I have leaders who devote time to coach and provide feedback in our innovation efforts" (behaviors), and "I have administrators who demonstrate knowledge about the process of school improvement" (strong administrative leadership). The adapted questionnaire was reviewed and validated by experts in educational management and research before administration. Internal-consistency reliability was acceptable for all four scales: organizational inertia, $\alpha = .77$; ambidexterity, $\alpha = .75$; organizational climate, $\alpha = .73$; and school effectiveness, $\alpha = .76$. Scale scores were computed as the mean of the items for each indicator and for each variable, and mean scores were interpreted as very high (4.45–5.00), high (3.45–4.44), moderate (2.45–3.44), low (1.45–2.44), and very low (1.00–1.44).

Data Gathering Procedure

After the instrument was validated, the researcher obtained the approval of the dean of the graduate school and sent letters requesting permission to conduct the study to the presidents of the tertiary institutions in Kidapawan City. Upon approval, schedules were arranged with department heads so that data collection would not disrupt classes, and the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents and retrieved them upon completion.

Data Analysis

Means and standard deviations were used to describe the levels of the four constructs (Objective 1). Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the relationship of each organizational condition with school effectiveness (Objective 2). Multiple linear regression with simultaneous entry was used to identify significant predictors of school effectiveness (Objective 3). The level of significance was set at .05. For the path analysis (Objective 4), the five hypothesized path models were estimated using maximum likelihood, and their fit was evaluated using the normed fit index (NFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the test of close fit (PCLOSE). Following common guidelines, good fit was indicated by NFI, CFI, and GFI of .95 or higher, RMSEA of .06 or lower, and PCLOSE above .05; RMSEA values above .10 indicate poor fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; MacCallum et al., 1996). Indirect effects were computed as the product of their constituent standardized paths. Descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses were conducted in IBM SPSS Statistics, and path analysis in IBM SPSS Amos. Regression and path

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analysis were used as complementary procedures. Multiple regression estimates the unique contribution of each predictor while holding the others constant, which answers the question of which conditions matter independently. Path analysis extends this by testing whether alternative structural arrangements of the same variables, such as models in which ambidexterity transmits the effects of the other two variables, are consistent with the observed pattern of correlations. Because all variables were measured as observed composite scores, path analysis rather than full latent-variable modeling was used.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the Graduate School Program of Central Mindanao Colleges. Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the dean of the graduate school and from the heads of the participating institutions. Participation was voluntary. Before answering the questionnaire, respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their right to decline or to withdraw at any time without consequence, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. No names or other identifying information were collected on the questionnaire, and results are reported only in aggregate so that neither individual respondents nor individual institutions can be identified. Completed questionnaires were kept secure and accessible only to the researcher. Data gathering was scheduled at the respondents' convenience to minimize disruption to their work, and respondents received a token of appreciation for their time. The study posed no more than minimal risk to participants.

Results

The results are presented in the order of the four objectives of the study.

Results for Objective 1: Levels of the Organizational Conditions and School Effectiveness

Table No. 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the four constructs and their indicators. Teachers rated all four constructs at a high level, with overall means ranging from 4.35 to 4.42. Across all four constructs, standard deviations were small (.153–.293), indicating that responses were concentrated near the upper end of the scale.

Variable and Indicator	M	SD	Interpretation
Organizational inertia (change receptivity)	**4.42**	**.176**	**High**
Readiness to change	4.48	.252	Very high
Openness to change	4.41	.261	High
Commitment to change	4.38	.255	High
Ambidexterity	**4.35**	**.188**	**High**
Adaptability and tolerance	4.40	.293	High
Formalization and connectedness	4.34	.291	High
Devotion and supportiveness	4.29	.250	High
Goals and effort	4.38	.239	High
Organizational climate	**4.36**	**.181**	**High**
Values	4.30	.237	High
Behaviors	4.37	.269	High
Relationships	4.40	.273	High
Resources	4.38	.245	High
School effectiveness	**4.39**	**.153**	**High**
Strong administrative leadership	4.37	.250	High
Orderly and safe environment	4.37	.226	High
Quality instruction	4.40	.242	High
Performance evaluation	4.44	.230	High

Note. Scale: 4.45–5.00, very high; 3.45–4.44, high; 2.45–3.44, moderate; 1.45–2.44, low; 1.00–1.44, very low. For organizational inertia, higher scores indicate greater change receptivity (lower inertia). Source: Primary survey data.

