
The Inter-Organizational Collaborative Capacity of National Government Agencies as Influenced by Internal Communication, Organizational Trust and Political Skills Of Unit Heads in Region XII: A Multivariate Modeling Approach

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Abstract— This study examined the determinants of inter-organizational collaborative capacity of National Government Agencies (NGAs) in Region XII and investigated how internal communication, organizational trust, and the political skills of unit heads shape this capacity. Grounded in collaborative governance theory, the research employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design using multiple regression through a structural equation modelling approach by means of total enumeration of respondents from unit heads of five (5) national government agencies. Findings demonstrated that all variables, interorganizational collaborative capacity, internal communication, organizational trust and political skills were perceived at very high levels. The exogenous variables, Internal Communication, Organizational Trust, and Political Skills positively associated with the endogenous variable, Inter-organizational Collaborative Capacity. Among these, Organizational Trust emerged as the strongest predictor, showing significant and stable effects across all models. Model 3, based on fit indices, underscored the major influence of Organizational Trust on Collaborative Capacity. The study highlighted the importance of cultivating transparent communication systems, trust-building mechanisms, and politically skilled leadership within NGAs to strengthen collaborative governance in Region XII. This research advocates for competency-based leadership development, inclusive organizational

practices, and sustainable governance mechanisms in improving public service delivery and strengthening citizens' trust and confidence in government institutions.

Keywords: Inter-organizational Collaborative Capacity, Internal Communication, Organizational Trust, Political Skills, Multivariate Approach, Public Administration, National government agencies, Region XII

I. INTRODUCTION

The collaborative governance mechanisms in the Philippines are undermined by communication gaps, organizational silos, a lack of stakeholder trust, and weak capacity for sustained collaboration (Amil, 2024). These weaknesses limit the effectiveness of joint programs in health, poverty reduction, disaster risk reduction, education, and social protection, which are considered core areas for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Despite the Philippines' commitment to the SDGs, the delivery of social services remains hindered by fragmented mandates, inadequate information sharing, overlapping responsibilities, and inconsistent collaborative frameworks.

The growing complexity of societal challenges underscores the critical role of inter-organizational collaboration among government agencies. As problems become more interconnected, unit heads and government leaders must move beyond organizational boundaries to address issues requiring shared resources, expertise, and strategic goals. This situation relates to inter-organizational collaborative capacity, defined as the ability of organizational leaders to coordinate their work with others to achieve mutually agreed-upon goals (Bryson et al., 2020). In government organizations, collaborative capacity is especially important in addressing complex governance concerns. According to Manasan (2020), the absence of a consistent framework for collaboration in the Philippines has resulted in inefficiencies, duplication of resources, and delays in policy implementation. Thus, strengthening inter-organizational capacity is essential to improving governance effectiveness.

Recent studies suggest that building collaborative capacity requires not only effective communication systems and stakeholder trust but also leaders with the political skills needed to reconcile divergent interests and manage conflicts (Alcantara & De Vera, 2023). Effective internal

communication is essential for sustaining inter-organizational collaboration, as organizations with strong communication systems are better equipped to share information efficiently, coordinate activities, and achieve common goals (Li, 2020; Jiang et al., 2021). Likewise, trust plays a vital role in reducing uncertainty, promoting openness, and encouraging resource sharing among organizations. Garcia and Tan (2022) found that trust is especially important in multi-agency initiatives such as disaster management and poverty alleviation programs.

Political skills are another critical yet often underexplored dimension of inter-organizational collaboration. Ferris et al. (2021) emphasized that political skills are indispensable in managing relationships, resolving conflicts, and fostering cohesion among diverse stakeholders. In the Philippine governance context, these skills are particularly important because of complex power dynamics, competing priorities, and bureaucratic resistance.

This study is anchored on several theoretical perspectives. Contingency Theory posits that the effectiveness of leadership behaviors such as communication, trust-building, and political skills depends on contextual factors, including organizational culture and inter-organizational dynamics (Fiedler, 1964). Boundary Spanning Theory explains how unit heads function as boundary spanners who facilitate communication, trust-building, and resource sharing across organizational boundaries (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). In addition, Bryson's (2015) Collaborative Governance Theory provides a framework for understanding the processes, structures, and mechanisms through which organizations collaborate in governance.

