

Determinants of hiring contract of service workers in the LGU of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro

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Abstract

This study examined the key determinants influencing the hiring of 240 randomly selected Contract of Service (COS) workers in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. Using an exploratory-sequential design, the qualitative phase was conducted through interviews to identify the determinants and qualifications of hiring COS. In contrast, the quantitative phase was conducted through a validated researcher-made questionnaire. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis and structural equation modeling in WarpPLS version 7.0. Findings revealed that the qualifications required for COS workers focus on three significant areas: educational attainment, technical skills, and work ethics, reflecting a balance of foundational knowledge, job competency, and professional behavior. Leadership and Management Skills are identified as the primary determinants of the need for COS workers, indicating that, beyond qualifications, their ability to lead and manage tasks effectively is crucial to workplace productivity. In addition, through Structural Equation Modelling, work ethics had the most significant influence on both leadership and management skills. In contrast, technical skills had a smaller yet significant effect on management skills. However, educational attainment and worker classification showed no significant influence. A set of targeted training and development programs was recommended to strengthen the competencies of COS workers, with a focus on ethics, leadership, management, and technical capabilities. The research offers valuable insights for LGU administrators to refine recruitment strategies and align them with organizational goals. The study encouraged future researchers to explore other institutional factors and compare COS hiring practices across different LGUs for a broader understanding.

Keywords: contract of service, work ethics, hiring determinants, leadership skills, Local Government Unit

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1. Introduction

The Civil Service Commission defines a Contract of Service (COS) as the engagement of an individual, private firm, non-governmental organization, or international entity to carry out a specific task or project that requires specialized or technical expertise and is to be completed within a defined period of not more than one (1) year. The engaged party is responsible for delivering the work independently, with minimal supervision from the contracting agency. In the Joint Circular Memorandum no. 2 series of 2020 issued by the Commission on Audit and Department of Budget and Management, it was stated that government agencies may contract the services of other government offices, private firms, NGOs, or individuals to perform tasks related to or supportive of their functions and day-to-day operations, regardless of whether such services are needed full-time or part-time (COA - DBM, 2020).

Under Section 77 of the Local Government Code of 1991, the local chief executive may hire emergency or casual employees authorized by the concerned sanggunian, without approval or attestation from the Civil Service Commission. Based on the Inventory of Government Human Resource (IGHR) report, a total of 939,771 government workers were on contracts of service or job orders as of June 30, 2024 (CSC, 2024). Out of the total, 679,427 government workers are employed by local government units. Region IV, however, contributes a total of 113,615 contracts of service, or job orders. The increasing number of contract service workers raised concerns among Philippine lawmakers in early 2022, who stated that government contractualization has worsened over the years. In its discussion on ending 'endo' at a private firm (2018), the Senate also stated that ending contractualization in the private sector will not be feasible if contractualization is also practiced in the government. However, in recognition of those in contract of service for 10 years and above, the Civil Service Commission extends eligibility for job orders and contract of service by issuing the Career Service Eligibility – Preference Rating (CSE-PR). This aims to strengthen the skills and capabilities of COS and JO workers to pass the Civil Service Exam and qualify for permanent positions (CSC, 2024). Recently, President Marcos extended the employment contract of service from December 31, 2024, to December 31, 2025, and instructed the development of the skills and capabilities of COS and JO workers by reeducating and training them and supporting them in passing the civil service examination.

On the other hand, the recruitment process in the public sector remains standard: receiving applications from the closing date through screening and ranking candidates, inviting them to interviews, and then extending a job offer (Mendelsohn, 2024). The initial screening is very cut-and-dried, as the minimum qualifications are assessed at this stage. However, qualifications for open positions typically apply to permanent roles. Qualifications for hiring contract-of-service workers remain undefined and not standardized. Moreover, political influence significantly affects recruitment and selection in the public sector. As noted by Fathmath et al. (2022), some leaders use their authority to appoint relatives and close friends. These issues contribute to the broader challenges surrounding contractualization in government service. Although previous studies have examined the extent of contractualization and the conditions faced by COS workers (Pamis & Edralin, 2020), limited research has focused on the actual qualifications and key determinants of COS employment in the local government sector. There remains a significant gap in understanding how local hiring decisions are made, what criteria are prioritized, and how these practices affect the quality, efficiency, and fairness of public service delivery. This study aims to fill that gap by understanding the qualifications and key determinants in hiring COS workers in the local government of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro.

Statement of the Problem - This study aimed to identify the determinants of hiring contract service workers in LGU San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. The researcher sought to answer the following questions: (1) What are the

needed qualifications in the hiring contract of service workers in the LGU of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro? (2) What are the determinants of the necessity of contract of service workers in the workplace? (3) What is the status of qualifications of the contract of service workers in terms of educational attainment, technical skills, and work ethics? (4) What are the classifications of contract of service workers in LGU San Jose, Occidental Mindoro? (5) What is the extent of the determinants of hiring contract of service workers in terms of leadership skills and management skills? (6) Are the determinants of contract of service workers significantly affected by their qualifications and classifications? (7) What training and development programs may be proposed to help contract of service workers improve their skills, knowledge, and abilities?