Table No. 1. Levels of Organizational Inertia, Ambidexterity, Organizational Climate, and School Effectiveness (N = 200)

For organizational inertia, readiness to change received the highest indicator mean (M = 4.48, very high), followed by openness to change (M = 4.41) and commitment to change (M = 4.38). At the item level, teachers most strongly agreed that

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management was right to introduce change (M = 4.56) and that most changes would have a positive effect on the clients they serve (M = 4.55), and least strongly agreed that they were personally responsible for making changes in their workplace (M = 4.15). Within readiness to change, all eight items were rated high or very high (4.43–4.55). Within openness to change, the highest-rated item was teachers' view of themselves as open to changes (M = 4.45) and the lowest was looking forward to changes in their own work role (M = 4.27).

For ambidexterity, adaptability and tolerance obtained the highest mean (M = 4.40), and devotion and supportiveness the lowest (M = 4.29). The lowest-rated item in the entire ambidexterity scale was the statement that the school pushes decisions down to the lowest appropriate level (M = 4.11). Within adaptability and tolerance, teachers most strongly agreed on the importance of being sensitive to the activities of competing institutions (M = 4.51) and least strongly that they were satisfied with the innovations the school had implemented (M = 4.29).

For organizational climate, relationships received the highest mean (M = 4.40) and values the lowest (M = 4.30); within values, the lowest-rated item concerned a strong desire to explore opportunities and create new things (M = 4.21). Within relationships and resources, the highest-rated items concerned taking responsibility for one's own actions and giving people dedicated time to pursue new opportunities (both M = 4.50), whereas the lowest concerned working well together in teams to capture opportunities (M = 4.30) and having the internal talent to succeed (M = 4.29).

For school effectiveness, performance evaluation obtained the highest mean (M = 4.44), and strong administrative leadership and orderly and safe environment the lowest (both M = 4.37). The highest-rated items were teaching with a written curriculum for each subject (M = 4.55), helping students master skills and concepts (M = 4.54), and having administrators who understand the process of school improvement (M = 4.51). The lowest-rated items concerned supervisors having plans for staff development activities (M = 4.24), working in clean and well-maintained buildings (M = 4.29), and clearly communicating performance expectations to parents and students (M = 4.33).

Results for Objective 2: Relationships Between the Organizational Conditions and School Effectiveness

Table No. 2 presents the correlations between each organizational condition and school effectiveness. All three were positively and significantly correlated with school effectiveness. The association was moderate for organizational climate and weak-to-moderate for change receptivity and ambidexterity. In terms of shared variance, organizational climate alone accounted for about 20% of the variance in school effectiveness (r^2 = .20), change receptivity for about 11%, and ambidexterity for about 10%. The three predictors were also moderately intercorrelated (r = .40 to .45). H1, H2, and H3 were therefore supported at the bivariate level.

Variable Pair	r	p	Interpretation
Organizational inertia (change receptivity) and school effectiveness	.335	< .001	Significant, weak-to-moderate
Ambidexterity and school effectiveness	.311	< .001	Significant, weak-to-moderate
Organizational climate and school effectiveness	.448	< .001	Significant, moderate

Note. Two-tailed tests. Correlations among the predictors: change receptivity and ambidexterity, r = .45; change receptivity and organizational climate, r = .40; ambidexterity and organizational climate, r = .43 (all p < .001). The correlation between change receptivity and climate is from the Model 5 output; the correlations of ambidexterity with the other two predictors are reproduced from the Model 5 standardized estimates, which fit that part of the model exactly. Source: Primary survey data.

Table No. 2. Correlations Between the Organizational Conditions and School Effectiveness (N = 200)

Results for Objective 3: Predictors of School Effectiveness

Table No. 3 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis. The model was statistically significant and explained 23.6% of the variance in school effectiveness, R = .486, R^2 = .236. Organizational climate was the strongest predictor (B = 0.293, β = .346, p < .001), followed by change receptivity (B = 0.136, β = .157, p = .008). Ambidexterity was not a significant unique predictor when the other two variables were held constant (B = 0.074, β = .092, p = .126). A one-point increase on the five-point climate scale was associated with an increase of about 0.29 points in school effectiveness, holding the other predictors constant, and a one-point increase in change receptivity with an increase of about 0.14 points. Because the combined model explained 23.6% of the variance, considerably less than the sum of the separate r^2 values, the three predictors share a substantial portion of the variance they explain. The first part of H4, that the three conditions jointly predict school effectiveness, was supported.

