



Exploring How RIZAL Graduate Attributes Shape Future-Ready Graduates in a Philippine Local College

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Received : February 3, 2026

Revised : March 16, 2026

Accepted : April 22, 2026

Online : September 30 , 2026

Abstract

In an era of rapid technological and organizational change, higher education institutions are expected to produce graduates who are not only professionally competent but also ethically grounded and adaptable. Empirical evidence remains limited on how institution-specific, values-based graduate attributes translate into leadership effectiveness and career outcomes, particularly in local colleges in developing contexts. Addressing this gap, this study examines the impact of the RIZAL graduate attributes, Resilient, Integrity-Driven, Zealous, Adaptable, and Lifelong Learner, on alumni serving in managerial roles at the City College of Calamba. A qualitative case study design was employed, using open-ended survey responses from 24 alumni in middle management positions. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006) to identify patterns in the professional application of these attributes. The results show that resilience, integrity, and adaptability are the most important traits for managers to have. These qualities help leaders address problems, keep their morals high, and adapt to changes in the organization. Zeal and lifelong learning sustain motivation and continuous professional development, though participants reported challenges such as burnout, value conflicts, and time constraints. Theoretically, the study contributes to the literature on graduate attributes by providing empirical support for values-based frameworks as predictors of leadership capability and career sustainability. Practically, it offers evidence-based recommendations for curriculum enhancement, emphasizing experiential learning, ethical leadership formation, industry engagement, and structured leadership development programs. Overall, the findings demonstrate strong alignment between the RIZAL attributes and contemporary industry demands, underscoring the role of values-driven education in preparing future-ready professionals.

Keywords: *RIZAL Values, Employability Skills, Curriculum Enhancement, Ethical Leadership*

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly dynamic global landscape, higher education institutions are expected to produce graduates who are not only professionally competent but also ethical, socially responsible, and adaptable. The [World Economic Forum \(2025\)](#) reports that 60% of employers anticipate digital transformation, with 39% of current employees' skills likely to become outdated by 2025–2030. Consequently, employers prioritize analytical thinking, resilience, adaptability, leadership, creativity, and lifelong learning, capabilities essential for success in a digitally driven economy. Universities worldwide are therefore redefining educational outcomes to emphasize these competencies ([Mitra & Aziatul Niza, 2021](#)). In the Philippines, institutions similarly integrate employability skills such as communication, leadership, and critical thinking to enhance graduate success ([Aguenza & Ingles, 2024](#); [Cruz & Cruz, 2023](#)).

Despite extensive research on graduate attributes, limited attention has been given to values-based frameworks in local Philippine institutions, particularly those grounded in national ideals and institutional missions. Existing studies largely focus on generic competencies, leaving

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underexplored how character-oriented models shape professional practice. While frameworks such as Outcome-Based Education emphasize measurable skills and Transformative Learning Theory highlight identity formation, these approaches often underrepresent the integration of ethical character with professional competence in real workplace contexts.

To address this gap, the City College of Calamba (CCC) developed the RIZAL graduate attributes. Resilient, Integrity-Driven, Zealous, Adaptable, and Lifelong Learner, anchored in the ideals of Dr. Jose Rizal. As a local government-funded college serving primarily community-based students, CCC provides a meaningful context for examining how values-based education contributes to future-ready professional formation, particularly within resource-constrained yet community-oriented institutions.

This study investigates how CCC alumni in managerial roles apply the RIZAL attributes in their professional practice. Guided by graduate attribute theory, outcome-based education, and transformative learning perspectives, the research views these attributes as integrated competencies encompassing knowledge, skills, values, and identity that shape long-term career outcomes. Specifically, the following qualitative research questions guide this study:

1. How do CCC alumni in managerial positions characterize the integration of RIZAL attributes in their professional practice?
2. Which RIZAL attributes are perceived as most influential in leadership and career success?
3. What workplace conditions support or constrain the manifestation of these attributes?
4. How do alumni perceive the alignment between RIZAL attributes and industry demands?
5. What recommendations do alumni offer for enhancing the curriculum to strengthen these attributes among future graduates?

Practically, the study offers evidence-based insights for curriculum enhancement, leadership development, and values formation in local colleges. Academically, it enhances qualitative comprehension of the translation of institution-specific, values-based graduate attributes into workplace leadership, adaptability, and professional identity. By linking educational philosophy with real-world outcomes, the results supplement ongoing discussions on employability, character education, and future-ready skills, while providing transferable insights for similar institutions seeking to develop ethically grounded and adaptable graduates.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Graduate Attributes and Future-Ready Education

Graduate attributes are widely recognized as foundational to employability, which contemporary models view as a lifelong developmental process shaped by learning, experience, and context rather than a single outcome. Universities thus create integrated curricular and co-curricular experiences to cultivate competencies that equip graduates to operate in intricate, swiftly evolving contexts. Employability is understood as “a process of lifelong and lifewide learning,” influenced by individual competencies, social interactions, and labor-market conditions (Cook, 2022). Beyond technical skills, current frameworks emphasize identity formation, emotional intelligence, and reflective practice, recognizing that attributes are enacted differently across contexts.