Significance of the Study - The study's results will benefit contract service workers in the public sector. This study may help them assess their knowledge and capabilities to maximize their potential in their duties and responsibilities, thereby supporting the execution of their agencies' functions. For department heads and supervisors, this study may help them assign functions to contract-of-service workers effectively. For local government units, this study will assist the Human Resource Department in determining the need to hire contract-of-service workers to perform local government functions. It will help them assess the required qualifications and the functions to be assigned to contract service workers. For future researchers, the insights presented in this study may serve as a reference or to validate related findings. Additionally, this study can serve as a supplementary source, providing background and an overview of the importance of hiring contract service workers to perform functions within local government units.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study - The purpose of this research was to identify the key factors that engage contract-of-service workers in the workplace. This study aimed to identify the determinants of hiring contract service workers in the LGU of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. It focused on the qualifications considered in hiring COS, such as Educational Attainment, Technical Skills, and Work Ethics, as well as the determinants of hiring COS, namely Leadership and Management Skills. The respondents in this study were limited to employees of the LGU San Jose. During the qualitative phase, participants included department heads and contractual and job-order workers; in the quantitative phase, only contractual and job-order workers were involved. It was conducted from January to July 2025, with data collection between March and June. A limitation of the study was the refusal of some prospective respondents to participate. However, the researcher made every effort to ensure a reasonable scope was covered to enhance the study.

2. Methodology

Research Design - The study used a mixed sequential exploratory design. This is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research aimed at achieving a deeper understanding and higher-level evidence of results (Kurtaliqi et al., 2024). The researcher conducted the qualitative phase, followed by quantitative data collection and analysis. A qualitative method was used, using an interview schedule to identify the determinants of hiring contract service workers in the workplace. The quantitative method, however, was implemented through data collected from the administered survey instruments. This method enabled the researcher to identify the relationships among the qualifications, classifications, and determinants of hiring COS in the LGU of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro.

Respondents of the Study - As of April 2025, the respondents of the study were contract service workers from the Local Government Unit of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. For the qualitative method, the respondents were 15 permanent employees and contract-of-service workers of the LGU of San Jose who were not included in the final administration of this study. For the quantitative method, the respondents were the contract service workers of the LGU of San Jose. As of April 30, 2025, the agency has 634 contract-of-service workers. Across the 17 participating departments, the Sangguniang Bayan Office had the most significant number of COS workers, with 104 and 39 respondents, respectively. This was followed by the Municipal Environment and Natural Resource Office (MENRO) with 126 personnel, from which 48 respondents were drawn. The Public Market Office and the Municipal Agriculture Office also had notably large job order populations, contributing 17 and 26 respondents, respectively. On the other hand, departments with moderate COS workforce sizes included the Municipal Health

Office (17 respondents out of 44), the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (14 out of 38), and the Municipal Engineering Office (22 out of 58). Meanwhile, smaller departments such as the Municipal Treasurer’s Office, Municipal Budget Office, and Municipal Human Resource Management Office each had relatively few COS workers, reflected in their correspondingly smaller respondent counts. In several departments, such as the Municipal Accounting Office, Municipal Environment and Natural Resource Office, and Public Market Office, only Job Order workers were present, with no contractual personnel. However, the Municipal Planning and Development Office had a predominantly contractual workforce, with 22 of 23 workers in this category.

From the total population, the Mayor’s Office was excluded because it was included in the instrument’s reliability testing. The Administrator’s Office was also excluded from the list because there was no contract of service for workers currently employed in that office at the time the study was conducted. Out of 634 contract of service workers, the sample size was 240, which was determined through Raosoft’s calculation with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level.

Research Instrument - The first instrument used in this study was the interview guide for the qualitative phase, administered to 15 permanent employees and contract service workers of the LGU of San Jose. For the quantitative phase, the main instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire, specifically designed to correspond with the interview results and the relevant literature of this study. The questionnaire items were structured as follows: twenty-one items measured the qualifications of COS workers; one item measured the classification of contract-of-service workers; and twenty items assessed the determinants of hiring COS workers. Respondents rated each item on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The validity of the questionnaire was ensured through the help of experts from the Graduate School professors of Divine Word College of San Jose and Occidental Mindoro State College. The validators' suggestions and comments on the instructions, question clarity, and relevance were incorporated into the final instrument. Revisions were made to improve clarity and ensure that each question was directly aligned with the construct being measured before proceeding to the reliability testing phase and the final field administration of the instrument. Thirty respondents (30) from the Mayor’s Office were asked to answer the 42 items of the researcher-made questionnaire. These respondents were not included in the final administration of the instrument. The instrument's inter-item reliability was assessed using the split-half method due to its one-time administration. The Spearman-Brown coefficient was computed using equal-length items to assess internal consistency. Reliability coefficients ranging from 0.896 to 0.961 indicate generally very high reliability for the questionnaire items; therefore, the questionnaire was recommended for administration to the final group of respondents.

Table 1
Reliability Analysis Results

| Item | Reliability Coefficients* | Number of Items | Interpretation |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Qualifications | | | |
| I. Technical Skills | 0.951 | 10 | Very High Reliability |
| II. Work Ethics | 0.896 | 10 | High Reliability |
| Determinants of Hiring | | | |
| I. Leadership Skills | 0.926 | 10 | Very High Reliability |
| II. Management Skills | 0.961 | 10 | Very High Reliability |

*Based on Spearman-Brown coefficients of equal length

Data Gathering Procedure - The researcher obtained permission from the LGU of San Jose to conduct the study to identify the determinants of the hiring of contract of service in the local government unit of San Jose. A request letter was submitted and subsequently approved by the Human Resource Department Head, and she endorsed her good character to the department heads. The data-gathering process was carried out in two phases from March to June 2025. Initially, the researcher interviewed a random sample of 15 LGU workers who were not included in the final administration of the study, including permanent employees and contract-of-service workers. The results were then analyzed and used to develop the thematic map of the study. Following the initial phase, the researcher distributed and collected the validated questionnaires on the scheduled administration date. The researcher personally distributed and retrieved the questionnaires to maintain the confidentiality of responses. The

collected data were organized, coded, and analyzed using appropriate statistical methods to address the study's problem statements.

