

## WORK ENVIRONMENT AND PERFORMANCE OF JUNIOR BUSINESS COUNSELORS IN DTI REGION 02, PHILIPPINES

LEIGH NADINE GO-ELDUCAL<sup>1</sup>, DAHLEE S. PASCUA<sup>2</sup>

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-0246-0796><sup>1</sup>, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5946-4932><sup>2</sup>

[leighnadine.g.elducal@isu.edu.ph](mailto:leighnadine.g.elducal@isu.edu.ph)<sup>1</sup>, [dahlee.s.pascua@isu.edu.ph](mailto:dahlee.s.pascua@isu.edu.ph)<sup>2</sup>

Isabela State University, Echague, Isabela, Philippines<sup>1-2</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Delving into the core of workplace dynamics, this study examines how the environment influences the performance of Junior Business Counselors (JBCs) at the LGU-based Negosyo Center of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in Region 02. In line with Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) on "Decent Work and Economic Growth," this research serves as a vital cog in propelling inclusive economic growth, fostering productive employment, and nurturing an environment of decent work, aligning seamlessly with the global objectives set forth by the United Nations. Employing a descriptive-correlational approach, the study meticulously scrutinized 49 selectively chosen respondents. Through meticulously crafted survey questionnaires, it dissected various facets of the physical work environment, including spatial dimensions, furnishings, equipment, and workplace location. Intriguingly, while participants expressed contentment with their immediate workspaces, dissatisfaction lingered over the broader office environment. Moreover, the study uncovered a compelling correlation between the quality of furnishings and the performance of JBCs, shedding light on the impact of the physical work environment on overall effectiveness. In light of these insights, the study advocates for strategic interventions aimed at optimizing space utilization and augmenting amenities to cater to the unique needs and expectations of JBCs. By fostering a positive work environment, such efforts hold the potential to significantly enhance performance levels, thereby contributing to improved organizational outcomes.

*Keywords: work environment, employee performance, descriptive-correlational design, LGU-based Negosyo Center*

### INTRODUCTION

The labor force's pivotal role in organizational success is widely acknowledged, with the work environment playing a crucial role in shaping employee performance. As emphasized by Weerarathna and Geeganage, (2014), the most valuable asset of any business or organization is its workforce, which is essential to both current

operational effectiveness and long-term competitive advantage. Accordingly, Kintanar (2020) and Lemana (2018), mentioned that among all the correlated variables, the work environment significantly predicted the employee performance of their respondents. Moreover, Sarode and Sirsath (2014), stated that the physical characteristics of a workplace environment can have an immediate effect on the morale, comfort,



concentration, productivity, health, and safety of those who work there. Similarly, Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) mentioned in their study that the workplace's physical environment has a significant impact on employees' productivity, happiness, interpersonal relationships, and health.

This study focuses on the physical aspects of the work environment for Junior Business Counselors (JBCs) in the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Region 02. It aims to understand how these factors relate to JBC performance, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 8 on "Decent Work and Economic Growth."

With 70% of DTI Region 02 staff being business counselors, the study underscores the vital role of the JBCs in achieving organizational goals across Cagayan Valley's cities and municipalities. The findings are expected to inform policy implementation, specifically Republic Act No. 10644 (Go Negosyo Act 2014), enhancing Negosyo Centers' functionality and impact. The proposed guidelines aim to create a dynamic, inclusive workplace culture that aligns with legal frameworks and promotes sustainable economic growth through entrepreneurial development.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study primarily aimed to investigate the perceived work environment of JBCs, with a focus on office infrastructure and equipment; examine the level of performance exhibited by JBCs, assessing their effectiveness in contributing to DTI initiatives across cities and municipalities in Cagayan Valley; and explore the relationship between the perceived work environment and JBC performance, aiming to uncover how physical factors impact their effectiveness within the organization.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopts quantitative research in descriptive and correlational design for data analysis. Respondents' profiles were described

using frequency counts percentages and mean, with a 4-point Likert scale for physical work environment evaluation. Likewise, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) processes the data in analyzing the relationships between variables using Kendall tau b.

Focusing on Negosyo Centers in Region 02, particularly LGU-based Junior Business Counselors (JBCs), the research strategically excludes vacant centers to ensure a focused and relevant assessment. With 49 JBCs selected through probability and purposive sampling from 83 LGU-based Negosyo Centers, the study investigates their profiles and work environment through surveys conducted between January and August 2023.

JBCs' performance was assessed based on their Individual Performance Rating (IPR) or Dashboards, obtained with the approval of the DTI Regional Director. The research utilizes a structured survey questionnaire, adapted from previous studies and subjected to face validity, alongside primary data from surveys and secondary data from various sources, including documents from DTI files and academic publications.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Perceived Work Environment of the JBCs In DTI Region 02

The perceived work environment of JBCs in DTI Region 02 is shown in Table 1. These factors include size and layout, furnishing, equipment, and physical location of the Negosyo Center. Based on the collected data, respondents generally acknowledged the existence of working areas and receiving spaces in the Negosyo Center (NC). However, they disagreed with the presence of specific facilities in the Negosyo Center, such as seventy square meters (70m<sup>2</sup>) of space, a



consultation/meeting room, a training room, and a comfort room which can be attributed to the nature of the office space allocation for Negosyo Centers.

