

Leadership dynamics, administrative efficiency, leadership abilities & approaches among department heads in Ifugao Province, Philippines: Implications for effective governance

Dinamika kepemimpinan, efisiensi administrasi, kemampuan & pendekatan kepemimpinan di antara kepala departemen di Provinsi Ifugao, Filipina: Implikasi untuk tata kelola yang efektif

Fernando G. Hernando¹  & Client William M. Malinao^{2*} 

¹College of Advanced Education & College of Education, Ifugao State University

²College of Advanced Education & College of Business & Management, Ifugao State University

Address: ¹Lagawe – 3600, Ifugao, Philippines

²Alfonso Lista – 3608, Ifugao, Philippines

E-mail: clientwilliammalinao@gmail.com

Article History: Received 24 October 2024; Accepted 5 March 2025; Published Online 13 March 2025

Abstract

The efficacy of government is mainly dependent on public service leaders, who are top civil officials who oversee and enhance key government operations. They convert political direction into programs and policies that maintain citizens' economic productivity, safety, and well-being. As such, this study determines the administrative capabilities, the level of program implementation, leadership qualities, and the styles of the department heads in the 11 municipalities in Ifugao Province. Using a descriptive-comparative research design, data were gathered from the 106 department heads and validated by the 92 elected officials and 449 employees. Using descriptive statistics and an F-test, findings revealed that the department heads are perceived to be capable of performing core management functions. Regarding program implementation, respondents concurred on moderately effective program execution. All groups agreed that the office heads possess the qualities of a leader who envisions the future and inspires members. On the leadership styles, the participative style of leadership, which ushered in the inclusion of employees in decision-making, was agreed upon by all respondents. The perceptions of the three groups were not significantly different regarding management functions, leadership qualities, and leadership styles of the department heads. Results map the strengths and gaps in the department heads' leadership styles and administrative capability, outlining helpful information for policy formulation and capacity-building initiatives.

Keywords: Local Government Unit (LGU) program implementations; participative leadership; personnel management

Abstrak

Keberhasilan pemerintah sangat bergantung pada para pemimpin layanan publik, yang merupakan pejabat tinggi sipil yang mengawasi dan meningkatkan operasi-operasi utama pemerintah. Mereka mengubah arah politik menjadi program dan kebijakan yang menjaga produktivitas ekonomi, keamanan, dan kesejahteraan warga negara. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menentukan kemampuan administratif, tingkat pelaksanaan program, kualitas kepemimpinan, dan gaya kepala dinas di 11 kotamadya di Provinsi Ifugao. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif-komparatif, data dikumpulkan dari 106 kepala dinas dan divalidasi oleh 92 pejabat terpilih serta 449 pegawai. Dengan menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan uji F, temuan menunjukkan bahwa kepala dinas dianggap mampu menjalankan fungsi-fungsi manajemen inti. Mengenai pelaksanaan program, para responden setuju bahwa pelaksanaan program cukup efektif. Semua kelompok setuju bahwa kepala kantor memiliki kualitas seorang pemimpin yang membayangkan masa depan dan menginspirasi anggotanya. Mengenai gaya kepemimpinan, gaya kepemimpinan partisipatif, yang mengikutsertakan karyawan dalam pengambilan keputusan, disepakati oleh semua responden. Persepsi ketiga kelompok tidak berbeda secara signifikan terkait fungsi manajemen, kualitas kepemimpinan, dan gaya kepemimpinan kepala departemen. Hasil penelitian ini memetakan kekuatan dan kesenjangan dalam gaya kepemimpinan dan kemampuan administratif para kepala departemen, yang menguraikan informasi yang berguna untuk perumusan kebijakan dan inisiatif pengembangan kapasitas.

Kata kunci: implementasi program Unit Pemerintah Daerah (Pemda); kepemimpinan partisipatif; manajemen kepegawaian

Introduction

The Global Goals, or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are an international endeavor to end poverty, safeguard the environment, and guarantee that everyone lives in peace and prosperity. The Global Goals, or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are an international endeavor to end poverty, safeguard the environment, and guarantee that everyone lives in peace and prosperity. Sustainable development, which promotes fulfillment, self-worth, and dignity, should help people reach their full potential (United Nations 2016). Experience has shown that institutions that encourage public participation, local leadership, and decentralization of authority have a higher chance of success, which is why inclusive engagement is necessary (Dahiru & Modibbo 2021).

Good governance is frequently referenced by development actors and institutions globally. Major development institutions currently regard promoting good governance as a fundamental component of their agenda (Mercado 2021). Leadership is a critical component for ensuring effective governance within any organization. Strong leadership is crucial for promoting sustainable development at both national and international levels, contributing significantly to society's overall well-being. Leaders in rural communities consider leadership vital for promoting sustainable development. Effective leadership enables the community to respond to the populace's needs and fosters resilience to confront social and communal challenges during difficult periods. This underscores the necessity for leaders to have a vision and a comprehensive understanding of the challenges they face beyond their immediate environment to maintain the principles of sustainable development (Dartey-Baah 2014). Sustainable development necessitates a leader committed to integrating the concept as a strategic element for social advancement (Sroufe 2017).

