Mental Health Program Effects on Public Service Delivery and Good Governance Among Local Institutions of Higher Learning in the Philippines

Dampak Program Kesehatan Mental terhadap Penyampaian Layanan Publik dan Tata Kelola Pemerintahan yang Baik di Institusi Pendidikan Tinggi Lokal di Filipina

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Abstract

Good governance, which is achieved through the delivery of high-quality public services, is closely linked to the quality of the government's bureaucracy. This study examined the perceptions and experiences of school leaders and personnel regarding the impact of mental health programs on public service delivery and good governance. The research adopted a qualitative descriptive design. Qualitative data were gathered through validated interview and analyzed using a content analysis approach. The study included 21 school leaders and 19 personnel as participants. The findings suggest that mental health programs contribute significantly to enhancing workplace efficiency, strengthening public service, promoting worker well-being, improving decision-making, increasing work productivity, and fostering a positive work culture. These factors collectively support the realization of good governance. The research outcomes provide valuable insights that could inform local policymaking, particularly in improving public service delivery and promoting good governance among local higher education institutions through the implementation of effective mental health programs.

Keywords: mental health program; public service delivery; good governance.

Abstrak

Pemerintahan yang baik, yang tercapai melalui penyediaan layanan publik berkualitas tinggi, sangat terkait dengan kualitas birokrasi pemerintah. Penelitian ini mengkaji persepsi dan pengalaman pemimpin sekolah serta personel mengenai dampak program kesehatan mental terhadap penyampaian layanan publik dan pemerintahan yang baik. Penelitian ini mengadopsi desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Data kualitatif dikumpulkan melalui wawancara yang telah divalidasi dan dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan analisis isi. Penelitian ini melibatkan 21 pemimpin sekolah dan 19 personel sebagai peserta. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa program kesehatan mental memberikan kontribusi signifikan dalam meningkatkan efisiensi tempat kerja, memperkuat layanan publik, mempromosikan kesejahteraan pekerja, meningkatkan pengambilan keputusan, meningkatkan produktivitas kerja, dan membina budaya kerja

yang positif. Faktor-faktor ini secara kolektif mendukung terwujudnya pemerintahan yang baik. Hasil penelitian ini memberikan wawasan berharga yang dapat digunakan untuk informasi bagi pembuatan kebijakan lokal, khususnya dalam meningkatkan penyampaian layanan publik dan mempromosikan pemerintahan yang baik di antara institusi pendidikan tinggi lokal melalui penerapan program kesehatan mental yang efektif.

Kata kunci: program kesehatan mental; penyampaian layanan publik; pemerintahan yang baik.

Introduction

Good governance is fundamentally a reflection of democratic values, materializing when it prioritizes "global targets" that follow human development (Rahim, 2019, p. 133). It embodies key principles such as equity, transparency, participation, responsiveness, accountability, and the rule of law. Upholding these principles is essential for unlocking development and progress for society (UNESCO, 2012, p. 3). In practical terms, good governance involves the effective management of a country's resources to foster sustainable development. The importance of emphasizing good governance, which aligns governmental practices with the principle of accountability, cannot be overstated (Diarra & Plane, 2011).

The 2013 World Bank report highlights key elements of good governance, emphasizing the importance of active public participation in program planning, clear program design, responsiveness to public demands, efficient implementation, inclusivity, and adherence to the rule of law. Additionally, the report underscores the significance of local governments in practicing good governance (Boherom et al., 2022). According to ASEAN (2020, p. 8), public service delivery is fundamentally rooted in "citizen engagement and empowerment." The government should actively engage with citizens to ensure that public services are not only beneficial but also responsive to their needs and delivered efficiently and effectively. The public service delivery system ensures the achievement of outcomes through continuous monitoring and feedback from citizens..