This paper aims to determine the structural equation model that best fits the inter-organizational collaborative capacity of national government agencies. Specifically, it seeks to determine the level of internal communication among NGAs in terms of feedback, vertical communication, horizontal communication, informal communication, organizational information, communication climate, quality of communication media, and communication in meetings. It also examines the level of organizational trust in terms of trust in the work team, work setting, and management; the level of political skills in terms of networking ability, interpersonal influence, social astuteness, and apparent sincerity; and the level of inter-organizational collaborative capacity in terms of felt need to collaborate, strategic action for collaboration, resource investment, structural flexibility, metrics for collaboration, rewards and incentives, collaborative learning, information sharing, social capital, individual collaborative capacity, support for individual

collaborative effort, collaborative tools and technology, and content and demographics. Furthermore, the study investigates the significant relationships between internal communication, organizational trust, political skills, and inter-organizational collaborative capacity; identifies the exogenous variables that significantly influence collaborative capacity; and determines the best-fit structural model for inter-organizational collaborative capacity.

Moreover, this study used a significance level of less than .05. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between internal communication, organizational trust, political skills, and inter-organizational collaborative capacity; that no exogenous variables significantly influence inter-organizational collaborative capacity; and that there is no best-fit structural model for inter-organizational collaborative capacity. The study's conceptual framework highlights internal communication, organizational trust, and political skills as exogenous variables, while inter-organizational collaborative capacity serves as the endogenous variable.

Despite the growing body of literature on collaborative governance, limited studies have examined the combined influence of internal communication, organizational trust, and political skills on inter-organizational collaborative capacity within Philippine national government agencies, particularly in Region XII. Existing research often focuses on collaboration in general governance contexts without developing a structural equation model that explains how these organizational and leadership factors interact to influence collaborative capacity. Hence, this study addresses this gap by identifying the relationships among these variables and determining the best-fit structural model that can serve as a basis for strengthening collaborative governance and public service delivery among NGAs in Region XII.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Respondents

The participants in the research were unit heads from the national government agencies in Region XII, which includes the Department of Agriculture, Department of Education, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Public Works and Highways, and the Department of Interior and Local Government. Participants were selected from different units, departments, or divisions within their respective agencies across the SOCSKSARGEN Region.

A complete enumeration method was utilized to select the study respondents, with 90% response rate, ensuring that all qualified unit heads had an equal opportunity to be included in the final sample.

The selection of respondents followed a defined set of criteria. Only unit heads who had served in their position for at least three years, held a permanent plantilla position, and performed administrative functions were included in the study. Their employment status was verified through records and organizational profiles from the Human Resource and Development Offices of their respective agencies.

Data collection and analysis took place from July 2025 to September 2025.

Materials and Instruments

This study utilized four instruments which was adopted and modified from various studies: The Inter-organizational Collaborative Capacity (ICC) Assessment from the study of Hocevar (2012) in Monterey California, The Internal Communication from the study of Verici et. al (2021) entitled Measuring Internal Communication Satisfaction: Validating the Internal Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire, Organizational Trust as developed by Polat (2007) from the study of Celep & Yilmazturk (2011) entitled The Relationship among Organizational Trust, Multidimensional organizational commitment and Perceived Organizational Support in Educational Organizations, and the Political Skills as developed by Ferris et al (2005) adopted from the study of Chavez (2022) entitled Political Skills, Resilience At Work, And Public Service Motivation: A Structural Equation Model On Job Engagement of Police Personnel In Region XII.

In answering the instrument, the respondents selected a five-point Likert scale: 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree).