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Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
(Constant)	2.195	0.240		9.155	< .001
Organizational inertia (change receptivity)	0.136	0.051	.157	2.670	.008
Ambidexterity	0.074	0.049	.092	1.535	.126
Organizational climate	0.293	0.049	.346	5.937	< .001

Note. $R = .486$, $R^2 = .236$, $p < .001$. Source: Primary survey data.

Table No. 3. Multiple Regression of School Effectiveness on Organizational Inertia, Ambidexterity, and Organizational Climate (N = 200)

Results for Objective 4: Comparison of the Hypothesized Path Models

Table No. 4 summarizes the fit of the five hypothesized models. Models 1 to 4 fit the data poorly on every index. Model 1, which specified only direct effects and no covariances among the exogenous variables, explained 17% of the variance in school effectiveness but had the weakest fit (NFI = .352, CFI = .348, RMSEA = .402). Models 2 and 3 produced identical fit statistics (CFI = .772, RMSEA = .412). This is expected rather than an error: each model constrains only the covariance between organizational inertia and organizational climate to zero and leaves all other relationships free, so the two models are statistically equivalent. Model 4, which routed the effect of organizational inertia entirely through ambidexterity but still assumed that inertia and climate were uncorrelated, also fit poorly (CFI = .745, RMSEA = .308).

Model 5, which added the covariance between organizational inertia and organizational climate to Model 4, produced a marked improvement. It met the criteria for the NFI (.969), CFI (.972), and GFI (.962). However, its RMSEA (.143) exceeded the .10 threshold for poor fit, and the test of close fit was significant (PCLOSE = .036). Model 5 was therefore the best-fitting of the five hypothesized models, but it did not achieve adequate absolute fit.

Model	NFI	CFI	GFI	RMSEA	PCLOSE
Model 1	.352	.348	.357	.402	< .001
Model 2	.774	.772	.777	.412	< .001
Model 3	.774	.772	.777	.412	< .001
Model 4	.743	.745	.248	.308	< .001
Model 5	.969	.972	.962	.143	.036
Criterion	≥ .95	≥ .95	≥ .95	≤ .06	> .05

Note. NFI = normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; GFI = goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; PCLOSE = p-value for the test of close fit. Criteria follow Hu and Bentler (1999) and MacCallum et al. (1996). Source: Primary survey data.

Table No. 4. Fit Indices of the Five Hypothesized Path Models

Figure No. 2 presents the standardized estimates of Model 5.

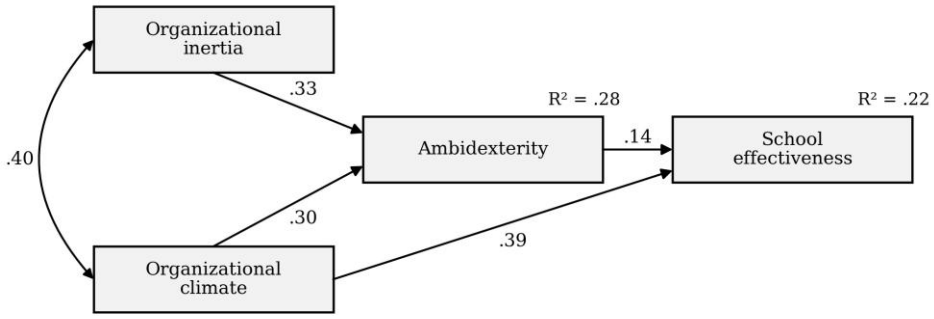

Figure No. 2. Standardized Estimates of Model 5, the Best-Fitting Hypothesized Model

Organizational inertia (β = .33) and organizational climate (β = .30) predicted ambidexterity and together explained 28% of its variance. Ambidexterity (β = .14) and organizational climate (β = .39) predicted school effectiveness, and the model explained 22% of the variance in school effectiveness. Organizational inertia, scored in the direction of change receptivity, and organizational climate were positively correlated (r = .40).