Statistical Treatment of the Data - For the qualitative method, thematic analysis was used to identify the determinants of hiring contract-of-service workers. To formulate the study's final thematic map, the gathered data were transcribed and familiarized, coded to identify initial themes, and refined and developed into the final set of themes. For the quantitative research, structural equation modeling was conducted using WarpPLS 7.0. Warp Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) software was used to analyze the collected data.

Ethical Considerations - The researcher obtained permission from the Local Government Unit of San Jose to collect data and explicitly stated the study objectives before administering the questionnaires. All respondents in both the quantitative and qualitative phases had the option to participate or not in the study. The confidentiality of respondents' data was maintained throughout the collection, analysis, and reporting of findings. It was guaranteed that all data and results collected were used exclusively for the study. This study is original and is not copied from any existing study. The researcher used the American Psychological Association (APA) style to give credit to the other research studies used as references. Proper citations for the previous studies and references were used to avoid plagiarism and give credit and acknowledgement to the proper authors.

3. Results and Discussions

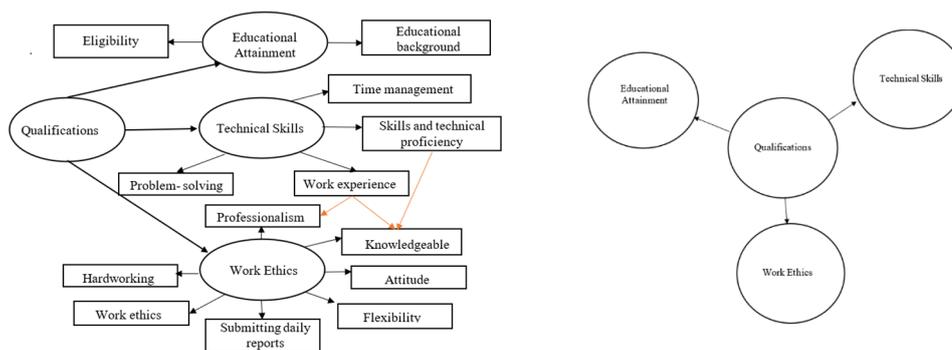


Figure 1. Developed and Final Thematic Map for Qualifications of Hiring COS

The participant responses regarding the qualifications of a Contract of Service (COS) worker were grouped into three dimensions: Educational Attainment, Technical Skills, and Work Ethics. These dimensions were developed by clustering 48 individual codes reflecting respondents' expectations and perceptions. Educational Attainment has two indicators, namely, eligibility and educational background. This includes 11 codes and reflects the foundational qualifications expected of COS workers. Codes such as Good educational background, Bachelor's degree, College graduate, and Civil Service Passer were frequently mentioned. These indicate that respondents view formal education as a non-negotiable requirement. Including civil service eligibility further reinforces the expectation that COS workers meet government standards of competence and credibility.

Language proficiency in both English and Filipino also underscores the importance of effective communication rooted in educational experience. The technical skills, however, have four (4) indicators, namely, time management, skills and technical proficiency, work experience, and problem-solving. This is the largest category, having 19 codes, highlighting the emphasis on job-related competencies. The codes, which include proficiency in MS applications (Excel and Word), problem-solving, technical capabilities, work experience, and Clerical duties, underscore the importance of both hard and soft technical skills. These skills ensure that a COS worker is not only technologically literate but also adaptable and capable of managing a range of operational tasks. The recurrence of the work experience code further suggests that prior exposure to relevant roles is highly valued. In terms of work ethic, seven (7) indicators were identified: professionalism, knowledge, attitude, flexibility, daily

report submission, work ethic, and hard work. Respondents considered these qualities as important as technical proficiency, as they ensured COS workers maintained a responsible and respectful presence in the workplace. The repetition of attitude-related terms across responses indicates that interpersonal behavior and personal integrity are considered crucial to fostering a professional and positive workplace culture. After a thorough understanding of the themes and sub-themes, the researcher identifies three final themes: Educational Attainment, Technical Skills, and Work Ethic. These findings support previous studies that, during the hiring process, most hiring practitioners considered candidates' skills and characteristics (Huber, 2018), gender (Protsch, 2021), educational attainment (Al Hatmi, 2022), and technical skills (Ibrayeva, 2025).

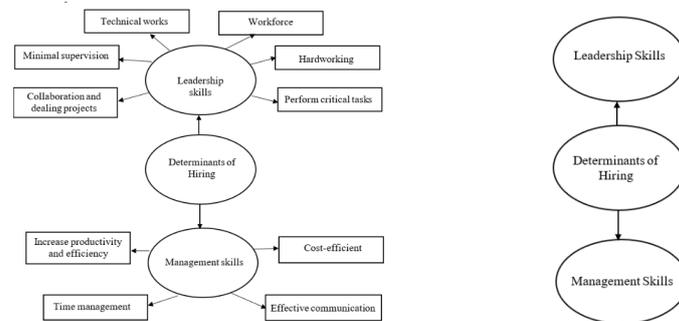


Figure 2. Developed and Final Thematic Map for Determinants of Hiring COS

Two final themes were derived from clustering 17 individual codes, reflecting respondents' expectations and perceptions. These themes are: Leadership Skills and Management Skills. The Leadership Skills were composed of six (6) indicators: informal supervision, technical work, Workforce, performing critical tasks, Hardworking, and Collaboration and project management. These indicators highlight the importance of being dependable, self-directed, and team-oriented—qualities that reflect informal leadership and initiative in the workplace. Management Skills, however, consisted of four (4) indicators: cost efficiency, Effective communication, Time Management, and increased productivity and efficiency. The results suggest that hiring decisions are not based solely on formal qualifications or experience but are primarily influenced by a candidate's capacity to lead and manage effectively. Developing the final themes of Leadership Skills and Management Skills, as shown in Figure 7, helped the researcher identify the key determinants of hiring COS. The final themes on the determinants of hiring COS suggest that leadership and management skills are essential to organizational performance and effectiveness. Leadership skills primarily focus on people, while management focuses on processes and resources (Azad et al., 2017). This distinction allows organizations to maximize efficiency by recognizing the specific contributions of each role