The rating scale used in the survey provides a structured interpretation of respondents' behaviors, ideas, values, or actions based on numerical ranges. A score between 4.20 and 5.00 is classified as Very High, indicating that respondents always manifested the specified behavior or belief. A range of 3.40 to 4.19 is considered High, meaning respondents often manifested the stated idea or action. Scores between 2.60 and 3.39 are labeled Moderate, indicating that respondents sometimes exhibit

the trait. Meanwhile, a Low rating, from 1.80 to 2.59, signifies that respondents seldom manifest the behavior or value. Finally, a score between 1.00 and 1.79 is categorized as Very Low, meaning respondents never manifest the specified characteristic.

The research instrument was reviewed by the researcher's adviser before being submitted to internal and external validators. After validation, a pilot test was conducted among 50 respondents from other government national agencies to assess reliability using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability coefficients were .977 for inter-organizational collaborative capacity, .941 for internal communication, .976 for organizational trust, and .953 for political skills. All values above .90 indicated high reliability and internal consistency.

Design and Procedure

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to calculate and describe the relationships and influence among variables at different measurement levels. A descriptive correlational research design is a non-experimental quantitative approach used to describe variables and determine the statistical relationship between variables without manipulating the variables or establishing causal relationships (Canonizado, 2020; Mustieles, 2020; Miksza et al., 2023).

Moreover, this study utilized the Structural Equation Model to determine the best fit model for inter-organizational collaborative capacity, a quantitative, non-experimental research design. SEM is a statistical analysis of data that includes more than one variable simultaneously. It refers to techniques for analyzing data sets with several dependent or independent variables in order to comprehend their associations, structures, and patterns, Anderson (2003).

In evaluating the goodness of fit for a multivariate analysis model, several standard criteria are used to determine how well the model represents the data. The Chi-square value should be large, while the P-value should be greater than 0.05 to indicate a good fit. The Chi-square divided by Degrees of Freedom (CMIN/DF) should be less than 0.05, ensuring that the model is not overly complex. Fit indices such as the Normative Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) should all be greater than 0.95 to demonstrate strong agreement between the model and the observed data. Additionally, the Root

Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) should be below 0.05, indicating minimal error in model estimation. Finally, the P-close value should be greater than 0.05 to confirm that the RMSEA is not significantly different from zero, further supporting the model's goodness of fit.

This research adhered to the ethical standards and protocols established by the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee with the UMEREC Protocol Approval number 2025-362. Approval from school authorities was also a prerequisite for this study, which the researcher diligently sought.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Internal Communication of Unit Heads in Region XII

Table 1 shows that internal communication among unit heads in Region XI is consistently very high, with an overall mean of 4.37 (SD = 0.38), indicating it is always evident. Most indicators received very high ratings: feedback (4.41), communication with immediate supervisor (4.53), horizontal communication (4.49), information about the organization (4.32), communication climate (4.61), quality of communication media (4.55), and communication in meetings (4.53). Only informal communication was slightly lower at 3.49, though still rated high.

TABLE 1
LEVEL OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Feedback	0.56	4.41	Very High
Communication with Immediate Superior	0.52	4.53	Very High
Horizontal Communication	0.54	4.49	Very High
Informal Communication	0.90	3.49	High
Information About the Organization	0.58	4.32	Very High
Communication Climate	0.50	4.61	Very High
Quality Of Communication Media	0.53	4.55	Very High
Communication In Meetings	0.54	4.53	Very High
Overall	0.38	4.37	Very High

All eight indicators achieved very high mean values. This suggests that internal communication is perceived as strongly positive and consistently practiced. This indicates that unit heads report consistently receiving meaningful feedback, showing that communication flows

upward as well as downward in the organization. Although informal communication scores slightly lower than other indicators, it remains high. The high rating for communication in meetings further highlights how important structured gatherings are for sharing information, encouraging discussion, and supporting collective decision-making.

This finding aligns with the idea of Rodriguez and Adul (2024) that by supporting upward, downward, horizontal, and informal communication channels, the organization appears to maintain a multidirectional communication environment.

The findings suggest that NGAs can improve coordination and operational efficiency by promoting informal communication through collaborative activities, mentoring, and digital platforms. Strengthening both formal and informal communication systems enables faster problem-solving, better inter-unit coordination, and more responsive public service delivery, particularly during large-scale government programs and crises.