Furthermore, "Behavioral Public Administration as the Interdisciplinary Analysis of Public Administration" involves the examination of the behaviors and

attitudes of individuals within the public sector, alongside the integration of behavioral science into public administration (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2017, p. 2). This highlights the idea that establishing good governance and delivering high-quality public services is dependent on the efficiency and effectiveness of the government's bureaucracy. Accordingly, this study investigates the effects of mental health programs, grounded in public health laws, on public service delivery and good governance.

According to Rahim (2019), good governance goes beyond justice and accountability; it focuses on making government accessible to the people. It involves shaping government for public service, valuing rights, and fostering productivity. Good governance integrates these values into society, with institutional ideals prevailing despite diverse social and political motivations. Rahim (2019) also notes that poor governance and ignorance of laws lead to political system failure. Outcomes include equal rights to services, economic opportunities, and political stability (UNESCO, 2012).

Mental health programs are essential for enhancing public service delivery and promoting good governance, particularly within educational institutions. The integration of services across various sectors is fundamental to the success of these programs. As Kadar, Andriani, and Tandi (2019) assert, successful mental health interventions in rural areas rely on cross-sector collaboration, particularly between healthcare and education ministries. This integrated approach ensures that mental health services are both comprehensive and accessible, addressing the diverse needs of populations. Onyenwe et al. (2024) emphasize that fragmented mental health efforts often lead to inefficiencies and inadequate care, highlighting the necessity of coordinated service delivery to optimize health outcomes and governance.

Community engagement and transparency are critical components in enhancing governance through mental health programs. Bhalla, Stefanovics, and Rosenheck (2020) stress the importance of community-based frameworks that not only provide mental health treatment but also involve the community in the design and delivery of services. Similarly, Kohrt et al. (2018) demonstrate that local community involvement can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of mental health services, especially in low- and middle-income countries. By fostering transparency and collaboration, mental

health programs can strengthen governance structures by encouraging active citizen participation.

Furthermore, the methodologies employed in mental health service delivery can significantly impact public service outcomes. Snow et al. (2023) highlight the effectiveness of structured models such as "Stepped Care 2.0," which improves the quality and efficiency of mental health services while promoting continuous program evaluation. This approach is crucial for local institutions seeking to enhance service delivery efficiency and governance.

Lastly, educational institutions play a central role in mental health promotion. As noted by Spanemberg et al. (2020) and Sullivan et al. (2022), integrating mental health services within schools not only improves student well-being but also fosters an environment conducive to effective governance and public service delivery. This comprehensive approach ensures the sustainability and resilience of public health initiatives within educational settings.

Methods

Qualitative descriptive research obtains subjective data concerning the "who, what, and where" of events or experiences. This approach aligns with constructionism and critical theories, utilizing interpretative and naturalistic methods. Open-ended interview responses are valuable data sources in qualitative descriptive studies (Kim et al., 2017, p. 23; Lincoln et al., 2017, as cited in Doyle et al., 2020, p. 445).

The interview was administered among the school leaders, the program implementers, and personnel, who are the direct program beneficiaries of local institutions of higher learning in Zambales: Gordon College, Kolehiyo ng Subic, and Polytechnic College of Botolan. The researcher carefully selected the participants from these groups using purposive and convenience sampling. Twenty-one school leaders and 19 personnel served as the study's participants. The study is limited to written interview responses from school leaders and personnel of local institutions of higher learning.

The interview included open-ended questions about the impact of mental health programs on public service delivery and good governance. The study proposal underwent an ethical review by the Ethics Committee, and the informed consent of the participants was sought before it was conducted. For ethical considerations, the researcher observed the anonymity of participants' identities by assigning codes such as "SL" and "P," referring to school leaders and personnel, respectively. Specialists in public administration, public health, and educational administration validated the interview instrument.

The process of qualitative content analysis involves an in-depth exploration of the meaning and relevance of respondents' experiences as conveyed in textual data. This approach prioritizes understanding the conveyed meanings and ideas over mere word counting (Newby, 2014, as cited in Al Zadjali, 2017).