The changing job market needs graduates who can adapt to new technologies and manage uncertainty with outstanding judgment and flexibility. Collaborative and experiential learning approaches are effective in developing these competencies, strengthening leadership, communication, problem-solving, and innovative thinking (Mitra & Aziatul Niza, 2021; Patel et al., 2024). Employers increasingly seek graduates who combine digital fluency with human-centered

capabilities such as empathy and intercultural communication, consistent with holistic models of future readiness.

Consequently, the assessment of graduate attributes has become central to quality assurance and curriculum design. Core competencies—including analytical thinking, digital literacy, ethical judgment, and intercultural competence—are evaluated through authentic performance tasks and triangulated measures such as capstones, simulations, employer feedback, and alumni surveys (Beena & Suresh, 2023; Steurer et al., 2022; Albay et al., 2024). Ongoing stakeholder participation further supports curriculum refinement and the integration of emerging competencies such as AI literacy and sustainability (Singh & Morkel, 2024; Wong et al., 2022).

Overall, the literature indicates that embedding graduate attributes through coherent curricula, experiential learning, and systematic assessment transforms them into measurable capabilities that enhance employability and prepare graduates for leadership in complex professional environments.

Values-Based Education and Character Formation

Integrating values and character education into the curriculum is essential for developing graduates who possess not only intellectual competence but also moral integrity, social responsibility, and ethical leadership. Character education should permeate all learning experiences rather than exist as a standalone subject, enabling students to internalize virtues through real-life application and reflection (Hermawan & Kusniasari, 2023).

Contemporary values-based education emphasizes preparing graduates to navigate moral dilemmas, lead with integrity, and contribute positively to society. Evidence suggests that institutional culture, educator role modeling, and sustained moral engagement shape ethical orientations more deeply than technical training alone, although workplace impacts remain underexplored, particularly in non-Western contexts.

Localized frameworks like the RIZAL attributes Resilience, Integrity-Driven, Zealous, Adaptable, and Lifelong Learner, show how national values can shape the overall growth of graduates by combining their cognitive, behavioral, and moral sides. These attributes support employability, leadership, adaptability, and civic responsibility, reflecting employers' demand for professionals who combine competence with ethical judgment. As Mahon (2022) notes, graduate attributes position higher education as a comprehensive developmental process, but their effectiveness depends on authentic integration and meaningful assessment to translate values into measurable outcomes.

Graduate Attributes and Employability: A Social Cognitive Perspective

In the boundaryless career era marked by rapid technological change and non-linear career paths, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) offers a useful framework for understanding how individuals navigate complex professional trajectories (D. Wang et al., 2022). SCCT views career development as the interaction of personal factors, such as self-efficacy, goals, and outcome expectations—with contextual influences including support, barriers, and opportunities (Lent & Brown, 2019). This perspective supports the argument that educational values can be internalized and translated into career behaviors and leadership practices.

Within this framework, the RIZAL attributes, Resilience, Integrity-Driven, Zealous, Adaptable, and Lifelong Learner, function as psychosocial resources that enhance coping, ethical decision-making, motivation, adaptability, and continuous growth. Employability models likewise highlight career identity, social capital, mentoring, and experiential learning as key to successful school-to-work transitions (Underdahl et al., 2023). Research further indicates that resilience depends on personal and contextual factors (Burke & Scurry, 2019), integrity fosters trust (Abdulai

et al., 2025), zeal sustains engagement (Sivakumar & Maina, 2024), adaptability supports responses to uncertainty (Stockinger et al., 2021), and lifelong learning enables ongoing employability.

Overall, SCCT conceptualizes graduate attributes as integrated psychosocial assets that interact with workplace conditions to shape employability, leadership effectiveness, and career resilience across the lifespan (Lent & Brown, 2020).

Conceptual Framework

Drawing on Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and graduate employability models, this study conceptualizes the RIZAL attributes as interrelated personal and professional resources that shape leadership effectiveness through interaction with workplace conditions. Educational experiences at CCC are viewed as formative processes that cultivate internal dispositions—such as resilience and integrity—which are enacted depending on organizational opportunities, constraints, and culture.

Figure 1 illustrates how CCC's values-based environment develops and internalizes the RIZAL attributes—Resilience, Integrity, Zeal, Adaptability, and Lifelong Learning—and translates them into managerial practice and career outcomes. Resilience, adaptability, and integrity emerge as most influential in leadership roles, enabling graduates to manage pressure, navigate change, and uphold ethical standards, while zeal and lifelong learning sustain motivation and continuous growth.

The framework also shows how these attributes produce individual, organizational, and societal outcomes, moderated by factors such as stress, burnout, and value conflicts. A feedback loop indicates how alumni experiences and industry demands inform ongoing curriculum improvement. Overall, the model demonstrates how values-driven education can produce future-ready, ethically grounded, and adaptable graduates.