Organizational Trust of Unit Heads in Region XII

Table 2 presented uniformly very high levels of organizational trust, with an overall mean of 4.32 or very high. Trust in the work team yielded a mean of 4.34 or very high, indicating that employees perceived their colleagues as reliable and supportive. Trust in the work setting yielded 4.33 or very high suggested confidence in organizational systems and work procedures. Trust in management obtained 4.30, despite its greater variability, and still reflected a strong belief in leadership integrity and competence.

TABLE 2
LEVEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Trust To Work Team	0.51	4.34	Very High
Trust To Work Setting	0.55	4.33	Very High
Trust To Management	0.67	4.30	Very High
Overall	0.52	4.32	Very High

The findings indicate that the organization demonstrates a very high and stable level of organizational trust across all dimensions, reflecting a strong and supportive work environment.

The highest score was observed in Trust in Work Team (4.34), showing that employees have strong confidence in their colleagues' integrity, competence, and reliability, which contributes to cohesion and productivity. Trust in the Work Setting was also rated very high, indicating that employees perceive organizational systems and workplace conditions as fair, supportive, and conducive to success; this aligns with evidence that trust is reinforced by transparent and fair organizational processes (Fischer et al., 2023).

Although slightly lower, Trust in Management remains very high, reflecting employees' confidence in leadership competence, ethical behavior, and decision-making. Research shows that trust in leadership strengthens team cooperation and overall performance (Jalil et al., 2024). The results suggest a well-integrated trust system where leadership, team relationships, and organizational structures mutually reinforce one another. This supports the view that organizational trust is strengthened through ethical leadership, consistent communication, and collaborative practices (Eva et al., 2024).

The findings suggest that government agencies can strengthen organizational trust through transparent leadership, accountability, and participatory management practices. High levels of trust can improve coordination, reduce conflict, and support effective implementation of reforms, crisis response, and public service programs, enabling government institutions to become more adaptive, resilient, and effective in addressing governance challenges.

Political Skills of Unit Heads in Region XII

Indicated in Table 3 is the level of political skills of unit heads. The overall mean score is 4.25, described as very high, which means that political skills are consistently demonstrated by the respondents. The mean ratings of the indicators of political skills are elaborated as follows: networking ability obtained a mean rating of 4.11 or high; interpersonal influence attained a mean rating of 4.23 or very high; social astuteness accumulated a mean of 4.24 or very high; and apparent sincerity garnered the highest mean rating of 4.40, also described as very high.

TABLE 3
LEVEL OF POLITICAL SKILLS

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Networking Ability	0.62	4.11	High
Interpersonal Influence	0.67	4.23	Very High
Social Astuteness	0.60	4.24	Very High
Apparent Sincerity	0.59	4.40	Very High
Overall	0.52	4.25	Very High

The results show that unit heads demonstrate a very high level of political skills, particularly in interpersonal influence, social astuteness, apparent sincerity, and networking ability. This indicates that unit heads are effective in building professional relationships, understanding social dynamics, and influencing others in the workplace. These findings support previous studies showing that political skills enhance workplace effectiveness, interpersonal competence, and organizational performance, as emphasized by Blickle et al. (2022), Kim et al. (2020), and Sanhokwe and Chinyamurindi (2023). The findings confirm that employees with strong political skills are better able to foster collaboration, manage workplace relationships, and contribute to the achievement of organizational goals.

Strong political skills among unit heads enhance their ability to manage conflicts, build collaboration, and strengthen relationships across offices and partner agencies. These skills are particularly valuable during policy implementation, crisis response, and public service reforms, where they help improve coordination, encourage cooperation, and speed up decision-making.

Inter-organizational Collaborative Capacity of Unit Heads in Region XII

Table 4 indicates that employees' inter-organizational collaborative capacity is very high (4.30), showing that collaborative behaviors are consistently observed. The highest rating is for the felt need to collaborate (4.60). Other indicators rated very high include strategic action (4.34), structural flexibility (4.23), collaborative learning (4.29), information sharing (4.35), social capital (4.32), individual capacities (4.39), support for collaboration (4.38), collaboration structures

(4.32), tools and technologies (4.23), and context and demographics (4.42). Meanwhile, resource investment (4.18), metrics (4.06), and rewards and incentives (4.07) are slightly lower but still rated high.