Results And Discussion

Effects of Mental Health Programs in the Delivery of Public Services for School Leaders

Mental health programs had three significant effects on public service delivery: strengthening public service, advancing the well-being of workers, and improving decision-making. The study of Boherom et al. (2022) pointed out that best practices are strategies that lead to positive results, while challenges are problems or difficulties encountered during program implementation. Table 1 presents the content interpretations generated about the effects of mental health programs on delivering public services as perceived by school leaders.

Strengthens Public Service. Mental health programs significantly improve public service delivery. Workers are becoming more focused on performing their tasks and functions as they feel more comfortable and confident at work. Through mental health programs, they are less stressed and agitated, which allows them to deliver quality public services. The quality of public services may be affected by the stresses experienced by public servants at work (Bakker et al., 2004; Dai et al., 2015; Leiter & Maslach, 2009; Shanafelt et al., 2010, as cited in Sciepura & Linos, 2022). Moreover, the quality of public service delivery is adversely affected due to work burnout. In the

study of Califf and Brooks (2020) and Kim and Stoner (2008), as cited in Sciepura and Linos (2022), the quality of public service delivery tends to be low as the public sector workers opted to quit and leave their jobs due to burnout.

Mental health programs should focus on strengthening teamwork and unity, with co-workers acting as support groups. When public servants feel accepted, appreciated, and grow within an organization, the risk of burnout decreases. One respondent shared that such programs help them stay physically and mentally stable, improving their performance (Sciepura & Linos, 2022). This was attested by one of the respondents' sharing that "mental health programs affect my performance by being physically and mentally stable in delivering public services" [SL35].

Table 1 Effects of Mental Health Programs in the Delivery of Public Services
for School Leaders

Content Interpretations	Descriptions	Sample Direct Responses
Strengthens public service	Mental health programs improve workers' productivity and performance.	"We learn to become more responsive and proactive to mitigate future problems/concerns. We become fully aware of our responsibilities" [SL5].
Advances the well-being of workers	Through mental health programs, workers become more aware of balancing life and work.	"Mental health programs improve the well-being of public servants by addressing stress and anxiety; when an employee is mentally healthy, they are productive and motivated" [SL4].
Improves decision-making	Through mental health programs, workers are trained to handle feelings and emotions in adverse or otherwise adverse situations.	"It affects decision-making since it involves emotions and distress" [SL39].

Source: Created by the author, 2025

Advances the Well-being of Workers. Health and wellness programs are essential in today's stressful work environment. The World Health Organization (WHO)

states these programs, covering physical and mental health, help reduce stress, improve workers' well-being, and boost productivity (Anderko et al., 2012; Caloyeras et al., 2014; Kaspin et al., 2013; Mattke et al., 2013; Parkinson et al., 2014; Shapiro & Moseley, 2013, as cited in Saliba & Barden, 2017). Dealing with work stress necessitates prioritizing workers' physical and mental health. In addressing stresses and adversities at work, workers must focus on the physical and psychological aspects of well-being (Focht & Lewis, 2013, as cited in Saliba & Barden, 2017). One respondent shared mental health programs' role in career life: "It gives me lots of strategies to help me take care of myself" [SL37].

Improves Decision-making. A sound mind and body allows an individual to make proper decisions and solve problems logically. This indicates that workers need to have a healthy body and sound mind as they make decisions and solve problems at work. Decision-making and problem-solving skills as mental processes are considered life skills that can determine the well-being of an individual in both the psychological and social aspects; these life skills will be misdirected if individuals suffer from mental health conditions (Gopinath & Krishnamurthy, 2018). This is reflected in one of the respondents' sharing, "mental health programs help me to manage my emotions and decision-making" [SL3].