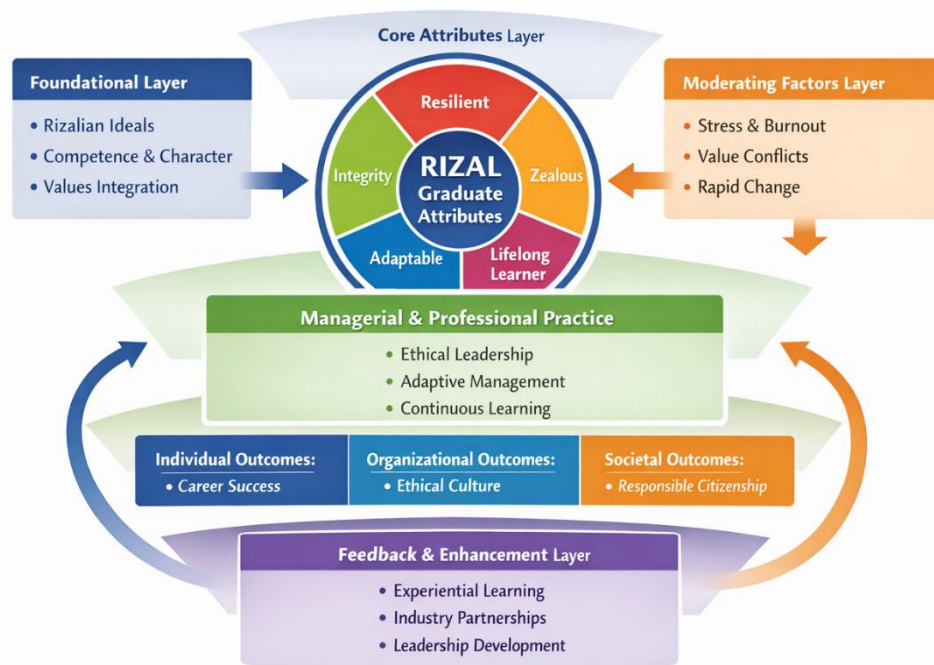


Figure 1. RIZAL Future-Ready Graduate Framework

Summary and Research Gap

Overall, the literature affirms that graduate attributes enhance employability, leadership, and lifelong learning, yet most studies emphasize broad competency frameworks and quantitative

outcomes. Many qualitative investigations do not examine how institution-specific, values-based attributes are enacted by alumni in real workplace contexts, particularly in local colleges within developing countries.

This study addresses this gap by exploring how the RIZAL attributes shape leadership behavior, adaptability, and professional identity among CCC alumni in managerial roles. Integrating SCCT with graduate employability perspectives, it examines how educational values translate into sustained career success and organizational effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine how graduates of the City College of Calamba (CCC) apply the RIZAL attributes—Resilient, Integrity-Driven, Zealous, Adaptable, and Lifelong Learner—in their professional careers. The study was exploratory-descriptive and focused on CCC alumni in middle-management positions to provide a contextualized understanding of how institution-specific, values-based education affects leadership practices, career development, and workplace adaptability in real-world contexts (Hunter et al., 2019).

Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional research ethics committee prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent secured electronically. Responses were anonymized, and no identifying information was reported to ensure confidentiality and protect participant privacy.

Data Gathering Tool and Data Treatment

Data were collected through an online questionnaire administered via Google Forms, chosen for its accessibility and suitability for geographically dispersed alumni in managerial roles. The instrument consisted of 6–8 open-ended prompts designed to elicit detailed narratives on how the RIZAL attributes are applied in professional contexts. Pilot testing with a small group of alumni ensured clarity and relevance, leading to minor revisions. Follow-up emails and member checking were used to clarify responses and validate interpretations.

All responses were exported for qualitative analysis. Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis procedure: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading, (2) initial coding, (3) generation of candidate themes, (4) review of themes against the dataset, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) interpretation. The analysis was primarily inductive, allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than being imposed a priori, although sensitivity to the RIZAL framework guided interpretation. Coding was conducted manually.

Two researchers coded the data on their own. Inter-coder discussions were held to compare interpretations, resolve discrepancies, and reach consensus on the final coding scheme, thereby increasing dependability. Rather than emphasizing frequency counts, the analysis prioritized the depth, context, and meaning of participants' experiences, consistent with qualitative research principles.

Trustworthiness was ensured using Lincoln and Guba's criteria (Ahmed, 2024): credibility through pilot testing and member checking, dependability through collaborative coding and audit documentation, confirmability through reflexive analysis, and transferability through detailed contextual description. Peer debriefing further strengthened the rigor of the analysis.

Description of Participants

Using purposive sampling, the study included 24 City College of Calamba (CCC) graduates in middle-management roles across education, information technology, business process

outsourcing, and public service. Participants were required to be CCC alumni, hold supervisory or managerial positions, have at least three years of work experience, and be willing to provide reflective insights on their leadership practice. Recruitment was conducted through alumni networks, professional associations, and referral sampling, with invitations distributed via email and social media.

The sample size is consistent with qualitative guidance on thematic saturation, which can be achieved with relatively small, homogeneous groups when the research focus is clearly defined (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Given the participants' shared institutional background and managerial experience, the sample was considered sufficient to generate rich and coherent themes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Participant Profile

To contextualize the narratives, the participants consisted of 24 CCC alumni occupying middle-management positions across the education, information technology, business process outsourcing, and public service sectors. Managerial experience ranged from approximately 3 to over 15 years, representing both emerging and seasoned leaders. The sample included both male and female managers from different graduation cohorts, indicating that the influence of the RIZAL attributes spans multiple professional stages. Providing demographic context enhances transferability by allowing readers to judge the applicability of findings to similar populations (Ahmed, 2024).

Influence of RIZAL (R-Resilient, I-Integrity-Driven, Z-Zealous, A-Adaptable, L-Life-long Learner) Attributes on Professional Development and Success

Table 1 summarizes the inductive thematic analysis, showing how the RIZAL attributes shaped alumni professional trajectories, consistent with Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach. A central theme, CCC as Formative Ground, highlights the institution's role in values formation through role modeling and lived experience. As one participant noted, "We learned not just from books, but from how our teachers lived the values" (P6, Education Manager), supporting transformative learning perspectives (Marginson, 2024).

