

Cognitive Flexibility, Psychological Resilience, and Goal Commitment Among Academic and Administrative Officials of Philippine Private University System

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Abstract

An increasing demand for adaptive leadership and effective performance in higher education has highlighted the importance of psychological capacities among academic and administrative officials. In a Philippine private university system, cognitive flexibility, psychological resilience, and goal commitment are essential in managing complex institutional demands, policy changes, and organizational challenges. These variables enable officials to adapt their thinking, cope with stress, and sustain commitment toward institutional goals in dynamic academic environments. The findings of the study revealed that the respondents demonstrated a high level of cognitive flexibility, indicating that they are capable of shifting strategies, considering multiple perspectives, solving problems adaptively, and remaining open to change in dynamic environments. A high level of psychological resilience was also observed, suggesting that the respondents are able to regulate emotions, tolerate stress, adapt positively, and maintain confidence in their capabilities despite challenges and uncertainties in the workplace. Furthermore, the respondents exhibited a high level of goal commitment, reflecting strong dedication, persistence, effort investment, and emotional attachment toward institutional objectives and responsibilities. Test of relationship showed that there is a significant relationship between cognitive flexibility and psychological resilience, suggesting that individuals who are more adaptable in their thinking are also more capable of coping with stress and adversity. Similarly, cognitive flexibility was found to be significantly related to goal commitment, indicating that flexible individuals are more likely to remain engaged and committed to institutional goals. Moreover, psychological resilience was significantly related to goal commitment, implying that individuals who can effectively manage stress and recover from challenges are more likely to sustain effort and dedication toward goal attainment. These findings emphasize that the three variables are interconnected and contribute to effective leadership and organizational performance. Based on the results, an intervention program is proposed to sustain and further enhance these psychological capacities.

Keywords: Cognitive Flexibility, Psychological Resilience, Goal Commitment, Academic and Administrative Officials, Descriptive-Correlational Research

Introduction

In educational contexts, the psychological dimensions of leadership and management are increasingly

recognized as essential to effective practice, particularly in complex and rapidly changing environments. One key construct is cognitive flexibility, which refers to the ability to adjust thinking and behavior in response to changing demands. Recent evidence shows that cognitive flexibility is associated with better stress management and adaptive functioning in academic settings, as individuals with higher cognitive flexibility reported lower levels of academic stress (Alsaif et al., 2024). In educational leadership, this capacity is especially important, as school administrators are required to respond to uncertainty, solve problems, and make decisions in dynamic environments. Studies on school leadership during crisis situations further emphasize that leaders must demonstrate adaptability, creativity, and flexible thinking (Röhl et al., 2024). Supporting this, Philippine-based research shows that cognitive flexibility contributes to adaptive teaching strategies and responsiveness to changing educational demands (Morales & Baguio, 2025).

Alongside cognitive flexibility, psychological resilience has been identified as a crucial factor in sustaining performance and well-being in educational settings. Resilience is understood as the capacity to adapt positively and maintain functioning despite adversity, and it is shaped by both personal and organizational factors. Studies show that supportive leadership and access to job resources significantly enhance teacher resilience and help individuals cope with stress and organizational change (Daniilidou et al., 2022). Research on school leadership during crisis situations demonstrates that resilient leadership involves adaptability, sensemaking, and support for collective well-being (Elomaa et al., 2025). Transformational leadership also contributes to organizational resilience by strengthening collective efficacy and fostering supportive environments (Zadok et al., 2024). In the Philippine context, resilience among school leaders is supported by adaptive practices, social networks, leadership experience, and continuous professional development (Pastor et al., 2024; Jose & Cabual, 2025; Pangandoyon et al., 2024). Another important construct is goal commitment, which refers to the degree of determination individuals have toward achieving their goals. In educational settings, goal commitment is associated with persistence, motivation, and improved performance, as individuals who remain committed are more likely to sustain effort and adjust strategies. Research suggests that goal commitment is influenced by psychological resources such as self-efficacy and resilience. Cognitive flexibility contributes to persistence toward long-term goals through its positive effects on resilience and self-efficacy (Şahin et al., 2026). Similarly, cognitive flexibility is positively related to self-regulation and resilience, which support goal-directed behavior (Rahimi et al., 2024). In Philippine educational settings, resilient and adaptable administrators are more likely to sustain focus on institutional goals and ensure continuity of services (Gagani & Mananay, 2024).