Table 2
Status of Respondents' Qualifications in Terms of Educational Attainment (n=240)

| Educational Attainment | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| With Master's degree units | 3 | 1.3 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 174 | 72.5 |
| College Undergraduate | 33 | 13.8 |
| Technical/Vocational | 10 | 4.2 |
| High School Graduate | 20 | 8.3 |
| Total | 240 | 100.0 |

Table 2 presents the status of respondents' qualifications by educational attainment. A majority of the respondents, 174 individuals or 72.5%, hold a bachelor's degree. This is followed by 33 respondents (or 13.8%) who are college undergraduates, and 20 individuals (8.3%) are high school graduates. Additionally, 10 respondents, or 4.2%, have completed technical or vocational education. Only three (3) individuals, or 1.3%, have pursued postgraduate studies and earned units toward a master's degree. The data show that most contract service workers and job order workers have completed some higher education, with many holding a bachelor's degree. This result aligns with Al Hatmi (2022), who found that educational level influences a company's hiring decisions, as it is a

strong indicator of job applicants' trainability. It is essential for a country's growth and progress (Swamy, 2023). Kulkarni et al. (2015) further emphasized that hiring managers are willing to interview and hire candidates whose education or experience exceeds a job's requirements. However, a study by Bills (1988), as cited in Tholen (2020), emphasized that education credentials are only one of many factors influencing recruitment and selection, not the dominant factor.

Table 3
Mean Status of Respondents' Qualifications in Terms of Technical Skills

| Indicators | Mean | Interpretation |
|---|------|----------------|
| 1. I am proficient in MS Applications, e.g., Word, Excel, etc. | 3.82 | High |
| 2. I can create effective presentations using tools like PowerPoint. | 3.76 | High |
| 3. I am capable of using cloud storage services (e.g., Google Drive, Dropbox) | 3.63 | High |
| 4. I am familiar with using tools such as printers and scanners. | 4.07 | High |
| 5. I can collaborate with teams using technical tools. | 3.71 | High |
| 6. I know how to manage digital files properly. | 3.83 | High |
| 7. I can troubleshoot technical issues effectively. | 3.50 | High |
| 8. I have the ability to generate structured reports. | 3.58 | High |
| 9. I can quickly adapt to new technologies when required. | 3.89 | High |
| 10. I regularly expand my knowledge in technical areas relevant to my career. | 3.95 | High |
| Overall Mean | 3.78 | High |

Table 3 presents self-assessed ability across technical skills, measured by weighted mean scores. The results for all ten indicators fall within the high category, indicating strong overall technical competency among the respondents. The highest-rated skills include familiarity with tools such as printers and scanners (4.07), continuous learning in technical areas relevant to their careers (3.95), and adaptability to new technologies (3.89). These suggest that respondents are eager to gain new technical knowledge to adapt to emerging technologies for professional growth and effectiveness in the workplace. Other competencies, such as digital file management (3.83), proficiency with Microsoft applications (3.82), creating effective presentations (3.76), and collaborating with teams using technical tools (3.71), were also rated highly, indicating a strong foundation in commonly used digital tools. The lowest, yet still high, ratings were for troubleshooting technical issues (3.50), generating structured reports (3.58), and cloud storage service usage capability (3.63), indicating these may be slightly less developed areas within the group. With an overall mean of 3.78, the data suggest that respondents possess competent technical skills and are capable of supporting their professional tasks and responsibilities. The result supports Ibrayeva's (2025) findings, emphasizing the importance of technical skills as a basis for employers' hiring qualification requirements. Technological literacy is also among the top qualifications employers identified in the Future of Jobs Report (2025). Possessing strong technical know-how not only makes a candidate more competitive and appealing (Alexandria, 2019) but also contributes to organizational growth and innovation, as technical competencies are increasingly recognized as key drivers of success (Lartey, 2024). As the need for technical know-how grew, education adapted—unions and trade schools promoted vocational training, and society increasingly recognized the importance of technical education (Saari et al., 2021).

Table 4
Mean Status of Respondents' Qualifications in Terms of Work Ethics

| Indicators | Mean | Interpretation |
|--|------|----------------|
| 1. I treat all individuals without bias. | 4.23 | Very High |
| 2. I treat colleagues with respect regardless of their position. | 4.27 | Very High |
| 3. I listen to others' ideas even if they differ from mine. | 4.22 | Very High |
| 4. I demonstrate punctuality. | 4.02 | High |
| 5. I remain calm in stressful situations. | 4.12 | High |
| 6. I am honest about my mistakes. | 4.32 | Very High |
| 7. I maintain confidentiality when required by my role. | 4.26 | Very High |
| 8. I take initiative without waiting to be told what to do. | 4.05 | High |
| 9. I take full responsibility for the outcomes of my work. | 4.27 | Very High |
| 10. I commit to maintaining high standards of professionalism in all interactions. | 4.20 | Very High |
| Overall Mean | 4.20 | Very High |