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Table No. 5 decomposes the standardized effects on school effectiveness. Because Model 5 contains no direct path from organizational inertia to school effectiveness, the entire effect of inertia is indirect, through ambidexterity, and equals the product of its two paths (.33 × .14 = .046). Organizational climate had both a direct effect (.39) and a small indirect effect through ambidexterity (.30 × .14 = .042), for a total effect of .43. Organizational climate thus had by far the largest total effect on school effectiveness, followed by ambidexterity (.14) and organizational inertia (.05).

Variable	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Organizational inertia (change receptivity)	—	.046	.046
Ambidexterity	.14	—	.14
Organizational climate	.39	.042	.432

Note. Indirect effects pass through ambidexterity and are the product of the two standardized paths. All direct paths were significant at p < .05. Source: Primary survey data.

Table No. 5. Standardized Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects on School Effectiveness in Model 5

Discussion

The discussion interprets the results for each objective, compares them with previous studies, and notes the limitations of the study.

High Self-Reported Levels and What They Mean

Teachers in Kidapawan City HEIs rated their institutions highly on all four constructs (Objective 1). Taken at face value, these results describe faculties that are receptive to change, work in institutions with the structural conditions for ambidexterity, perceive a climate that supports innovation, and regard their schools as effective. This profile is consistent with the emphasis of Philippine quality-assurance policy on continuous improvement (CHED, 2012) and with evidence from Cotabato HEIs that supportive, culturally responsive learning environments are valued in higher education (Villaver et al., 2026).

The item-level results, however, point to specific areas of relative weakness. Teachers agreed more strongly that change is beneficial and that management is right to introduce it than that they are personally responsible for making it happen. This gap between endorsing change and owning it suggests that teachers may value a change without feeling that its implementation is theirs to lead. Similarly, the lowest-rated ambidexterity item indicated that decisions are not consistently delegated, which suggests that decision-making remains relatively centralized, and the lowest-rated effectiveness item concerned supervisors' plans for staff development. Both findings suggest that faculty participation in decisions and structured professional development are areas where HEIs could strengthen the conditions for improvement.

The item-level contrasts are informative even within a compressed range. Teachers rated highly the aspects of effectiveness that fall within their own control, such as following a written curriculum and helping students achieve mastery, and rated lower the aspects that depend on institutional systems, such as staff-development planning, facilities maintenance, and communication with parents. A similar pattern appeared in climate: teachers rated their personal accountability highly but rated teamwork and the institution's internal talent lower. These contrasts suggest that the institutions' strengths lie in individual professional commitment, while opportunities for improvement lie in collective structures and institutional support, a distinction that aligns with the emphasis of effectiveness research on the school-level conditions that enable teachers' work (Reynolds et al., 2014).

The uniformly high means and small standard deviations also call for caution. Responses clustered near the top of the scale, which limits the variance available for detecting relationships and may reflect socially desirable responding, since teachers were rating their own institutions and, in part, themselves (Podsakoff et al., 2012). The high levels should therefore be read as teachers' favorable perceptions rather than as objective evidence of institutional performance.

Change Receptivity and School Effectiveness

Change receptivity was positively related to school effectiveness and remained a significant unique predictor after climate and ambidexterity were controlled (Objectives 2 and 3), supporting H1. Because the inertia scale was scored in the direction of readiness, openness, and commitment to change, this result means that teachers who were more receptive to change, that is, who reported lower inertia, also perceived their institutions as more effective. This direction is consistent with the theoretical expectation that inertia impedes adaptation (Hannan & Freeman, 1984) and with evidence that inertia and

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resistance to change hinder organizational learning (Woelders, 2020). From the perspective of resource dependence theory, HEIs that respond to external demands, including accreditation requirements, curricular reforms, and shifting student needs, are better positioned to secure the resources and legitimacy on which they depend (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

The modest size of this effect (β = .157) suggests that change receptivity is a contributing rather than a dominant condition. Its practical significance may lie in the gap noted above between endorsing change and owning it: institutions that convert teachers' general support for change into active participation in planning and implementing it are likely to benefit most. Had the scale measured resistance to change directly, higher scores would be expected to relate negatively to effectiveness. The positive coefficient observed here is fully consistent with inertia theory once the direction of measurement is taken into account: the less inert the faculty, the more effective they judge their institution to be.