TABLE 4
LEVEL OF INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Felt The Need to Collaborate	0.46	4.60	Very High
Strategic Action for Collaboration	0.53	4.34	Very High
Resource Investment in Collaboration	0.61	4.18	High
Structural Flexibility	0.65	4.23	Very High
Metrics For Collaboration	0.65	4.06	High
Rewards And Incentives	0.78	4.07	High
Collaborative Learning	0.60	4.29	Very High
Information Sharing	0.61	4.35	Very High
Social Capital	0.62	4.32	Very High
Individual Collaborative Capacities	0.56	4.39	Very High
Support For Individual Collaboration Efforts	0.57	4.38	Very High
Collaboration Structures	0.61	4.32	Very High
Collaborative Tools and Technologies	0.65	4.23	Very High
Context And Demographics	0.58	4.42	Very High
Overall	0.45	4.30	Very High

Among the indicators, felt the need to collaborate obtained the highest mean of 4.60, making it the most dominant dimension. This indicates a strong internal recognition among employees of the importance of collaboration as a necessary approach in accomplishing inter-organizational tasks. The result underscores that shared purpose and perceived necessity are key drivers of collaborative engagement. Other indicators also obtained very high ratings, particularly context and demographics (4.42), individual collaborative capacities (4.39), support for individual collaboration efforts (4.38), and information sharing (4.35). These findings suggest that employees possess strong individual competencies and operate within a supportive environment that facilitates knowledge exchange and cooperative behavior. High ratings in strategic action for collaboration (4.34), collaboration structures (4.32), social capital (4.32), and collaborative

learning (4.29) further indicate that both relational and structural dimensions of collaboration are well-established, enabling coordinated action and continuous learning within and across organizations.

Meanwhile, although still rated high, resource investment in collaboration (4.18), rewards and incentives (4.07), and metrics for collaboration (4.06) obtained relatively lower means compared to other indicators. This suggests that while collaborative systems and behaviors are strong, formal mechanisms for measuring, rewarding, and resourcing collaboration may still be less developed or less consistently implemented. Strengthening these areas may further enhance the sustainability and institutionalization of collaborative practices.

These findings suggest that the organization demonstrates a robust collaborative culture supported by strong individual capacities, shared awareness of collaborative necessity, and well-established structural and relational systems. The high ratings in strategic action, collaborative learning, and information sharing indicate active engagement in knowledge exchange and joint problem-solving, which are essential for innovation and organizational effectiveness (Wang, Xi, & Henseler, 2021; Huxham & Vangen, 2020). Moreover, strong social capital and support for collaboration reflect the importance of trust, relational quality, and leadership support in sustaining inter-organizational networks (Adler & Kwon, 2021). Overall, the results highlight a highly functional collaborative environment, though further attention to incentives, metrics, and resource allocation may strengthen long-term collaborative sustainability.

Correlation between Internal Communication, Organizational Trust, Political Skills and Inter-organizational Collaborative Capacity

The correlation analysis in Table 5 shows that internal communication, organizational trust, and political skills are all significantly and positively related to inter-organizational collaborative capacity. Organizational trust has the strongest relationship ($r = .731$), followed by internal communication ($r = .675$), and political skills ($r = .610$). These results indicate that higher levels of trust, effective communication, and stronger political skills among unit heads are associated with improved collaborative capacity. Consequently, all null hypotheses were rejected.

TABLE 5
CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF THE VARIABLES

Pair	Variable	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Decision on H ₀
IV1 and DV	Internal Communication and Inter-Organizational Collaborative Capacity	.675***	.000	Reject
IV2 and DV	Organizational Trust and Inter-Organizational Collaborative Capacity	.731***	.000	Reject
IV3 and DV	Political Skills and Inter-Organizational Collaborative Capacity	.610***	.000	Reject

The correlation analysis shows significant positive relationships between internal communication, organizational trust, political skills, and inter-organizational collaborative capacity.