Contract service workers' work ethic is generally perceived as very high, with a composite mean of 4.20, as shown in Table 4. The highest-rated indicator is honesty about mistakes, with a weighted mean of 4.32. This is

followed closely by respecting colleagues regardless of position and taking full responsibility for work outcomes, with weighted means of 4.27 and 4.26, respectively. These results reflect a high level of integrity, accountability, and respect for others—traits essential to fostering a culture of trust and professionalism in the workplace. Other indicators that received very high ratings, with weighted means ranging from 4.20 to 4.23, include treating all individuals without bias, listening to diverse opinions, and maintaining high standards of professionalism, reinforcing the idea that respondents uphold inclusivity and strong interpersonal ethics in their professional interactions. Although slightly lower, indicators such as punctuality, initiative, and stress management were still rated high, with means ranging from 4.02 to 4.12. These are still considered strong but slightly less prominent work ethic attributes. The findings indicate that respondents place great importance on workplace ethics. The likelihood of employment and access to better job opportunities increases when individuals possess a strong work ethic (Herrity, 2023). As noted by Miñon (2017), the educators in the study identified it as the guiding value system that influences their work and lives. The results are consistent with Simonsen et al. (2015), who found that general managers and human resource professionals ranked a candidate’s ability to perform the job—classified as a characteristic of work ethic—as the most important factor in their hiring decisions. Similarly, Huber (2018) emphasized that strong work ethics, coupled with a positive attitude, stand among the most essential soft skills and are regarded as key determinants of employability

Table 5
Status of Respondents’ Classification of Contract of Service Workers

| Classification | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Contractual | 82 | 34.2 |
| Job Order | 158 | 65.8 |
| Total | 240 | 100.0 |

The majority of respondents were classified as Job Order workers, accounting for 158 individuals (or 65.80 percent of the total), while 82 individuals (or 32.20 percent) were classified as Contractual workers. They were classified as Contractual. The results in Table 5 indicate that the LGU of San Jose chose a more cost-efficient JO arrangement, under which compensation is based on daily government wage rates plus a premium of up to 20%, compared with contractual workers, whose pay is aligned with prevailing market rates (COA - DBM, 2020). Both contractual and job order workers do not have an existing employer-employee relationship; thus, they do not receive the benefits granted to regular employees (Cristobal & Resurreccion, 2014, as cited in Pamis & Edralin, 2020; Respicio & Co., 2025).

Table 6
Mean Extent of Determinants of Hiring Contract of Service Workers in Terms of Leadership Skills and Management Skills

| Indicators (Leadership Skills) | Mean | Interpretation |
|---|------|----------------|
| 1. My colleague feels comfortable expressing their ideas to me. | 4.02 | High |
| 2. I encourage input from others before doing tasks. | 4.06 | High |
| 3. I handle criticisms without taking them personally. | 3.98 | High |
| 4. I promote a positive working environment. | 4.26 | Very High |
| 5. I manage interpersonal conflict calmly. | 4.02 | High |
| 6. I am aware of how my emotions affect my behavior. | 4.12 | High |
| 7. I embrace new ideas. | 4.29 | Very High |
| 8. I analyze problems thoroughly before taking action. | 4.10 | High |
| 9. I am capable of organizing tasks in the absence of direct supervision. | 4.08 | High |
| 10. I promote teamwork over individual competition. | 4.18 | High |
| Overall Mean | 4.11 | High |
| Indicators (Management Skills) | | |
| 1. I allocate sufficient time to each task according to its priority. | 4.05 | High |
| 2. I have the ability to manage time efficiently to meet task deadlines. | 4.06 | High |
| 3. I minimize time spent on non-essential activities. | 3.95 | High |
| 4. I ensure resources are used efficiently. | 4.05 | High |
| 5. I monitor the progress of my work from time to time. | 4.11 | High |
| 6. I can do basic task planning within the organization. | 3.96 | High |
| 7. I support a culture of continuous learning. | 4.18 | High |
| 8. I support the team in adapting to new processes. | 4.20 | Very High |

| | | |
|--|------|------|
| 9. I respond proactively to unexpected challenges. | 4.02 | High |
| 10. I can coordinate issues in the workflow with supervisors promptly. | 4.06 | High |
| Overall Mean | 4.06 | High |

Leadership skills focus on directing, aligning people, motivating, and inspiring (Thorpe, 2016). It is one of the organizational regulators (Halim et al., 2023). The results indicate that leadership skills are considered important and are generally assessed at a high level when hiring contract-of-service workers, with an overall weighted mean of 4.11. Consistent with the findings of John Richey & Rhia (2016), employers across various institutions recognize problem-solving and decision-making as key indicators of a competitive candidate. These competencies are integral components of effective leadership. Among all indicators, embracing new ideas and promoting a positive working environment were rated very high, with weighted means of 4.29 and 4.26, respectively. These findings highlight the premium placed on adaptability, innovation, and a positive workplace culture. This finding supports the studies of Amoah-Mensah & Darkwa (2020) and Amegayibor (2021) that leadership styles significantly affect the employee’s performance. Moreover, although still rated high, the lowest-rated indicators were managing interpersonal conflicts calmly and making colleagues feel comfortable expressing their ideas, both with a weighted mean of 4.02. Overall, the results support that leadership competencies play a significant role in shaping hiring decisions for contract service workers, with particular emphasis on adaptability, collaboration, and a positive work environment.