Ambidexterity and School Effectiveness

Ambidexterity was positively correlated with school effectiveness, supporting H2 at the bivariate level, but it did not predict effectiveness once climate and change receptivity were taken into account. This pattern indicates that the variance ambidexterity shares with effectiveness overlaps substantially with the variance explained by the other two conditions. Two explanations are plausible. First, the instrument adapted from Chang and Hughes (2012) measures organizational antecedents of ambidexterity, such as adaptability, supportive structures, and shared goals, rather than the balance of exploration and exploitation itself. These antecedents overlap conceptually with a climate that supports innovation, which may explain why climate absorbed much of their predictive power. Second, research on ambidexterity in education suggests that its effects may operate mainly through how school leaders structure exploratory and exploitative work (Pietsch et al., 2022), which a teacher-level perception scale may not fully capture.

The non-significant unique effect should not be read as evidence that ambidexterity is unimportant. Its bivariate correlation with effectiveness was comparable in size to that of change receptivity, and in organizations where climate is already favorable, the conditions for ambidexterity may be present largely because of that climate. This suggests that efforts to build ambidexterity in HEIs may be most productive when they are embedded in broader efforts to build a supportive, innovation-oriented climate rather than pursued as a separate initiative.

Organizational Climate as the Strongest Predictor

Organizational climate was the strongest correlate and predictor of school effectiveness, supporting H3. This finding is consistent with reviews that link a positive school climate to a wide range of teacher and student outcomes (Thapa et al., 2013). Because the climate scale was drawn from an instrument measuring a culture of innovation (Danks et al., 2017), the result specifically underscores the importance of shared values, supportive leader behaviors, trusting relationships, and dedicated resources for new ideas. Social learning theory helps explain why such a climate matters: teachers model the practices they observe being encouraged and rewarded around them, so an institution that visibly supports experimentation and collaboration is likely to see those practices spread (Bandura, 1977; Schneider et al., 2013).

The magnitude of the climate effect is also worth noting. Together, the three predictors explained about one quarter of the variance in school effectiveness. This is a substantial share for perceptual organizational variables, and it is consistent with the conclusion of educational effectiveness research that school-level conditions explain a meaningful but limited part of differences in effectiveness (Reynolds et al., 2014). The remaining three quarters of the variance point to factors not included in the model, such as leadership practices, faculty qualifications and workload, student characteristics, and institutional resources. Climate, however, is among the conditions most directly within the control of institutional leaders, which strengthens its practical importance.

The Structure of the Relationships

The path analysis (Objective 4) clarifies how the three conditions may work together. The dramatic improvement from Model 4 to Model 5 shows that organizational inertia and organizational climate cannot be treated as independent: teachers who perceive a supportive, innovation-oriented climate are also more receptive to change (r = .40). Any adequate model of these data must allow for that relationship.

Model 5 suggests that change receptivity and climate each foster the conditions for ambidexterity, which in turn contributes to school effectiveness. This structure is theoretically coherent and consistent with the view that ambidexterity arises from organizational context (Chang & Hughes, 2012; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013). The indirect effects that pass through ambidexterity, however, are small (about .04–.05), because the path from ambidexterity to school effectiveness is modest.

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Organizational climate influences effectiveness mainly directly, and its total effect (.43) is roughly three times that of ambidexterity.

The limited absolute fit of Model 5 is also informative. Model 5 omits a direct path from change receptivity to school effectiveness, yet the regression analysis found that change receptivity was a significant unique predictor ($\beta = .157$, $p = .008$). The elevated RMSEA is consistent with this omission: part of the relationship between change receptivity and effectiveness does not pass through ambidexterity. Adding that direct path would produce a saturated model equivalent to the regression, which fits perfectly by definition but cannot be tested. The most defensible reading is therefore that change receptivity influences school effectiveness both directly and, to a small degree, through ambidexterity, and that organizational climate is the dominant and most direct of the three conditions. H4 was thus only partially supported: the three conditions jointly predicted effectiveness, but none of the hypothesized path models achieved adequate absolute fit. Because models that reverse or rearrange paths can fit cross-sectional data equally well, this structure should be tested further with longitudinal data.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional, correlational design does not permit causal conclusions; the path models describe patterns of association consistent with, but not proof of, the hypothesized directions of influence. Second, all constructs were measured through teachers' self-reports on a single questionnaire, which raises the possibility of common method bias and socially desirable responding (Podsakoff et al., 2012); the high means and small standard deviations are consistent with such effects and may have attenuated the observed relationships. Third, the sample was limited to 200 teachers in one city, and institutional differences were not modeled, so the findings may not generalize to HEIs in other regions or to institutions with different governance structures. Fourth, the organizational inertia scale measured change receptivity rather than inertia directly, the ambidexterity scale measured antecedents rather than the balance of exploration and exploitation, and the climate scale focused specifically on a climate for innovation. Fifth, school effectiveness was measured through teachers' perceptions rather than objective performance data. Sixth, the best-fitting path model did not achieve adequate absolute fit, and the indirect effects were estimated as products of standardized paths without resampling tests of their significance.