Internal communication has a strong positive correlation (.675), indicating that clear, transparent, and multi-directional communication enhances collaboration by improving coordination, trust, and problem-solving across organizations (Majchrzak et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). Organizational trust shows the strongest relationship (.731), emphasizing its central role in collaboration. Higher trust encourages information sharing, joint initiatives, and stronger cooperation among leaders, reinforcing its importance in multi-stakeholder environments (Adler & Kwon, 2021; Thomson et al., 2022; Gray, 2021; Huxham & Vangen, 2020). Political skills also demonstrate a significant positive correlation (.610), suggesting that leaders with strong interpersonal influence, networking ability, and social awareness are more effective in building alliances and facilitating cooperation (Blickle et al., 2022; Sanhokwe & Chinyamurindi, 2023).

The findings indicate that internal communication, organizational trust, and political skills function as interconnected drivers of collaborative capacity. Communication enables coordination, trust provides relational stability, and political skills support effective navigation of social and organizational dynamics. Together, these factors strengthen collaboration, innovation, and organizational effectiveness (Kanat-Maymon et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021).

Influence of Internal Communication, Organizational Trust and Political Skills on Inter-organizational Collaborative Capacity

Presented in Table 6 is the influence of internal communication, organizational trust, and political skills on the inter-organizational collaborative capacity of unit heads. As indicated by the F-value of 95.207, with a corresponding p-value of 0.000, the regression model is therefore significant. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. It can be stated that there is at least one variable that can significantly predict the inter-organizational collaborative capacity of the unit heads.

The R² value of .593 signifies that 59.3 percent of the variation in inter-organizational collaborative capacity is explained by the predictor variables internal communication, organizational trust, and political skills. This means that 40.7 percent of the variation could be attributed to other factors not included in the model.

The presentation reveals that the standardized coefficient of organizational trust has the highest beta value of .482. This indicates that organizational trust has the greatest influence on inter-organizational collaborative capacity compared to political skills with .212 and internal communication with .165.

TABLE 6
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION,
ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST AND POLITICAL SKILLS ON INTER-
ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY

Inter-organizational Collaborative Capacity				
(Variables)	<i>B</i>	β	<i>T</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Constant	.894		3.762	.000
Internal Communication	.195	.165	2.095	.037
Organizational Trust	.412	.482	6.894	.000
Political Skills	.181	.212	3.312	.001
R	.770			
R ²	.593			
ΔR^2	.587			
F	95.207			
P	.000			

The findings indicate that internal communication, organizational trust, and political skills significantly influence inter-organizational collaborative capacity, as supported by a highly significant regression model ($F = 95.207$, $p = 0.000$). Among these variables, organizational trust emerged as the strongest predictor, underscoring its role as a foundational element in fostering effective collaboration. This aligns with existing literature emphasizing that trust enhances coordination and adaptability in collaborative governance.

Internal communication also demonstrated a significant positive effect, suggesting that transparent and consistent communication strengthens organizations' ability to collaborate externally. It facilitates mutual understanding and supports trust-building, enabling more cohesive engagement with partner organizations. Political skills likewise showed a meaningful positive influence, highlighting the importance of social competence in managing inter-organizational relationships. Individuals with strong political skills contribute to collaboration by navigating interests, resolving conflicts, and building networks.

The results emphasize that collaborative capacity is shaped by trust, communication, and individual competencies. With a predictive power of 0.593, the model explains a substantial proportion of the variance in collaborative capacity, confirming the importance of these internal organizational factors.

Best Fit Model of Inter-organizational Collaborative Capacity

As shown in Table 7, Model 3 satisfies all the established criteria for good model fit. The non-significant p-value (.267) reflects acceptable deviation between the model and the data. The CMIN/DF of 1.105 falls squarely within the ideal range (0–2), and the GFI, CFI, NFI, and TLI values all exceed the recommended threshold of .95, signaling excellent model fit. Furthermore, the RMSEA value of .023 is well below the .05 criterion, with a P-close of .948, confirming that the model provides a highly adequate and parsimonious representation of the observed data.