The results in Table 6 indicate that management skills are given considerable weight in hiring Contract of Service (COS) workers, as reflected in an overall weighted mean of 4.06. Among the ten indicators, supporting the team in adapting to new processes was rated very high, with a weighted mean of 4.20. This suggests strong adaptability and support for change, which are critical skills in dynamic workplaces. Respondents also expressed high regard for a supportive culture of continuous learning, timely monitoring of work progress, efficient coordination of workflow issues with supervisors, and effective time management to meet task deadlines, with weighted means ranging from 4.06 to 4.18. The indicators that received the lowest ratings—though still within the High category—were basic task planning within the organization (3.96) and minimizing time spent on non-essential activities (3.95), suggesting areas for further improvement. The remaining indicators had weighted average means between 4.05 and 4.02, including allocating sufficient time to each task according to its priority, using resources efficiently, and responding proactively to unexpected challenges. Managers are frequently tasked with functions of planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, problem-solving, and controlling (Thorpe, 2016). A study by Klus & Muller (2020) found that effective management also requires a combination of technical, human, and conceptual skills.

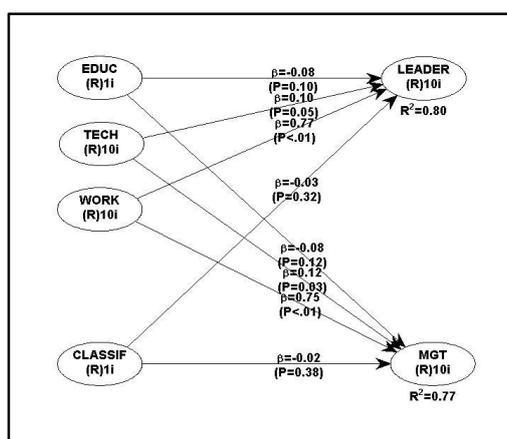


Figure 3. The Structural Model

The structural model of the hypothesized relationship between the two sets of exogenous variables and the endogenous variable, determinants of contract of service workers, is disclosed in Figure 3. The Structural Equation

Modeling (SEM) was conducted using WarpPLS version 7.0, with hypothesis testing set at the 0.05 significance level ($p < 0.05$). The status of qualifications of contract of service workers, considering Educational Attainment (EDUC), Technical Skills (TECH), and Work Ethics (WORK), is hypothesized to significantly affect the determinants of contract of service workers, specifically Leadership Skills (LEADER) and Management Skills (MGT). There are 10-item indicators for each of these determinant factors, as well as for technical skills and work ethic. The computed Beta coefficients (β) are reported in the model, with corresponding p-values shown to 2 decimal places. These coefficients indicate the strength of the association, as supported by the p-values, confirming its significance. The combined effect of service workers' qualifications and classifications on the mean extent of determinants of hiring for contract service workers shows high R2 values of 0.80 for leadership skills and 0.77 for management skills. These suggest that service workers' qualifications and classifications account for 80% and 77%, respectively. Thus, the remaining percentage is attributable to other variables not included in the study.

Table 7
Path Coefficients and p-values for Ho

| Path | Beta (β) Coefficient | p-value* | Interpretation |
|--|------------------------------|----------|--------------------|
| Ho1: A. Qualifications→Determinants of Hiring | | | |
| EDUC→LEADER | -0.083 | 0.097 | Not Significant |
| TECH→LEADER | 0.102 | 0.054 | Not Significant |
| WORK→LEADER | 0.775 | <0.001 | Highly Significant |
| EDUC→MGT | -0.076 | 0.116 | Not Significant |
| TECH→MGT | 0.122 | 0.027 | Significant |
| WORK→MGT | 0.752 | <0.001 | Highly Significant |
| B. Classifications→Determinants of Hiring | | | |
| CLASSIF→LEADER | -0.031 | 0.316 | Not Significant |
| CLASSIF→MGT | -0.019 | 0.384 | Not Significant |

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

Eight path coefficients, ranging from -0.031 to 0.775, are reported in Table 7, indicating the strength or weakness of the relationships between qualifications and classification and the determinants of hiring contract service workers. Work Ethic shows a strong positive association with Leadership Skills ($\beta=0.775$, $p < 0.001$) and Management Skills ($\beta=0.752$, $p < 0.001$). Considering service workers' qualifications in terms of their Technical Skills, the beta value indicates a low but significant association with Management Skills (beta = 0.122, $p = 0.027$). It is also clearly stated that the service workers' Educational Attainment, as one of the qualifications, does not constitute a determining factor in hiring contract service workers. This result suggests that while Educational Attainment is a significant factor in hiring, it is not a reliable indicator of an individual's ability to demonstrate Leadership or Management Skills in the workplace. This result was supported by Tholen (2020), who found that employees can be effective professionals and still acquire skills regardless of their educational attainment. Their findings suggest that while formal education provides foundational knowledge and theoretical understanding, it does not necessarily translate into improved workplace performance.

The significant connection between Work Ethics and Leadership and Management Skills, however, was supported by Miñon's (2017) study, which found that educators agreed that Work Ethics serves as a guiding value system that influences their work and lives. These findings suggest that ethical traits—such as responsibility, discipline, and integrity—promote a strong sense of accountability and initiative, both essential to effective team leadership and task management. Employees who consistently demonstrate ethical behavior are more likely to earn colleagues' trust, make sound decisions, and contribute positively to a healthy work environment. From an organizational perspective, cultivating a workforce with a strong work ethic enhances operational efficiency, promotes a culture of excellence, and reduces absenteeism, misconduct, and turnover. Thus, integrating work ethic as a key criterion in talent acquisition not only increases the likelihood of employment and better job opportunities (Huber, 2018) but also supports both individual and organizational growth.