Several core attributes emerged in practice. Lifelong Learning as a Mindset reflects continuous development, illustrated by the statement, "Growth didn't end when I got my diploma—it was just the beginning" (P11, IT Manager), consistent with employability frameworks (Cook, 2022). Resilience in Adversity captures perseverance under pressure: "The experience was tough, but life is tougher. We are just trained right" (P3, Public Service Manager), aligning with research on resilience as a leadership resource (Deep, 2023). Integrity as a Moral Compass indicates internalized ethical standards, as expressed in "Integrity shall be woven into my moral fiber" (P8, BPO Supervisor), reinforcing its role in trust and responsible leadership (Gardiner, 2024). Adaptability in Dynamic Contexts highlights flexibility in response to change, reflected in "Adaptability became a survival skill" (P14, IT Operations Manager), a key competency for future-ready professionals (Schueller & Figueiredo, 2021).

Collectively, these themes demonstrate that values-based education contributes to holistic professional formation integrating competence, character, and adaptability.

Table 1. Influence of RIZAL Attributes on Professional Development and Success

codes/categories	verbatim responses	No, it occurs	Number of participants who responded	themes	Description of themes
Role modeling from CCC professors	"We learned not just from books, but from how our teachers lived the values."	8	6	CCC as Formative Ground (Cross-cutting)	The college environment nurtured ethical, resilient, and adaptable professionals.
Perseverance under pressure	"The experience was tough but life is tougher. We are just trained right."	12	10	Resilience in Adversity	Graduates persist through difficulties using strength built during college experiences.
Moral uprightness	"Integrity shall be woven into my moral fiber."	10	8	Integrity as a Moral Compass	Consistently making ethical choices and maintaining honesty in work and leadership. Professional integrity influences leadership and team dynamics.
Leading by example	"I lead my team with honesty and fairness, like how our instructors modeled it."	7	5		
Passion and motivation	"Zeal fuels my passion for teaching, helping me inspire my students every day."	9	7	Zeal: Passion Fuels Purpose	Inner drive and enthusiasm inspire excellence in teaching, leadership, and service. Exceeding expectations due to inner passion and commitment.
Going beyond duty	"I always try to give more than what's expected. It's how we were trained."	6	6		
Openness to change	"Adaptability became a	11	9		Adjusting quickly to new systems,

codes/categories	verbatim responses	No, it occurs	Number of participants who responded	themes	Description of themes
Career transitions and flexibility	survival skill.”			Adaptability in Dynamic Contexts	environments, and challenges in professional settings. Being able to pivot between professions or adjust roles fluidly.
	“I shifted from education to military service, and CCC gave me that confidence.”	6	5		
Continuous self-improvement	“Growth didn’t end when I got my diploma—it was just the beginning.”	13	11	Lifelong Learning as a Mindset	A proactive commitment to ongoing learning through formal and informal means. Formal learning continued post-graduation; CCC instilled a love for learning.
Embracing lifelong learning	“I enrolled in graduate school because CCC taught me to never stop growing.”	9	7		

Impact of RIZAL Attributes in Managerial Roles

In managerial contexts, several RIZAL attributes emerged as particularly salient (Table 2). Resilience was closely associated with crisis leadership, as illustrated by, “During the pandemic, I stayed calm and continued operations” (P2, School Administrator), indicating its role in sustaining performance under stress (Caniëls et al., 2022). Adaptability was similarly prominent: “I quickly reorganized teams during sudden changes” (P17, BPO Manager), reflecting the need for agile decision-making in complex environments (Aljehani & Qureshi, 2025). Integrity supported trust formation, with one participant noting, “Doing what’s right builds trust in my leadership” (P5, Government Manager), consistent with ethical leadership research (Din & Zhang, 2023). Zeal contributed to motivational leadership, while Lifelong Learning enhanced strategic readiness: “Continuous improvement helped me lead strategically” (P20, IT Project Manager), supporting sustained engagement and competence development (Mustafa & Lleshi, 2024).

Overall, the prominence of resilience, adaptability, and integrity suggests that values-based education is particularly effective in preparing leaders for high-uncertainty environments, consistent with employability research emphasizing ethical competence and adaptability as core managerial attributes (Steurer et al., 2022).

Table 2. Impact of RIZAL Attributes in Managerial Roles

RIZAL Attributes	No. it occurs	No. of participants who responded	Sample verbatim responses	Theme/Impact in Management	Interpretation of Impact
Resilience	19	17	“Resilience helped me stay focused despite pressure and setbacks.” “During the pandemic, I stayed calm and continued operations.”	Stability Under Pressure Leadership in Crisis	Most consistently linked with the ability to endure high-stress situations, motivate teams, and overcome challenges. Crucial in uncertain or crisis-driven environments.
Integrity	15	13	“Doing what’s right builds trust in my leadership.” “Integrity helped me make ethical decisions under pressure.”	Trust and Credibility Ethical Decision-Making	Highly impactful in building team confidence, ensuring transparency, and upholding professionalism. Seen as foundational to effective and principled leadership.
Zeal (Passion)	13	11	“My zeal inspired my team.” “Passion for the work kept morale high.”	Motivational Leadership Team Energy and Morale	Energizes team culture and fuels persistence. Zeal contributes to sustained motivation, making leaders effective role models.
Adaptability	18	15	“I quickly reorganized teams during sudden changes.” “Helped me adjust plans during budget cuts and changing	Flexibility in Complexity Navigating Change	Frequently noted for enabling effective response to change, supporting innovation, and maintaining productivity