The results indicate that Model 3 is the only model that demonstrates a good fit, making it the most appropriate representation of the relationships among the variables in the study.

TABLE 7
SUMMARY OF GOODNESS OF FIT MEASURES OF THE THREE GENERATED MODELS

Model	P-value (>0.05)	CMIN / DF (0<value<2)	GFI (>0.95)	CFI (>0.95)	NFI (>0.95)	TLI (>0.95)	RMSEA (<0.05)	P-close (>0.05)
1	.000	4.622	.610	.685	.632	.658	.135	.000
2	.000	3.859	.637	.753	.696	.730	.120	.000
3	.267	1.105	.955	.996	.961	.994	.023	.948

Regression Weights of the Generated Models

Table 8 presents the regression weights of three exogenous variables, Internal Communication, Organizational Trust, and Political Skills on the endogenous variable across three generated models. It presents the standardized path coefficients showing the influence of the three exogenous variables Internal Communication, Organizational Trust, and Political Skills as the endogenous variable across the three structural models.

In the final model, Model 3, which had undergone further modification to enhance overall fit, Internal Communication demonstrated an increased and significant effect on the endogenous variable (.254**). Conversely, Organizational Trust showed a reduced yet still significant influence (.227*), suggesting a redistribution of explanatory power between the two constructs in the optimized model. Political Skills again failed to reach statistical significance (.072NS), confirming that its role in predicting the outcome variable remained minimal after model refinement

TABLE 8
REGRESSION WEIGHTS OF THE 3 GENERATED MODELS

Exogenous Variables to Endogenous Variables			
Model	Internal Communication	Organizational Trust	Political Skills
1	.190***	.339***	.097**
2	.190*	.318***	.074 ^{NS}
3	.254**	.227*	.072 ^{NS}

The three generated models consistently show that Internal Communication, Organizational Trust, and Political Skills have positive effects on inter-organizational collaborative capacity, though their strength and significance vary. Organizational Trust is the strongest and most stable predictor, while Internal Communication demonstrates a moderate but increasingly important influence across models. Political Skills exhibit the weakest effect, becoming non-significant in later models, indicating limited explanatory value.

To examine these relationships, structural models were developed, with Model 3 emerging as the refined and best-fitting version. This model improved parsimony and reliability by removing weak indicators and retaining only the most stable measures for each construct: Internal Communication (FEE, CIS, HOC, IAO), Organizational Trust (TWS, TWT), and Political Skills (SOA, INI, NEA). Inter-organizational collaborative capacity was also effectively represented by its key indicators (FNC, RAI, COL, INS, CAD).

Model 3 demonstrated clearer and stronger causal relationships, with Organizational Trust and Internal Communication exerting meaningful positive effects, while Political Skills contributed only modestly. Fit indices confirmed that Model 3 achieved an excellent fit to the data, meeting all statistical criteria. As a result, it was identified as the best model, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis of no best-fit structural model.