The interrelationship among cognitive flexibility, psychological resilience, and goal commitment is increasingly supported in contemporary research. Cognitive flexibility enables individuals to reinterpret challenges and adopt adaptive coping strategies, which strengthens resilience and supports persistence toward goals. Studies show that adaptive capacities such as learning agility and resilience contribute to psychological well-being and academic success (Huang & Kou, 2025). Research also emphasizes that resilience is influenced by both individual competencies and environmental factors (OECD, 2021). Philippine-based evidence highlights that flexible thinking, resilience, and sustained goal commitment collectively contribute to effective leadership and organizational adaptability (Guadamor & Guadamor, 2025). Despite the growing body of research, there remains a need for more integrative studies focusing on school administrators in the Philippine context, which this study aims to address.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Assess the respondents' level of cognitive flexibility in terms of cognitive shifting, perspective taking, adaptive problem solving, and openness to change.
2. Determine the respondents' level of psychological resilience in terms of emotional regulation, stress tolerance, positive adaptation, and self-efficacy.
3. Examine the respondents' level of goal commitment in terms of goal importance, persistence, effort investment, and goal attachment.
4. Test the relationships among cognitive flexibility, psychological resilience, and goal commitment.

The primary goal is to examine how cognitive flexibility, psychological resilience, and goal commitment are assessed and how they relate with one another among academic and administrative officials. The secondary goal is to provide empirical evidence that may serve as a basis for enhancing leadership practices, professional development programs, and institutional support systems within educational settings. The succeeding sections present the study's methods, results, and discussion, offering insights that may inform organizational policies and interventions aimed at strengthening psychological and leadership capacities in higher education institutions.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationships among cognitive flexibility, psychological resilience, and goal commitment among academic and administrative officials in a Philippine private university system. A correlational design was deemed appropriate because the study sought to determine the strength and direction of associations between these variables without manipulating the respondents' work environment or intervening in their natural professional experiences. By using this design, the researchers were able to objectively analyze patterns and relationships that exist within the population, providing empirical evidence that can inform leadership practices, organizational policies, and psychological interventions in educational institutions.

Research Respondents

The population of the study comprised academic and administrative officials of the UPHS JONELTA campuses, which include Biñan, General Mariano Alvarez, Manila, Pangasinan, Isabela, and Pueblo de Panay campuses. The total population consists of 125 academic and administrative officials. The study utilized simple random sampling in selecting the respondents. From the total population of 125 officials, 81 respondents were randomly selected as participants of the study. Simple random sampling was used to ensure that every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected, thereby reducing bias and increasing the representativeness and generalizability of the results. Only the 81 completed and retrieved questionnaires were included in the final analysis of the study.

Research Instruments

The researchers used a non-standardized questionnaire consisting of three parts. Part one focused on the respondents' level of cognitive flexibility; part two focused on the respondents' level of psychological resilience; and part three focused on the respondents' level of goal commitment.

Instrumentation Validation

The researchers subjected the non-standardized questionnaire to face and content validation. A panel of experts—one in psychology, one in research, and one in statistics—reviewed the instrument to provide comments and suggestions. The researchers incorporated the recommended revisions and submitted the improved questionnaire to the adviser for final approval before administering it to the target respondents.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher administered the survey instrument to the respondents. First, the researchers listed all the academic and administrative officials of the UPHS JONELTA campuses. After having the list, the researcher personally conducted the data gathering and explained to the respondents the purpose of the study. Then, the researcher introduced herself to the academic and administrative officials of the UPHS JONELTA campuses, who answered the prepared questionnaire. The researcher also explained the procedures for answering the questionnaire and guaranteed confidentiality. The questionnaires were collected right after they had answered them. The gathered data were be tallied, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The following statistical tools were used to the gathered data: Weighted mean was used to determine the (a) respondents’ level of cognitive flexibility, (b) respondents’ level of psychological resilience, and (c) level of goal commitment. Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient will be used to determine if there is a significant relationship in the (a) respondents’ level of cognitive flexibility and their level of psychological resilience, (b) respondents’ level of cognitive flexibility and their level of goal commitment, (c) their level of psychological resilience and their level of goal commitment.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study are presented according to the research questions:

1. Assess the respondents’ level of cognitive flexibility in terms of cognitive shifting, perspective taking, adaptive problem solving, and openness to change.