RIZAL Attributes	No. it occurs	No. of participants who responded	Sample verbatim responses	Theme/Impact in Management	Interpretation of Impact
			client demands.”		during transitions or crises.
Lifelong Learning	14	12	“I pursued advanced training to prepare for leadership.” “Continuous improvement helped me lead strategically.”	Growth-Oriented Leadership Strategic Readiness	Important for ongoing development. Ensures leaders stay current, adaptable, and open to new tools and ideas , making them more competent over time.

Challenges in Embodying RIZAL (R-Resilient, I-Integrity-Driven, Z-Zealous, A-Adaptable, L-Life-long Learner) Attributes

Systemic and situational factors shape their practice, as participants reported constraints that hinder consistent enactment of the RIZAL attributes (Table 3). Resilience was difficult to sustain under prolonged stress: “Resilience is tough when the workload is heavy” (P9, Public Sector Manager), reflecting mental and emotional exhaustion in high-pressure environments (Egan et al., 2024). Integrity was challenged by organizational culture: “Integrity becomes at stake when the culture goes against it” (P4, Corporate Manager), illustrating value conflict and the need for supportive governance (Derfler-Rozin & Park, 2022). Zeal diminished during burnout: “Staying enthusiastic all the time is challenging” (P12, Education Supervisor), consistent with evidence that fatigue reduces motivation (Hapday, 2025). Adaptability was strained by rapid change: “Adapting to new systems is frustrating” (P18, IT Manager), underscoring the importance of structured transitions (Sott & Bender, 2025). Lifelong Learning was limited by time constraints: “Hard to stay updated with so many responsibilities” (P7, BPO Supervisor), reflecting systemic barriers to continuous development (Mundhe, 2022).

Overall, these findings suggest that attribute enactment is context-dependent and influenced by environmental supports and barriers, consistent with Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent & Brown, 2019).

Table 3. Challenges in Embodying RIZAL Attributes

codes/categories	verbatim responses	No. it occurs	No. of participants who responded	themes	Description of themes
Challenges to Resilience	“Resilience is tough when the workload is heavy...” “Hard to stay strong after	13	13	Mental and Emotional Exhaustion	Resilience is most challenged during sustained pressure,

codes/categories	verbatim responses	No. it occurs	No. of participants who responded	themes	Description of themes
	tough times or when confidence is low.” “Resilience can be the hardest to uphold because of pressure to deliver.”				stress, or setbacks.
Challenges to Integrity	“Integrity is definitely hard... it cannot be faked.” “Integrity becomes at stake when the system is broken or the culture goes against it.” “Balancing integrity with organizational pressure was tough.”	11	11	Conflict Between Personal Values and Organizational Culture	Integrity is difficult when organizational norms conflict with personal values.
Challenges to Zeal	“Zeal is difficult during burnout or when passion fades.” “Staying enthusiastic all the time is challenging...” “Zeal can be the most difficult attribute to uphold consistently.”	10	10	Burnout and Motivation Fatigue	Zeal fades in the face of repeated stress, low morale, or feeling unappreciated.
Challenges to Adaptability	“Adaptability can be draining when changes come fast.” “Adapting to new systems is frustrating...” “Hard to adapt when others resist change.”	12	12	Overload and Resistance to Change	Frequent, rapid change strains flexibility and creates misalignment among team members.

codes/categories	verbatim responses	No. it occurs	No. of participants who responded	themes	Description of themes
Challenges to Lifelong Learning	"Finding time for lifelong learning is hard due to workload." "Hard to stay updated with so many responsibilities." "Time constraints squeeze out learning."	9	9	Time Constraints and Competing Priorities	Lifelong learning is hindered by busy schedules and the difficulty of prioritizing development.

Relevance of RIZAL (R-Resilient, I-Integrity-Driven, Z-Zealous, A-Adaptable, L-Life-long Learner) Attributes to Industry Demands

Table 4 indicates strong alignment between the RIZAL attributes and core industry competencies across sectors, with all 24 participants identifying them as essential for employability, professional growth, and career sustainability. This suggests the framework represents practical, transferable capabilities valued by employers. CCC's experiential and integrative pedagogy seems to instill these values, allowing graduates to cultivate not only technical skills but also ethical discernment, adaptability, and resilience for intricate work environments.

Resilience was most emphasized (19 participants), particularly in high-pressure sectors, supporting its role in sustaining effectiveness amid adversity (Burton-Hughes, 2025). Integrity (17) was viewed as indispensable for trust and ethical professionalism (Salmela & Hemberg, 2025). Zeal (11) energized teams and sustained motivation (Reinis, 2025), while adaptability (15) was critical in fast-evolving industries requiring continuous adjustment (Lyng et al., 2021). Lifelong learning (14) supported ongoing relevance and innovation (Vold, 2023).