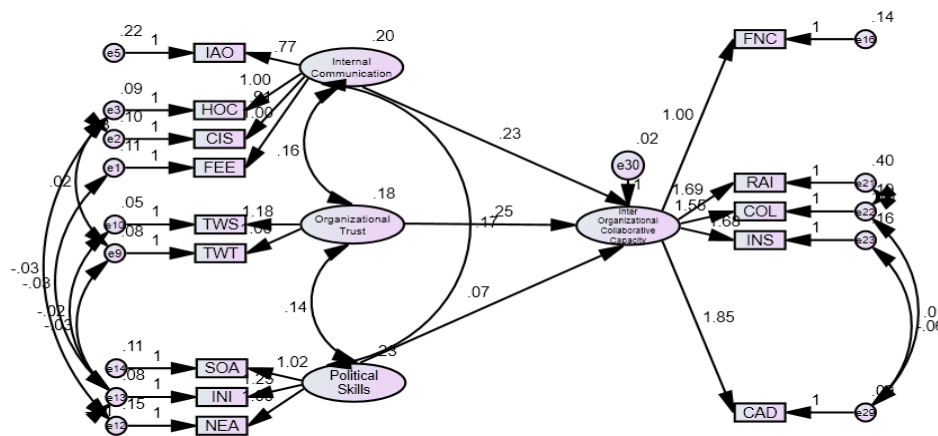


FIGURE 1
STRUCTURAL MODEL 3 IN STANDARDIZED SOLUTION

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study reveal that internal communication, organizational trust, political skills, and inter-organizational collaborative capacity within National Government Agencies in Region XII were all perceived at high to very high levels, indicating a healthy organizational environment characterized by effective communication systems, strong interpersonal relationships, ethical leadership, and collaborative practices. These results demonstrate that NGAs already possess important organizational foundations necessary for responsive governance and efficient public service delivery. At the same time, the study identified several areas requiring continuous improvement to sustain long-term institutional effectiveness and collaboration.

The study found that internal communication was consistently rated very high, particularly in communication climate, communication with immediate superiors, and horizontal communication. This suggests that unit heads experience open, transparent, and supportive communication across organizational levels. However, informal communication received comparatively lower ratings, implying that opportunities still exist to strengthen spontaneous interactions that encourage creativity, innovation, teamwork, and relationship-building. To address this, NGAs should promote cross-unit social activities, collaborative workspaces, and digital communication platforms that encourage faster and more informal exchanges while maintaining strong formal communication systems.

Organizational trust was also rated at a very high level, reflecting employees' strong confidence in their teams, leaders, and organizational systems. This finding underscores the importance of trust as a critical governance mechanism that enhances cooperation, minimizes conflict, and strengthens psychological safety within public institutions. To sustain this positive organizational culture, agencies should continue implementing transparent governance practices, ethical leadership initiatives, accountability mechanisms, and regular feedback systems that reinforce integrity, fairness, and employee confidence.

The findings further revealed that political skills among unit heads were generally very high, particularly in interpersonal influence, social astuteness, and apparent sincerity. These competencies indicate that leaders can effectively understand organizational dynamics, build authentic relationships, and influence others constructively. However, networking ability received

relatively lower ratings, suggesting the need to strengthen leaders' capacity to establish broader professional and inter-agency connections. NGAs are therefore encouraged to invest in mentoring programs, social intelligence training, leadership development initiatives, cross-department assignments, and inter-agency collaboration workshops to further strengthen networking and collaborative leadership competencies.

Likewise, inter-organizational collaborative capacity was rated very high, indicating that agencies possess a strong foundation for coordination and partnership-building with external stakeholders. Strategic action for collaboration, collaborative learning, information sharing, and resource investment all demonstrated strong institutional support for cooperative efforts. Nonetheless, collaboration metrics and reward systems received comparatively lower ratings, highlighting the need for clearer monitoring frameworks and recognition systems. NGAs should therefore establish measurable collaboration indicators, integrate collaborative outcomes into performance evaluation systems, and create incentive programs that recognize teamwork, innovation, and successful partnership initiatives.

The success of Model 3 further supports the principles of collaborative governance theory, particularly the importance of inclusive processes, shared accountability, adaptive leadership, and coordinated governance systems as emphasized by John M. Bryson (2015). The findings confirm that organizational effectiveness is strengthened when agencies institutionalize shared decision-making structures, stakeholder engagement mechanisms, and coordinated leadership practices. For policymakers and administrators, this study provides evidence-based guidance for strengthening governance frameworks, improving leadership development programs, and institutionalizing collaborative systems that support long-term organizational learning and partnership-building.

In alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), national government agencies should continue strengthening informal communication to promote inclusive and resilient institutional communities (SDG 11), sustain transparency and ethical leadership to reinforce strong institutions (SDG 16), and institutionalize collaborative governance and stakeholder partnerships that support collective performance and innovation (SDG 17).

Future researchers may expand this study by exploring additional organizational and contextual factors affecting collaborative capacity, such as digital transformation, organizational

culture, employee engagement, and crisis management. Comparative studies, qualitative investigations, and mixed-method approaches are also recommended to gain deeper insights into collaborative governance practices and their impact on public sector effectiveness and social service delivery.

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