**Table 1**  
*The perceived work environment of JBCs in DTI Region 02*

	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
<b>A. Size &amp; Layout</b>		
1. The Negosyo Center has seventy (70) square meters (70m <sup>2</sup> ) space	2.38	Disagree
2. The Negosyo Center has a Receiving/Reception Area	2.95	Agree
3. The Negosyo Center has a Consultation/Meeting Room	2.16	Disagree
4. The Negosyo Center has a Working Area	3.22	Agree
5. The Negosyo Center has a Training Room	1.89	Disagree
6. The Negosyo Center has a Comfort Room	2.04	Disagree
7. Overall, the Negosyo Center has the standard Size and Layout.	2.32	Disagree
<b>B. Furnishings</b>		
1. The Negosyo Center has a Receiving Counter	3.08	Agree
2. The Negosyo Center has Computers for On-Line Research	2.85	Agree
3. The Negosyo Center has access to an E-Library	2.30	Disagree
4. The Negosyo Center has a lounge	2.20	Disagree
5. The Negosyo Center has shelves for Information Materials	3.42	Agree
6. The Negosyo Center has a long working table provided	2.95	Agree
7. The Negosyo Center has a conference table	2.48	Disagree
8. The Negosyo Center has air-condition/electric fan	2.93	Agree
9. Overall, the furnishings in the Negosyo Center are adequate	2.71	Agree
<b>C. Equipment</b>		
1. The Negosyo Center has a laptop/desktop	3.61	Strongly Agree
2. The Negosyo Center has a printer	3.59	Strongly Agree
3. The Negosyo Center has a smartphone	3.55	Strongly Agree
4. Overall, the equipment in the Negosyo Center are adequate.	3.53	Strongly Agree
<b>D. Location (Proximity)</b>		
1. The Negosyo Center is located near/within the LGU?	3.51	Agree
2. The Negosyo Center is located near/within the market?	2.97	Agree
3. The Negosyo Center is located near/within the academe?	2.69	Agree
4. Overall, the Negosyo Center is easily accessible to the public.	3.32	Agree

Legend: 1.50-2.49 = Disagree; 2.50-3.49 = Agree; 3.50-4.00 = Strongly Agree

## 2. Level of Performance of the JBCs in DTI Region 02

**Table 2**  
*Level of performance of the JBCs in DTI Region 02*

Performance	Frequency	Percent
Very Satisfactory	1	2.0
Outstanding	48	98.0
Total	49	100.0

The level of performance of the JBC in DTI Region 02 is shown in Table 2. The data reveals positive results, with 98.0% of respondents reporting outstanding performance. This level of dedication has vital implications: formal recognition can boost morale and pride, motivating employees to maintain or exceed their current performance. As mentioned by Tessema et al. (2013), these high-performing individuals can

serve as benchmarks for others and inspire growth in various work areas. Sustaining this exceptional performance requires identifying contributing factors, providing necessary resources, and continuous recognition. In congruent to the study of Duru and Shimawua (2019), nurturing these outstanding performers fosters a culture of excellence, setting high standards and encouraging others to achieve similar levels of success.

Overall, acknowledging, learning from, and supporting exceptional performers are crucial for maintaining and enhancing productivity and morale within the organization.

## 3. The working environment and the level of performance

**Table 3**  
*The relationship between the perceived work environment of JBCs in DTI Region 02 and their level of performance*