Participant statements further illustrate this alignment: "The attributes are essential in my industry" (P1, IT Manager); "Resilience helps handle fast-changing demands" (P10, Public Service Manager); and "Integrity is non-negotiable" (P15, Finance Manager). These perspectives indicate that employers value character-driven dispositions alongside technical competence, reinforcing models that view employability as the integration of skills, identity, and values (Mahon, 2022).

Overall, the findings confirm that the RIZAL attributes function as concrete, industry-relevant competencies rather than abstract ideals, providing a strong foundation for developing ethically grounded, adaptable, and future-ready professionals.

Table 4. Relevance of RIZAL Attributes to Industry Demands

codes/categories	verbatim responses	No. it occurs	No. of participants who responded	themes	Description of themes
Relevance of RIZAL Attributes in Industry	"RIZAL is very relevant to the demands of	24	24	Essential Industry Fit	Graduates affirm that RIZAL attributes are

codes/categories	verbatim responses	No. it occurs	No. of participants who responded	themes	Description of themes
	the industry I'm serving." "The attributes are helpful and led me to where I am now." "These attributes will not only make the company survive but keep its vision more visible." "The industry I entered demands these attributes seriously." "The RIZAL attributes are essential in my industry."				highly aligned with their industry expectations, enhancing credibility, performance, and personal growth.
Relevance of Resilience	"We are constantly navigating challenges that require resilience." "Helps me lead teams and support teachers." "Essential for managing pressure and staying focused." "Resilience helps handle	19	19	Coping with Pressure and Change	Resilience is critical for managing adversity, pressure, and frequent transitions across fields such as IT, education, and public service.

codes/categories	verbatim responses	No. it occurs	No. of participants who responded	themes	Description of themes
	fast-changing demands."				
Relevance of Integrity	"Integrity is non-negotiable." "Important for ethical decision-making and trust." "In IT, integrity is crucial for handling sensitive data."	17	17	Ethical Foundation	Integrity is necessary for trust, transparency, and accountability in professional environments, especially in leadership and sensitive-data roles.
Relevance of Zeal	"Zeal inspires teams and drives innovation." "Passionate drive helps stay motivated." "Zeal fuels creativity and engagement in the classroom."	11	11	Motivated Performance	Zeal fosters enthusiasm, team morale, and energy, contributing to innovation and productivity.
Relevance of Adaptability	"Adaptability is a must for changing technologies." "Crucial to responding to new tools and shifting client needs." "Helps deal with fast-paced tech industry."	15	15	Workplace Agility	The ability to adapt ensures success in fast-evolving sectors, particularly in IT, education, and BPO industries.

codes/categories	verbatim responses	No. it occurs	No. of participants who responded	themes	Description of themes
Relevance of Lifelong Learning	"Being a life-long learner allows me to grow." "Essential for staying competitive and informed." "Helps maintain relevance in a fast-changing world."	14	14	Continuous Improvement	A growth mindset and commitment to lifelong learning are key to professional development and career resilience.

Reflective Interpretation Across Themes

Not all attributes manifested equally in managerial practice. Resilience, adaptability, and integrity were most salient due to the demands of crisis management, uncertainty, and ethical accountability, whereas zeal and lifelong learning were less visible as internal motivational drivers rather than observable behaviors. Attribute expression was also shaped by context: high-pressure environments amplified resilience, technology-driven sectors elevated adaptability, and heavy workloads constrained lifelong learning and enthusiasm. This context dependence is in line with SCCT's idea that career behavior is the result of interactions between personal traits and environmental factors (Lent & Brown, 2020). In general, the results show how important it is to combine competence, ethical character, and adaptability. They also show how a values-based, institution-specific framework can lead to effective managerial skills in a local college setting.

Recommendations for CCC Curriculum Enhancement

Table 5 summarizes alumni recommendations for strengthening the CCC curriculum to better prepare graduates for managerial roles, based on 65 coded responses from 24 participants. Key priorities include sustained integration of the RIZAL attributes to support professional identity and purpose and a stronger emphasis on ethical leadership grounded in integrity and transparency (Catalan et al., 2024).

Interpersonal skill development emerged most frequently, highlighting communication, empathy, and conflict resolution as essential for people management (Messaoudi & Sakale, 2024). Participants also called for practical leadership training through experiential activities, simulations, mentorship, and industry immersion to bridge theory and practice (Gigliotti & Spear, 2022; Garcia & Yazon, 2020). Analytical thinking and digital proficiency were recognized as essential for intricate decision-making and the evolving demands of Industry 5.0 (Poltronieri et al., 2025; Tiron-Tudor et al., 2025).

Additional recommendations included mentoring and coaching for guided professional growth, enhanced communication proficiency, case-based and collaborative learning, seminars and field exposure, and structured leadership pathways (Mebert et al., 2020; Van Wart et al., 2020).

Overall, alumni expressed a desire for a holistic, experiential, and values-based curriculum aligned with contemporary managerial and industry requirements.