Future research could include institutional performance indicators, such as licensure examination results or accreditation levels, and use longitudinal or multilevel designs that account for teachers nested within institutions. Measures that capture exploration and exploitation directly would clarify the role of ambidexterity, and the inertia construct would benefit from a scale that measures inertia directly rather than inversely through change receptivity. Qualitative or mixed-methods designs, such as interviews with faculty and administrators, could explain why teachers endorse change more readily than they take ownership of it. Replication in other Mindanao provinces and in other regions of the Philippines would show whether the prominence of organizational climate is specific to this setting or a more general feature of Philippine higher education.

Conclusion and Implications

Tertiary teachers in Kidapawan City perceive their institutions as highly effective and as having high levels of change receptivity, ambidexterity, and an innovation-supportive climate. Organizational climate and change receptivity were significant unique predictors of school effectiveness and, together with ambidexterity, explained about one quarter of its variance, whereas ambidexterity contributed no unique prediction once the other two were considered. Of five hypothesized path models, the model in which change receptivity and climate covaried and ambidexterity partly transmitted their effects fitted best, but its absolute fit was inadequate, and change receptivity also appeared to influence effectiveness directly. Returning to the research problem, the results indicate that administrators of provincial HEIs who wish to improve effectiveness should give first priority to the climate in which their faculty work.

Theoretical Implications

The findings offer qualified support for each of the three theories that framed the study and suggest how they might be integrated. Resource dependence theory is supported to the extent that faculty receptivity to change, the individual-level foundation of institutional adaptation, contributes uniquely to perceived effectiveness (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Social learning theory receives the strongest support, since the climate in which teachers observe, model, and are rewarded for particular practices was the most powerful predictor (Bandura, 1977). Ambidexterity theory receives the weakest support in its present operationalization, but the pattern of results is consistent with the view that ambidexterity is itself a product of organizational context rather than a separate driver (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013). An integrated interpretation would place climate and change receptivity as foundational conditions that shape both the institution's capacity for ambidexterity and its effectiveness, a framework that can be tested in future research in Philippine HEIs.

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Practical Implications

Because climate was the strongest predictor, investments in trust, collaboration, regular coaching and feedback from academic leaders, and protected time and resources for innovation are likely to yield the greatest returns. Administrators could close the gap between teachers' endorsement of change and their ownership of it by involving faculty in decisions and by delegating decisions to the lowest appropriate level, which was the weakest ambidexterity item. Clear, two-way communication about the purpose of change also matters; research in Cotabato has shown that proper communication channels and transparent, accountable leadership encourage stakeholder engagement with local programs (Osumo et al., 2025). The relatively low rating of supervisors' staff-development plans suggests a need for structured, context-sensitive faculty development, an approach supported by recent local research on grassroots instructional design and contextualized teaching materials in HEIs (Osumo, 2024; Villaver et al., 2026). Because institutions in the same city operate under the same quality-assurance expectations (CHED, 2012), sharing practices across public and private HEIs, for example through joint faculty development or benchmarking, could help institutions learn from one another's approaches to innovation. Finally, because teachers rated institution-level supports, such as facilities maintenance and communication with parents, lower than their own professional practices, modest improvements in these supports may yield visible gains in how faculty perceive the effectiveness of their institution.

Methodological Implications

The comparison of five path models showed that conclusions about how organizational conditions relate to effectiveness depend strongly on whether the covariance between exogenous variables is modeled. Future studies of school effectiveness should therefore compare alternative structural models rather than test a single model, report absolute as well as comparative fit, and use direct measures of each construct, multiple data sources, and designs that account for teachers nested within institutions.

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Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are not publicly available because they contain information from identifiable institutions, but they are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Appendices

No appendices are included in this article.

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