	Correlation Coefficient	p-value
<b>A. Size &amp; Layout</b>		
1. The Negosyo Center has seventy (70) square meters (70m <sup>2</sup> ) of space	.157 <sup>ns</sup>	.282
2. The Negosyo Center has a Receiving/Reception Area	.095 <sup>ns</sup>	.514
3. The Negosyo Center has a Consultation/Meeting Room	.013 <sup>ns</sup>	.932
4. The Negosyo Center has a Working Area	.117 <sup>ns</sup>	.422
5. The Negosyo Center has a Training Room	.063 <sup>ns</sup>	.669
6. The Negosyo Center has a Comfort Room	.192 <sup>ns</sup>	.187
7. Overall, the Negosyo Center has the standard Size and Layout.	.132 <sup>ns</sup>	.366
<b>B. Furnishings</b>		
1. The Negosyo Center has a Receiving Counter	.252 <sup>ns</sup>	.080
2. The Negosyo Center has Computers for On-Line Research	.133 <sup>ns</sup>	.361
3. The Negosyo Center has access to an E-Library	.046 <sup>ns</sup>	.755
4. The Negosyo Center has a lounge	.085 <sup>ns</sup>	.562
5. The Negosyo Center has shelves for Information Materials	.381*	.007
6. The Negosyo Center has a long working table provided	.324*	.023
7. The Negosyo Center has a conference table	.131 <sup>ns</sup>	.368
8. The Negosyo Center has air-conditioning/electric fan	.229 <sup>ns</sup>	.113
9. Overall, the furnishings in the Negosyo Center are adequate	.133 <sup>ns</sup>	.361
<b>C. Equipment</b>		
1. The Negosyo Center has a laptop/desktop	.055 <sup>ns</sup>	.709
2. The Negosyo Center has a printer	.027 <sup>ns</sup>	.853
3. The Negosyo Center has a smartphone	.208 <sup>ns</sup>	.151
4. Overall, the equipment in the Negosyo Center is adequate.	.195 <sup>ns</sup>	.179
<b>D. Location (Proximity)</b>		
1. The Negosyo Center is located near/within the LGU?	.009 <sup>ns</sup>	.950
2. The Negosyo Center is located near/within the market?	.040 <sup>ns</sup>	.783
3. The Negosyo Center is located near/within the academe?	.069 <sup>ns</sup>	.636
4. Overall, the Negosyo Center is easily accessible to the public.	.066 <sup>ns</sup>	.653

Legend: \* = significant at 0.05 level; ns = not significant

## CONCLUSION

The study sheds light on the work environment and performance of Job Business



Counselors (JBCs) in DTI Region 02. Findings reveal a significant impact of the physical work environment on job satisfaction, with variations in facilities attributed to differences in resources provided by Local Government Units (LGUs).

On the perceived work environment, tangible elements encompassing the physical attributes and amenities within the Negosyo Center received an overall positive reception, specifically with commendation for the working area and receiving space. Nevertheless, reservations arose regarding the absence of a dedicated training room and the suboptimal condition of the comfort room. While furnishings such as shelves and a receiving counter were favorably acknowledged, recommendations were proposed for the provision of an E-library and lounge area. Favorable sentiments were expressed regarding the availability of equipment and the Negosyo Center's proximity to the Local Government Unit (LGU). However, there was potential for improvement in proximity concerning markets and educational institutions.

In terms of performance, there was a notably positive trend among Junior Business Counselors (JBCs) in DTI Region 02, with an impressive outstanding performance. This dedication had significant implications for the organization, boosting morale and motivating employees to consistently excel. To sustain this exceptional performance, it was crucial to identify contributing factors, provide necessary resources, and ensure consistent recognition, fostering a culture of excellence that encouraged others to strive for success.

With regards to the perceived work environment and the level of performance, the study indicated that certain tangible factors like workspace size and layout, equipment presence, and location did not significantly affect the performance of Junior Business Counselors (JBCs). However, specific aspects of furnishing, such as storage solutions and collaborative workspace design, exhibited a positive correlation with JBCs' performance. The critical importance of the work atmosphere in influencing JBCs' performance was underscored, particularly the positive impact of a quiet workspace. Organizations should prioritize creating

environments conducive to a quiet and focused workspace to enhance overall performance and productivity.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Even with high-performance levels, respondents express the need for improved amenities and specific spaces. Thus, to enhance the work environment for Junior Business Counselors (JBCs) in DTI Region 02, recommendations include improving tangible factors like providing dedicated training rooms, enhancing comfort room facilities, and paying attention to areas like the E-library and lounge.

On the other hand, with the notably positive trend in the JBC's performance in DTI Region 02, it is strongly recommended that the organization places a strategic emphasis on acknowledging and supporting these high-performing individuals. With this, it is crucial to identify contributing factors, allocate necessary resources, and maintain a consistent recognition system. Nurturing outstanding performers not only fosters a culture of excellence but also establishes high standards, and encourages others to strive for similar levels of success. In essence, a proactive approach to acknowledging, learning from, and supporting exceptional performers is essential for the organization's efforts to maintain and enhance both productivity and morale.

Lastly, while physical factors like furnishings correlate with improved performance, future studies on factors beyond the physical work environment may be recommended to evaluate its significant role in influencing employee effectiveness.

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## AUTHORS PROFILE



**Leigh Nadine Go-Elducal** currently serves as the Administrative Officer V and Administrative and Finance Director at Isabela State University-San Mariano Campus.

She is a Master in Business Administration graduate at Isabela State University. She holds a degree in AB Political Science from the same university. For communication, she can be reached via email at [leighnadine.g.elducal@isu.edu.ph](mailto:leighnadine.g.elducal@isu.edu.ph).



**Dahlee S. Pascua** a full-time faculty member of Isabela State University under the Department of Business Administration. She has a degree in Ph.D. in Commerce and teaches business management and human resource management courses in BSBA and MBA programs. She has published research in Scopus and international peer-reviewed journal. She can be contacted at email: [dahlee.s.pascua@isu.edu.ph](mailto:dahlee.s.pascua@isu.edu.ph)

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