Table 5. Recommendations for CCC Curriculum Enhancement

codes/categories	verbatim responses	No. it occurs	No. of participants who responded	themes	Description of themes
Continue RIZAL Attribute Integration	"Be RIZAL so you can be an asset of your future industry." "Keep teaching Rizal because it will help future professionals in dealing with their work and problems." "My CCC days shaped me into the teacher I am today."	6	6	Value-Driven Foundation	Graduates recognize the lasting value of the RIZAL attributes and recommend their continued integration into the curriculum
Emphasize Ethics and Values	"Teach ethical values necessary in today's generation." "Emphasize the ethical values they have to uphold no matter what their position is."	4	4	Ethical Leadership	Ethical grounding is seen as vital for responsible managerial roles in modern industries.
Leadership and Real-Life Application	"Integrate more hands-on leadership	7	7	Practical Leadership Development	Graduates call for experiential leadership

codes/categories	verbatim responses	No. it occurs	No. of participants who responded	themes	Description of themes
	development opportunities." "Encourage leadership roles in class." "Appoint leaders who walk the talk."				training, including real-world simulations and role modeling by faculty.
Internship and Industry Linkages	"Encourage graduates to find good companies for experience." "On-the-job training and industry exposure are important."	6	6	Industry Immersion	Real-world experience through internships and business linkages is viewed as essential for management preparation.
Soft Skills and Emotional Intelligence	"Focus on emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, empathy." "Teach communication and public speaking."	9	9	Interpersonal Skill Building	Developing emotional intelligence and communication skills is emphasized for effective people management.
Critical and Strategic Thinking	"Incorporate strategic thinking and decision-making." "Foster critical thinking"	5	5	Analytical Capability	Students should be trained to think critically, analyze situations, and lead strategically in

codes/categories	verbatim responses	No. it occurs	No. of participants who responded	themes	Description of themes
	and problem-solving."				complex environments.
Technology and Digital Skills	"Teach the application of technology in the workplace."	2	2	Digital Competency	Digital literacy and the ability to manage tech tools are necessary to remain competitive in the workplace.
Mentorship and Coaching	"Embed mentorship and coaching with industry professionals." "The importance of mentorship."	3	3	Guided Professional Growth	Mentorship opportunities are recommended for real-time learning and personal leadership development.
Communication Proficiency	"Bring back intensive grammar to enhance communication skills." "Excellent communication helps graduates compete globally."	3	3	Communication Excellence	Strong writing and speaking skills are seen as fundamental for effective leadership and professional credibility.
Case-Based and Experiential Learning	"Include case study competitions and real-life projects." "Use real-world	4	4	Applied Learning	Problem-solving and decision-making through case-based learning bridges theory and practice.

codes/categories	verbatim responses	No. it occurs	No. of participants who responded	themes	Description of themes
	challenges and group tasks."				
Seminars and Field Exposure	"More seminars or fieldwork to experience concepts."	2	2	Professional Exposure	Seminars, workshops, and site visits are encouraged to broaden student understanding of management concepts.
Structured Leadership Development	"Develop a leadership pipeline." "Focus on building strategic thinking and leadership skills."	3	3	Leadership Pathways	A defined structure for cultivating leadership throughout academic programs is recommended.

Action Plan to Enhance CCC Curriculum for Management Preparation

The proposed curriculum enhancement plan responds to graduate feedback affirming the continued relevance of the RIZAL attributes—Resilience, Integrity, Zeal, Adaptability, and Lifelong Learning—and evolving workplace demands. It aims to develop both technical competence and leadership capability. Priorities include sustained integration of these attributes across courses through instruction, reflection, and strengthened ethics education, including a proposed Ethical Leadership in Practice module.

Leadership development will be advanced through experiential strategies such as simulations, rotating roles, and faculty role modeling, alongside expanded internships, OJT programs, and an annual Industry Immersion Week. Soft skills and emotional intelligence will be enhanced through communication, teamwork, and conflict-resolution activities, while case studies and a proposed Strategic Thinking course will strengthen critical decision-making. Digital readiness, mentorship programs, and collaboration with alumni and industry partners will further support student development.

Communication proficiency will be reinforced through grammar-focused courses, labs, and speaking clubs, complemented by case competitions, seminars, and industry visits. A structured leadership pipeline will identify and train student leaders progressively. Overall, the plan translates graduate insights into targeted interventions to produce well-rounded, values-driven, and industry-ready professionals, reinforcing CCC's commitment to continuous improvement.

Table 6. Proposed Action Plan for CCC Curriculum Enhancement

Key Area	Action Steps	Responsible Unit	Timeline	Expected Outcome
1. Sustain RIZAL Attribute Integration	- Continue embedding RIZAL attributes in all core and elective subjects - Develop RIZAL-based reflection modules across years	Deans, Curriculum Committee, Department Heads	Ongoing; review annually	Graduates with strong values, resilience, and adaptability
2. Strengthen Ethics and Values Education	- Integrate “Ethical Leadership in Practice” on ethics subject - Integrate ethical decision-making scenarios into all management courses	Academic Affairs	Start of next academic year	Graduates equipped with integrity and responsible leadership
3. Enhance Leadership Development Opportunities	- Design a Leadership Development Program with simulations, rotating leadership in projects, and team-based tasks - Faculty training to model effective leadership	Student Affairs, Academic Affairs	Pilot next semester, full rollout next year	Students gain practical leadership experience and confidence
4. Expand Internship and Industry Linkages	- Strengthen OJT by partnering with more companies in various industries - Launch an “Industry Immersion Week” per academic year	OJT Coordinator, Alumni and Industry Relations Office	Next academic year	Improved real-world exposure and career readiness
5. Develop Soft Skills and Emotional Intelligence	- Conduct workshops on communication, empathy, conflict resolution, and teamwork - Integrate public speaking and	Guidance Office, Academic Affairs	Per semester	Enhanced interpersonal and managerial effectiveness