Sub-variables	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Cognitive Shifting	4.47	Highly Flexible	3
Perspective Taking	4.59	Highly Flexible	2
Adaptive Problem-solving	4.46	Highly Flexible	4
Openness to Change	4.64	Highly Flexible	1
Overall Weighted Mean	4.54	Highly Flexible	

Table 1. Summary Table of the Level of Cognitive Flexibility

The findings revealed that the respondents demonstrated a highly flexible level of cognitive flexibility (WM = 4.54). Among the four dimensions, the highest mean score was observed in Openness to Change (WM = 4.64), followed by Perspective Taking (WM = 4.59), Cognitive Shifting (WM = 4.47), and Adaptive Problem-Solving (WM = 4.46). All indicators were interpreted as highly flexible, with Openness to Change obtaining the highest rating among the sub-variables.

These results suggest that the respondents demonstrate strong adaptability, particularly in embracing change and considering multiple perspectives, reflecting their ability to respond effectively to evolving

institutional demands. Their capacity to integrate different viewpoints and adjust strategies indicates high situational awareness and sound decision-making in dynamic environments. However, their slightly lower score in Adaptive Problem-Solving suggests that while they are highly flexible, there may still be room for strengthening structured problem-solving approaches in complex situations. This pattern supports Tagalog and Muegna (2024), who emphasized that cognitive flexibility enhances collaborative work environments by improving communication, interpersonal understanding, and conflict management.

2. Determine the respondents’ level of psychological resilience in terms of emotional regulation, stress tolerance, positive adaptation, and self-efficacy.

Sub-variables	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Emotional Regulation	4.47	Highly Resilient	3
Stress Tolerance	4.37	Highly Resilient	4
Positive Adaptation	4.52	Highly Resilient	2
Self-efficacy	4.57	Highly Resilient	1
Overall Weighted Mean	4.48	Highly Resilient	

Table 2. Summary Table of the Level of Psychological Resilience

The findings revealed that the respondents demonstrated a highly resilient level of psychological resilience (WM = 4.48). Among the four dimensions, Self-efficacy obtained the highest mean score (WM = 4.57), followed by Positive Adaptation (WM = 4.52), Emotional Regulation (WM = 4.47), and Stress Tolerance (WM = 4.37). All indicators were interpreted as highly resilient, with Self-efficacy obtaining the highest rating among the sub-variables.

These results suggest that the respondents demonstrate strong resilience, particularly in self-efficacy and positive adaptation, likely developed through exposure to complex institutional tasks and evolving work demands. Their ability to adapt positively to difficulties reflects confidence in managing challenges and adjusting strategies when necessary. In addition, their capacity to regulate emotions indicates effective coping mechanisms shaped by experience and professional responsibility. Overall, the findings suggest that the respondents possess a well-developed sense of resilience characterized by confidence, adaptability, and effective stress management. This finding is supported by Guillen-Rondon et al. (2023), who found that higher psychological resilience is linked to better stress management and job satisfaction among academic leaders.

3. Examine the respondents’ level of goal commitment in terms of goal importance, persistence, effort investment, and goal attachment.

Sub-variables	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Goal Importance	4.59	Highly Committed	1
Persistence	4.43	Highly Committed	4
Effort Investment	4.58	Highly Committed	2
Goal Attachment	4.49	Highly Committed	3
Overall Weighted Mean	4.52	Highly Committed	

Table 3. Summary of the Level of Goal Commitment

The findings revealed that the respondents demonstrated a highly committed level of goal commitment

(WM = 4.52). Among the dimensions, Goal Importance obtained the highest mean score (WM = 4.59), followed by Effort Investment (WM = 4.58), Goal Attachment (WM = 4.49), and Persistence (WM = 4.43). All indicators were interpreted as highly committed, with Goal Importance ranking highest among the sub-variables.

These results suggest that the respondents demonstrate strong dedication to institutional goals, particularly in recognizing their importance and consistently investing effort toward their attainment. This commitment is likely shaped by their understanding of institutional priorities and active involvement in goal-oriented responsibilities. Their alignment with organizational objectives reflects a sense of purpose that strengthens motivation and focus. Overall, the findings indicate that the respondents exhibit sustained commitment and consistent engagement in achieving institutional goals. This supports Chen and Chen (2022), who found that goal commitment significantly predicts academic performance and engagement among university faculty.