The results above support rejecting the hypothesis that the determinants of hiring contract of service workers are not significantly affected by their qualifications and accepting the hypothesis that the determinants of hiring contract of service workers are not significantly affected by their classifications. The findings indicate a strong,

significant effect of work ethic and technical know-how on service workers' leadership and management skills, which helps explain how organizations make hiring decisions based on the skills, knowledge, and competencies prospective workers bring to the workplace (Becker, 1964, as cited in Weiss, 2015). Their Technical Skills are also important, particularly in how they manage their work. Meanwhile, the classification of service workers, whether contractual or on a job order status, does not affect how they apply their Leadership and Management Skills in the work environment.

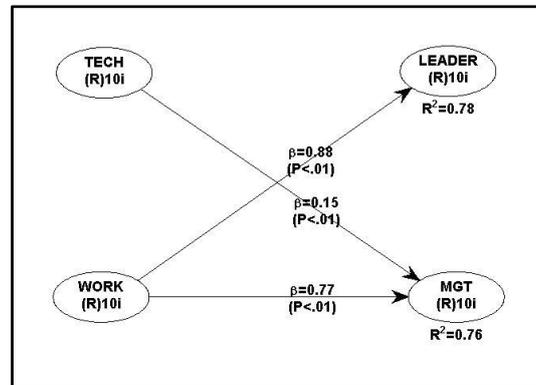


Figure 4. The Emerging Model

Given that five (5) connections showed no significant links between the variables, as revealed in the previous structural model, a new model emerges and is shown in Figure 4. This new model discloses the standardized estimates of the path (β), effect sizes (R^2), and p-values. A notable increase in the beta coefficients is evident: Work Ethic was associated with Leadership and Management Skills, and Technical Skills were associated with Management Skills. The new model also shows that Work Ethics accounts for a large share of the variance in both Leadership ($R^2=0.78$ or 78%) and Management skills ($R^2=0.76$ or 76%).

Table 8
Standardized Estimates of the Path in the Emerging Model

| Hypothesis | Standardized Estimates (β) | Standard Error | p-value* | Effect Coefficient** | Effect Size |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------|----------|----------------------|-------------|
| Ho1: Qualifications→Determinants of Hiring | | | | | |
| WORK→LEADER | 0.885 | 0.055 | <0.001 | 0.783 | Large |
| TECH→MGT | 0.152 | 0.063 | 0.008 | 0.097 | Small |
| WORK→MGT | 0.769 | 0.056 | <0.001 | 0.665 | Large |

*Significant at $p<0.05$

** Effect size coefficient: 0.02 – small, 0.15 – medium, 0.30 – large

The three standardized estimates of the path, Qualifications →Determinants of Hiring, are disclosed in the emerging model table, highlighting as well the effect sizes, standard error, and p-values. It can be noted that the path, Classifications→Determinants of Hiring, is not included anymore due to its negligible coefficients generated by the prior structural model. This result supports the null hypothesis that service workers' educational qualifications have no significant effect on the determinants of service worker hiring. Work Ethic had a strong effect on the determinants of hiring service workers, particularly Leadership Skills (0.783) and Management Skills (0.665). Management Skills show a small but significant influence from technical skills, with an effect coefficient of 0.097. These values favor the rejection of the null hypothesis and therefore ascertain that Work Ethics is a highly contributing factor to the determinants of hiring workers. This is confirmed by p-values < 0.001 and < 0.008 , indicating strong significance for the relationship between the aforementioned variables. Moreover, standard errors of 0.055 to 0.063 are negligible, indicating the samples' accuracy relative to the conclusions drawn about the overall service population. The findings suggest that work ethic plays a significant role in hiring service workers, particularly in relation to Leadership and Management Skills. The strong effect coefficient of 0.783 between Work Ethics and Leadership Skills implies that individuals who demonstrate high ethical standards are more likely to exhibit leadership traits such as initiative, responsibility, and influence, which are highly valued by employers even in non-supervisory roles. Technical Skills also play a vital role in enhancing leadership and Management Skills.

These results were supported by Temelkova (2018), who states that, to achieve technological advancement, leaders and managers should also enhance their knowledge, capabilities, and skills. The Leadership and Management Skills were also significantly affected by Technical Skills (Klus & Muller, 2020) and Work Ethics (Sakr et al., 2022).

Table 9
Proposed Training and Development Programs for Contract of Service Workers