Key Area	Action Steps	Responsible Unit	Timeline	Expected Outcome
	negotiation exercises in class			
6. Build Critical and Strategic Thinking Skills	- Revise management curriculum to include problem-solving case studies - Introduce a “Strategic Thinking and Decision-Making” course	Curriculum Committee	Curriculum revision cycle (annually)	Students equipped to handle complex management scenarios
7. Boost Digital and Technological Competency	- Include updated tech tools in coursework (data management, analytics) - Train faculty in digital tools relevant to management practice	IT Department, Academic Affairs	Start of next academic year	Tech-savvy graduates able to lead in digital workplaces
8. Implement Mentorship and Coaching Programs	- Launch Alumni-Student Mentorship Program - Partner students with industry leaders for guided learning	Alumni Affairs, Career Center	Pilot within 6 months	Strengthened student confidence, leadership insight, and networking
9. Improve Communication Proficiency	- Reinstate grammar-intensive courses in first-year curriculum - Offer Communication Labs and Toastmasters-style clubs	English Cluster, Language Coordinator	Next academic year	Better verbal and written communication among students
10. Integrate Case-Based and Experiential Learning	- Encourage use of case studies, simulations, and real-world problem-solving - Hold annual case competitions across programs	Academic Department, Academic Affairs	Annually	Stronger practical thinking and applied knowledge

Key Area	Action Steps	Responsible Unit	Timeline	Expected Outcome
11. Increase Seminars and Field Exposure	- Organize seminars with guest managers and industry experts - Facilitate educational field trips to businesses and institutions	Student Affairs, Academic Departments	Each semester	Broader understanding of workplace expectations and trends
12. Develop a Structured Leadership Pipeline	- Identify and mentor potential student leaders early - Create a tiered leadership training program (Foundations, Intermediate, Advanced)	Student Affairs, Leadership Committee	Full rollout within a year	Systematic leadership development across year levels

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined how the RIZAL graduate attributes—Resilience, Integrity, Zeal, Adaptability, and Lifelong Learning—are demonstrated by City College of Calamba (CCC) alumni in managerial roles, which attributes are most impactful, the challenges encountered in sustaining them, and their alignment with industry demands. The findings show that graduates actively apply these attributes in professional settings, particularly resilience, adaptability, and integrity, which are most visible in crisis management, ethical decision-making, and organizational change. Zeal and lifelong learning function primarily as internal drivers of motivation and continuous development. Participants also identified constraints such as heavy workloads, burnout, time limitations, and value conflicts within organizational cultures, indicating that the enactment of these attributes is shaped by workplace conditions as well as personal dispositions.

The study demonstrates strong alignment between the RIZAL framework and contemporary industry expectations, with all participants affirming its relevance to employability, leadership effectiveness, and career sustainability. Alumni recommendations highlight the need for experiential learning, ethical leadership formation, industry immersion, and interpersonal skill development to further strengthen these attributes among future graduates.

Theoretical Contributions

This research contributes to graduate attribute theory by showing that institution-specific, values-based frameworks can function as integrated psychosocial resources shaping professional identity and leadership capability. The RIZAL framework illustrates how culturally grounded attributes rooted in national ideals can translate into workplace-relevant competencies. The findings also suggest that graduate attributes operate dynamically, with different attributes becoming salient depending on professional roles and contextual demands.

Tensions Between Values and Organizational Systems

Participants reported persistent tensions between personal values and organizational realities, particularly when integrity conflicts with institutional norms or when sustained pressure

undermines resilience and motivation. These findings underscore that values-based education must be complemented by supportive organizational environments to enable consistent ethical practice and professional growth.

Transferability and Reflexivity

As a qualitative case study, the findings are not intended for statistical generalization but may be transferable to similar local colleges emphasizing values-based education, particularly in developing contexts. The researchers acknowledge their institutional affiliation with CCC and addressed potential bias through systematic coding, inter-coder discussions, member checking, and reflexive analysis to ensure interpretations were grounded in participant narratives.

Overall, the study affirms that the RIZAL attributes provide a robust foundation for developing future-ready professionals who combine competence with character, enabling them to navigate uncertainty, uphold ethical standards, and sustain lifelong growth in complex organizational environments.

LIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study contributes theoretically by showing how institution-specific graduate attributes translate into professional leadership practice. The findings indicate that the RIZAL attributes function as internalized dispositions that guide ethical decision-making, adaptability, resilience, motivation, and continuous learning in complex workplace environments, thereby shaping leadership behavior and career sustainability.

Nonetheless, the study possesses limitations. Data were based on self-reports from a relatively small sample of alumni from a single institution, which may involve recall bias and limits the range of perspectives. As a qualitative case study, the results are context-specific and intended for depth of understanding rather than statistical generalization.

Future research may include comparative studies across institutions, longitudinal tracking of graduates' career trajectories, and incorporation of employer perspectives or mixed methods to further validate the impact of values-based attributes on professional outcomes.

Practical Implications

The findings suggest that universities and policymakers can strengthen graduate readiness by adopting values-based frameworks similar to the RIZAL model. Embedding ethical formation, resilience, adaptability, and lifelong learning through experiential learning, industry engagement, and leadership development initiatives may help produce graduates who are both professionally competent and ethically grounded.

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