Effects of Mental Health Programs in the Delivery of Public Services for Personnel

Meanwhile, Table 2 presents the content interpretations generated about mental health programs' effects on delivering public services as perceived by the personnel. Helps Understand the Self. To understand others better, one must reflect on him/herself; it is through self-knowing that one fully understands others (Dimaggio et al., 2008, as cited in Böckler et al.,2017). An employee who better knows him/herself can work and perform soundly at work. Understanding one's strengths and weaknesses helps public servants improve and deliver services effectively. Self-awareness is enhanced by understanding others' feelings, behaviors, and mindsets, which in turn helps in better self-understanding (Keysers & Gazzola, 2009; Mitchell; Singer, 2012, 2009, as cited in Böckler et al.,2017). Two of the respondents shared that "it is very crucial as one person cannot function well or not mentally capable" [P38] and "it helps one to understand oneself and other people better" [P42].

Table 2 Effects of Mental Health Program in the Delivery of Public Services for Personnel

Content Interpretations	Descriptions	Sample Direct Response
Helps understand self	The strategies included in the mental health programs allow the employee to discover himself/ herself.	"It gives me ideas regarding self-care and well-being" [P36].
Promotes productivity	A healthy employee delivers higher productivity at work.	"Mental health programs can impact public servants' well-being, performance, and delivery of public services, such as teaching" [P16].
Overlooks program implementation	Given the bulk and complexity of work, mental health programs are irregularly implemented.	"It decelerates performance" [P17].

Source: Created by the author, 2025

Promotes Productivity. There is no doubt that the state of well-being of an employee determines his/her performance at work. A strong link exists between better psychological well-being and higher productivity at work (Oswald & Dorsett, 2014, as cited in Aquino et al., 2020). Workplace stress lowers performance and productivity, causing psychological and physiological issues that affect well-being and job effectiveness (Aquino et al., 2020). If the mental well-being of workers is of significant concern, they will be motivated to work better for the organization. Prioritizing workers' psychological well-being through programs, interventions, and incentivization will develop a healthier working environment (Aquino et al., 2020). "Effective mental health program promotes productivity" [P8], as one of the respondents pointed out.

Overlooks Program Implementation. There are times that the implementation of mental health programs was overlooked because of the bulk of work that overlapped. There are situations where the program exists, but others were unaware due to

miscommunication or failed to participate because of personal hesitations. Engaging the stakeholders will make the program implementation successful (Khan et al., 2011; Kost et al., 2012; Wilkins et al., 2013, as cited in Richter et al., 2022). It is through strong participation and support of the whole workforce that any program succeeds in its implementation. Better program implementation starts when all the stakeholders are united and passionately driven to achieve the program goals (Proctor et al., 2011, as cited in Richter et al., 2022). One of the respondents shared sentiment on the negligible implementation of mental health programs: "It will be beneficial if there is" [P12].

Effects of Mental Health Programs in the Practice of Good Governance for School Leaders

Good governance, integral to policy formulation and implementation, includes accountability, transparency, and equity. Successful health governance requires strong leadership to oversee and sustain these principles (Abd Rahim et al., 2021; Rahim, 2019). Table 3 presents the content interpretations generated regarding the effects of mental health programs on good governance from the school leaders' point of view.

Table 3 Effects of Mental Health Programs in the Practice of Good Governance for School Leaders

Content Interpretations	Descriptions	Sample Direct Response
Supports workers	There is evident participation in activities related to mental health programs. These activities are tailored to accommodate all the workers and respond to their needs.	"This is one of the programs I support to help other workers understand each other's situation" [SL7].
Organizes programs and activities	Some interventions and activities were developed and promoted to raise mental health awareness. These are efficiently implemented periodically to ensure that these will help improve the workers' well-being.	"By conducting different programs and seminars connected with mental health matters" [SL35].
Promotes positive work culture	The mental health programs effectively attained the goal of promoting work-life balance.	"It allows the employees to maintain work-life balance and have a

		positive mental health" [SL9].
Disseminates information	There is transparency in the formulation of policies and the development and implementation of programs. Workers are kept abreast of the program through information dissemination.	"Through social media (most of the people are focusing on different platforms)" [SL6].
Abates implementation	Despite the initiatives to mainstream mental health in the workplace, there are still shortcomings in the implementation, such as the provision of mental health professionals and massive campaigns.	"There is a limited implementation in the institution. However, it captures all those needed" [SL17].