4. Test the relationships among digital literacy, self-efficacy, and psychological well being

Independent	Dependent	Pearson’s <i>r</i> ^a	<i>p</i> -value	Decision	Interpretation ^b
Cognitive Flexibility	Psychological Resilience	.675 (strong)	<.001	Reject H ₀	Significant

Table 4. Relationship Between the Level Cognitive Flexibility and Level of Psychological Resilience

As shown in the results, cognitive flexibility demonstrated a strong positive correlation with psychological resilience ($r = 0.675, p < .001$). This indicates that respondents with higher cognitive flexibility also tend to exhibit higher levels of emotional regulation, stress tolerance, positive adaptation, and self-efficacy. The finding suggests that flexible thinking enhances the ability to reframe challenges and apply adaptive coping strategies in difficult situations. In line with Alqahtani (2025), Ye et al. (2023), and Darvishi et al. (2024), who found that cognitive flexibility strengthens psychological resilience through adaptive coping and perspective shifting, the present results imply that greater cognitive flexibility supports stronger resilience among respondents.

Independent	Dependent	Pearson’s <i>r</i> ^a	<i>p</i> -value	Decision	Interpretation ^b
Cognitive Flexibility	Goal Commitment	.652 (strong)	<.001	Reject H ₀	Significant

Table 5. Relationship Between the Level of Cognitive Flexibility and Level of Goal Commitment

As shown in the results, cognitive flexibility demonstrated a strong positive correlation with goal commitment ($r = 0.652, p < .001$). This indicates that respondents with higher cognitive flexibility also tend to exhibit stronger goal commitment in terms of goal importance, persistence, effort investment, and goal attachment. The finding suggests that flexible thinking enhances the ability to adjust strategies and maintain focus on institutional goals despite challenges. In line with Masten et al. (2021), Robertson et al. (2021), and Klein et al. (2021), who found that adaptive cognitive functioning supports sustained goal-directed behavior, the present results imply that greater cognitive flexibility supports stronger goal commitment among respondents.

Independent	Dependent	Pearson's r^a	p -value	Decision	Interpretation ^b
Psychological Resilience	Goal Commitment	.713 (strong)	<.001	Reject H_0	Significant

Table 6 Relationship Between the Level of Psychological Resilience and Level of Goal Commitment

As shown in the results, psychological resilience demonstrated a strong positive correlation with goal commitment ($r = 0.713$, $p < .001$). This indicates that respondents with higher levels of emotional regulation, stress tolerance, positive adaptation, and self-efficacy also tend to exhibit stronger goal commitment in terms of goal importance, persistence, effort investment, and goal attachment. The findings suggest that resilient individuals are better able to sustain motivation, manage challenges, and remain focused on institutional goals. In line with Gokce and Guner (2024), Huang et al. (2023), and Locke and Latham (2020), who found that psychological resilience supports sustained goal-directed behavior through emotional regulation and adaptive coping, the present results imply that greater resilience strengthens goal commitment among respondents.

Conclusion and Implications

This study revealed that the respondents demonstrated high levels of cognitive flexibility, psychological resilience, and goal commitment. Correlation analyses showed that there are significant relationships between cognitive flexibility and psychological resilience, cognitive flexibility and goal commitment, and psychological resilience and goal commitment. These findings indicate that the three constructs are strongly interconnected, suggesting that flexible thinking is associated with better resilience, while both cognitive flexibility and psychological resilience contribute to stronger commitment toward institutional goals. Overall, the results highlight the importance of these psychological attributes in supporting adaptive functioning, emotional stability, and sustained motivation among the respondents. Drawing from these results, an intervention program titled MANCOM System-wide Quarterly 4P's Framework: "Pivot, Persevere, Perform, and Progress" is proposed to sustain and enhance the cognitive flexibility, psychological resilience, and goal commitment of academic and administrative officials across Philippine University Systems. The program focuses on strengthening adaptive thinking, emotional regulation, stress management, and goal-directed behavior through structured development activities and reflective practices. It aims to build on the respondents' existing strengths while addressing areas that may require further enhancement, ensuring continued effectiveness in managing institutional demands. Ultimately, the intervention seeks to promote long-term psychological well-being, stronger commitment, and improved organizational functioning within the academic setting.

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