| Focus Area | Program Title | Objectives | Suggested Content | Mode of Delivery | Budget | Success Indicator |
|--------------------|--|---|---|---------------------------|---------|--|
| Technical Skills | Digital Tools in the Digital Age | Improve MS Office, cloud services, file management, and reporting skills | MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Google Drive, file organization, and report templates | Hands-on training | P25,000 | 85% of participants have improved in the usage of digital tools |
| | Basic Troubleshooting & Tech Adaptability Bootcamp | Enhance problem-solving and adaptability to new technologies | Troubleshooting basics, software updates, and adaptive learning platforms | Simulation & webinars | P25,000 | 80% of participants can independently troubleshoot common technical issues |
| Work Ethics | Professionalism & Integrity in the Workplace Seminar | Promote ethical behavior, accountability, and respect in the workplace | Honesty, punctuality, confidentiality, responsibility, bias awareness | Workshop | P30,000 | 90% of participants have increased ethical awareness |
| | The Key to Effective Communication and Inclusivity Seminar | Enhance respectful dialogue and inclusive practices | Active listening, respectful discourse, handling conflict, and teamwork | Interactive seminar | P25,000 | 80% apply communication strategies in role-play exercises |
| | Emotional Intelligence at Work | Help manage emotions, stay calm under stress, and build better relationships. | Self-awareness, empathy, stress management, and interpersonal skills | Experiential learning | P20,000 | 80% report improved emotional self-management via the feedback form |
| Leadership Skills | Leadership Development | Build autonomy, initiative, and team collaboration skills | Team dynamics, motivation, conflict resolution, situational leadership | Blended learning | P30,000 | 85% demonstrate leadership traits in group tasks or simulations |
| | Innovation and Idea Generation Training | Enhance innovation and critical problem-solving skills | Idea pitching, design thinking, and feedback systems | Small group workshops | P30,000 | 70% of participants proposed new ideas and solutions |
| Focus Area | Program Title | Objectives | Suggested Content | Mode of Delivery | Budget | Success Indicator |
| Management Skills | The Art of Time Management | Enhance efficiency and task prioritization skills | SMART goals, scheduling tools, prioritization frameworks | Microlearning series | P5,000 | 85% were able to identify activities necessary in a time management plan |
| | Strategic Utilization of Resources | Promote cost-efficient and effective use of resources | Lean practices, resource planning, and minimizing waste | Case-based learning | P5,000 | 80% of the resources were used, and there was at least a 50% reduction in waste. |
| | Continuous Learning & Adaptability Program | Encourage lifelong learning and openness to new processes | Learning management systems (LMS), training feedback loops, and peer learning | Mentorship + eLearning | P15,000 | 80% register or engage in follow-up learning platforms |
| Educational Growth | Scholarship & Career Pathways Orientation | Inform about further education and upskilling opportunities | Scholarship options, career mapping, and professional certifications | Info session + counseling | P15,000 | 60% of participants pursue at least one education or training opportunity |

Training and Development Programs play a crucial role in enabling organizations to fully maximize the potential of not only high-performing employees but also those who exhibit strong commitment and readiness to assume greater responsibilities (Rodriguez & Walter, 2017). Their study further highlights that such programs serve as powerful motivators, enhancing both individual growth and collective advancement toward short-term objectives and long-term strategic goals. In line with this, the proposed Training and Development Programs are designed to holistically improve the competencies of Contract of Service (COS) workers by focusing on five key areas: Technical Skills, Work Ethics, Leadership Skills, Management Skills, and Educational Growth. Programs such as The Digital Tools in the Digital Age and Basic Troubleshooting & Tech Adaptability Bootcamp are recommended under Technical Skills. These programs aim to enhance workers' proficiency in software applications, cloud platforms, and basic troubleshooting through hands-on and simulation-based learning. To promote ethical behavior, accountability, and interpersonal sensitivity, programs such as the Professionalism & Integrity in the Workplace Seminar, the Key to Effective Communication and Inclusivity Seminar, and Emotional Intelligence at Work are proposed, using workshops and experiential learning to cultivate a respectful and inclusive workplace culture. For leadership skills, programs should include Leadership Development and Innovation and Idea Generation Training, which aim to build initiative, collaboration, and creative problem-solving through blended and small-group learning formats. Three programs are proposed to address Management Skills, namely: The Art of Time Management, Strategic Utilization of Resources, and the Continuous Learning & Adaptability Program. These programs aim to equip workers with tools for efficiency, prioritization, and resource optimization, using microlearning and case-based strategies. These programs are important for cultivating the COS's managerial strength (Guterman, 2023). Lastly, under educational growth, Scholarship & Career Pathways Orientation is suggested to support COS workers in preparing for long-term career advancement by informing them about further education, scholarships, and upskilling opportunities.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the summary of findings, the study concludes that the qualifications required for hiring Contract of Service (COS) workers in LGU San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, center on Educational Attainment, Technical Skills, and Work Ethics, showing a balance of knowledge, competency, and professionalism. Leadership and management skills are the primary determinants of the need for COS workers, underscoring the importance of their ability to lead and manage tasks effectively. Most COS workers hold a bachelor's degree, possess strong technical skills, and highly value work ethics, reflecting their competence and professionalism. They also demonstrate strong leadership and management skills, indicating their capability to motivate others, organize work, and solve problems. The LGU employs more Job Order workers than Contractual workers, suggesting a preference for flexible staffing. The study further reveals that Technical Skills and Work Ethics significantly influence leadership and management performance, with Work Ethics being the most impactful, while Educational Attainment shows no effect. Employment classification—whether Contractual or Job Order—does not influence how workers apply leadership and management skills. Overall, the findings underscore the need for ongoing training and development programs to enhance COS workers' skills, knowledge, and abilities.

Based on the findings and conclusions, several recommendations are proposed. The Local Government Unit of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, may strengthen the technical skills and work ethic of Contract of Service (COS) workers by developing targeted training and seminars and by integrating leadership and management development into its capacity-building programs. To further enhance COS qualifications, the LGU may invest in upskilling and specialization initiatives, offer advanced training and certifications, and recognize workers who consistently demonstrate a strong work ethic. Continuous development opportunities—such as leadership training, mentoring, and project management workshops—may also be provided, along with assigning COS workers to roles that require initiative and coordination. The LGU is likewise encouraged to review its workforce composition and hiring practices to ensure alignment with legal guidelines and service delivery needs. Additionally, competency-based assessments may be prioritized, and targeted training programs focusing on practical skills, ethical standards, and leadership competencies may be implemented for all workers regardless of employment status. For future

researchers, it is recommended to examine further the relationship between qualifications and hiring determinants across agencies and to explore additional factors that may influence hiring, such as project seasonality, funding availability, political dynamics, and varying departmental workloads.

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