Source: Created by the author, 2025

Supports Workers. In many ways, the quality of social support affects the conditions of people with mental health problems (Baiden et al., 2017; Forrester-Jones et al., 2012, as cited in Bjørlykhaug et al., 2022). There is a strong positive link between social support and well-being. People with mental health conditions have weak social support (Baiden et al., 2017; Stockdale et al., 2007, as cited in Bjørlykhaug et al., 2022). Through responsive and inclusive mental health programs, workers' participation is observed. The benefits of joining the activities are especially evident. Social support through networking positively impacts the well-being of individuals with mental health conditions (Kogstad et al., 2013, as cited in Bjørlykhaug et al., 2022).

In the study of Cobb (1976), as cited by Steigen et al. (2022), there is social support once a person feels loved, cared for, and respected. One of the respondents pointed out, "By participating and attending different programs, you want to learn, you want to know, and you want to engage with something, especially in mental health concerns that also benefit us" [SL35].

Organizes Programs and Activities. Efficiency in mental health programs enhances workers' well-being through effective interventions and stakeholder involvement in policy, development, and implementation, ensuring outputs align with

efforts invested (Eisman et al., 2022).This was underscored in two of the respondents' sharing: "I approved project proposals. I allocate budget" [SL5], and "I am the one responsible for preparing communications for budgetary allotment [SL 36].

Promotes Positive Work Culture. Mental health programs foster a positive work culture by addressing workers' needs through interventions based on organizational policies. These programs promote self-care, well-being, and a healthy environment, reshaping physical and social aspects of the workplace to support workers' holistic health (Wu et al., 2021). One of the respondents pointed out "fostering a positive work culture" [SL7].

Disseminates Information. Transparency in mental health programs is ensured when information is accessible and based on rules. Digital platforms improve accessibility, though content must be validated for accuracy (Garett et al., 2016; Lord et al., 2019). One of the respondents underscores this: "Today, we have many ways to disseminate information about mental health; we have different social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc." [SL 35]. However, accessible information on social media and other web-based platforms should be validated. An essential strategy in disseminating information is to guarantee that information reaches the policymakers and responds to clients (Purtle et al., 2020).

Abates Implementation. Program implementation struggles are often due to poor communication, weak leadership, and insufficient monitoring, leading to low participation. Obstacles include public mistrust, unattractive health programs, inadequate training, and unclear community goals (Mahmoodi et al., 2023). One respondent shared, "There was no engagement because there was no full implementation" [SL8].

Effects of Mental Health Programs in the Practice of Good Governance Personnel

Meanwhile, Table 4 presents the generated content interpretations about the effects of mental health programs on good governance from the personnel's point of view.

Participates in Programs and Activities. Active participation in mental health programs results from respect, inclusiveness, and feeling valued. People engage when informed, heard, and able to contribute to decision-making processes (Stomski & Morrison, 2017). One of the respondents shared that they "fully supported all of the school's programs and advocacies" [P14].

Table 4 Effects of Mental Health Programs in the Practice of Good Governance for Personnel

Content Interpretations	Descriptions	Sample Direct Response
Participates in programs and activities	Workers support mental health programs by participating in activities that meet their needs.	"I always participate, especially when it is scheduled to a day that I have no classes" [P36].
Disseminates information	Information about the mental health program is disseminated through social media and printed materials.	"Today, we have many ways to disseminate information about mental health; we have different social media platforms, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc." [P34].
Organizes well-defined programs	The mental health programs are adapted to respond to the workers' real needs.	"In order to make the mental health programs responsive to the needs of the workers, it's essential to consider the unique challenges the employees may face" [P16].
Declines engagement	Workers ' participation is weakened because of the limited opportunities to join.	"Since there is no mental health program" [P12].

Source: Created by the author, 2025

Disseminates Information. Transparency and accountability are crucial for effective mental health programs. Accessible information encourages worker participation and ensures organizational responsibility, fostering support. Validated, well-disseminated information is key to program success (Purtle et al., 2020). Accurate, reliable information influences participation; less knowledge about a program increases

resistance to involvement (Albright et al., 2021). One of the respondents pointed out, "I help raise awareness and propagate advocacy" [P42].

Organizes Well-defined Programs. Organizing relevant mental health programs is challenging. Programs must meet people's needs, reflect consensus, and be sustainably implemented to motivate adoption and achieve goals (Mcneill et al., 2022). Through tailored programs, repetitions of interventions and strategies may be avoided (Eccles et al., 2020). One respondent shared that "mental health programs respond to the needs of the workers by observation and somehow by conducting a interview or research" [P34].

Declines Engagement. Workplace mental health programs struggle with disengagement, particularly in low-income countries (Adams & Eaton, 2016; Benti et al., 2016; Kamimura et al., 2018, as cited in Boherom et al., 2022). People tend to disengage from mental health programs because they want to solve their problems; they find the program inconvenient, irrelevant, and unhelpful for their conditions, or they think that they do not need support from others (Lawn et al., 2021).

The conceptual framework serves as a guiding tool for local policymakers in facilitating the improvement of public service delivery and attaining good governance through the implementation of relevant mental health programs within local institutions of higher learning.
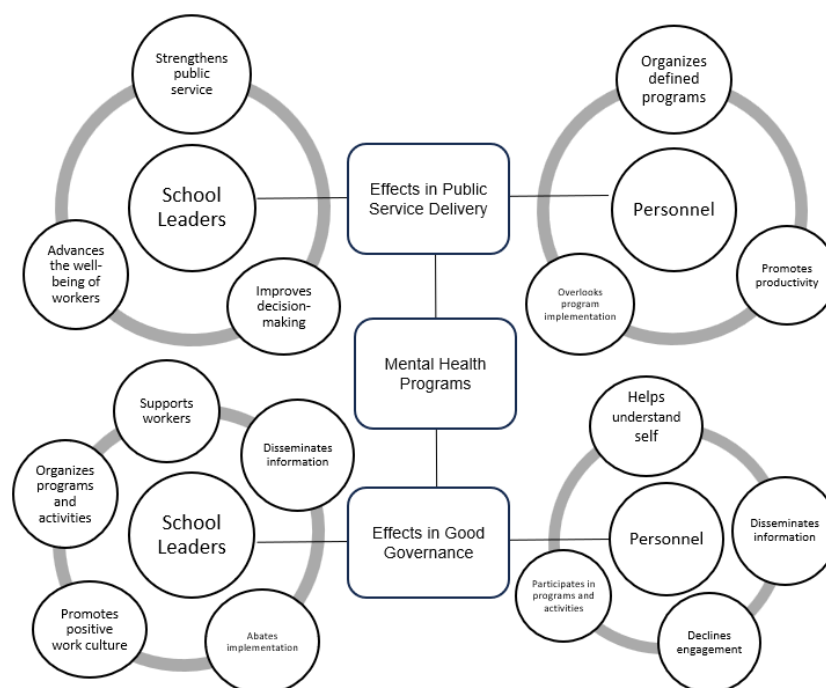
Figure 1 Framework of the Research Findings
Source: Created by the author, 2025

These findings will be appropriate for sensible reflection as they reveal the perspectives and experiences of school leaders as implementers and college personnel as direct beneficiaries of mental health programs.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that enhancing workplace efficiency involves the positive effects of mental health initiatives on public service delivery. Mental health programs strengthen public service, promote work productivity, foster a positive work culture, and increase employee participation. However, to ensure the effective implementation of such programs, it is crucial to place greater emphasis on adherence to the rule of law. Additionally, mental health programs play a critical role in improving good governance. Despite the positive influence of mental health programs on governance, a significant issue of disengagement persists, highlighting the need for increased participation.

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Author's Contributions

The author has contributed to the final manuscript. The contribution of the author: conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing original draft preparation, writing review, and editing. The author has read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The author has no conflict of interest related to this study.

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