A leader must develop a relational perspective and self-awareness to collaborate with others to facilitate change effectively. This internal process is essential for sustainable development. Additionally, "understanding one's skills, knowledge, and values within community groups" is called reflection (Nikezic 2012). Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) necessitates that leadership at national and organisational levels embrace styles that promote shared responsibility for attaining these Goals. Such leadership should prioritize long-term perspectives, recognize the importance of collective effort, remain open to learning, and uphold ethical standards, thereby underscoring the importance of moral action among followers (Maqbool et al. 2024). Leaders must manage resources effectively, uphold ethical standards, and maintain a visionary outlook while focusing on long-term objectives, ensuring that morals and values are not compromised in pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Leaders must involve all stakeholders in the governance process and draw inspiration from a vision to achieve goals, even in changing environmental variables (Cooper & Nirenberg 2012). The characteristics of transformative leadership are evident in leadership practices. Improvements in social cohesiveness, economic efficiency, and environmental responsibility could result from this type of leadership combined with the cooperation and involvement of all parties. The three primary indicators of sustainable development are outlined as follows. The primary responsibilities of a leader include planning, executing, and supervising initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable development, characterized by a cyclical relationship. To ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at both national and global levels, it is essential to have robust leadership, a comprehensive implementation plan, and the involvement of all government agencies and relevant stakeholders (Amundsen & Martinsen 2015, Zhang & Jin 2019).

The 1987 Constitution of the Philippines states that "the state shall ensure the autonomy of local governments." Section 3, Article X mandates Congress to enact a local government code that establishes a more responsive and accountable local government structure through decentralization. This code must include mechanisms for recall, initiative, and referendum, allocate powers, responsibilities, and resources among local government units, and address the qualifications, election, appointment, removal, terms, salaries, powers, functions, and duties of local officials, along with other organizational and operational matters concerning local units (Villanueva et al. 2019). The Code established significant decentralization and autonomy by acknowledging the essential function of local governments in executing public programs and providing vital services (Nishimura 2022).

Local government executives face the dual administrative challenges of enhancing local revenue and addressing various health issues. The rapid expansion of urban areas presents additional challenges from societal complexity, including the need for infrastructure development, enhancement of social services, education, maintenance of peace and order, and adaptation to climate change. A leader must demonstrate high competence and the ability to navigate obstacles while steering the town toward progress (Viernes et al. 2018).

The leadership styles employed within organizations and societies significantly impact their inception, growth, and ongoing sustainability. Leadership is a concept that transcends businesses, sectors, and cultures. It substantially influences the achievements and objectives inherent in human endeavors. How leaders direct, motivate, and influence their subordinates significantly affects the trajectory of progress and development (Khan et al. 2014, Hernando-Devibar & Pera 2023).

The leadership of an organization constitutes its core. It manages human resources, which constitute the most critical element of an institution. Leadership constitutes a social influence process whereby the leader aims to secure the voluntary engagement of subordinates to achieve organizational objectives. Leaders influence their subordinates to achieve their goals effectively and efficiently. Transforming leadership involves a reciprocal process where leaders and followers collaborate to enhance morale and motivation. Transformational leaders inspire followers to alter expectations and perceptions, motivating them to attain shared objectives through the power of their vision and personality (Viernes et al. 2018).

Local governments received increased power, authority, responsibilities, and resources to enhance development and progress in rural areas. This action assessed their administrative capacity in executing their broadened responsibilities (Dagohoy 2021). Administrative capability refers to the capacity to mobilize resources and enhance productivity or efficiency. Administrative capability encompasses efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, and efficacy. Efficiency pertains to transforming inputs into outputs, emphasizing the utilization of inputs. Effectiveness relates to the relationship between inputs and the intended specific outcomes they produce. Innovation encompasses the entire process; however, its primary role is to enhance outputs to attain the desired outcomes. Efficacy pertains to achieving objectives, mainly through mechanisms that extend beyond traditional bureaucracy, incorporating public input to ensure that administrative outputs align with societal needs (Basaluddin 2021).

One key element that affects an organization's performance is its leadership, especially for local governments. How local government representatives choose their leadership roles may significantly impact the organization's performance. Local governments provide a wide range of services and directly and visibly affect the daily lives of their residents (Vos & Voets 2022, Irene et al. 2024). In the Philippines, many local governments still neglect to provide for the necessities of their people. Some local government officials do not uphold the standards of accountability and transparency that would otherwise establish a proper environment for democratic governance at the local level (Gabriel 2017, Gabriel & Gutierrez 2017).

Thus, this study assesses the administrative capabilities, the extent of implementation of government programs, leadership qualities, and leadership approaches among the Department Heads of the different municipalities in the province of Ifugao as perceived by them, the elected officials, and rank-and-file employees directly working under their supervision. More so, there is a difference in the perception of the elected officials and department heads and the rank in the file of the municipalities of Ifugao in terms of administrative capabilities, extent of implementation of programs, leadership qualities, and leadership styles. This would aid government agencies in identifying strengths and weaknesses that can enhance service delivery and governance. This will allow the design of capability-building programs that target specific areas for improvement for more effective and efficient management at the local level. Additionally, the study's results may serve as a basis for policies relevant to leadership development, administrative capability enhancements, and employee involvement in decision-making.

Research Method

This study used a descriptive-comparative research design and a quantitative research method to determine the administrative capabilities of the different municipal department heads in the province

of Ifugao, Philippines, regarding management functions, program implementation level, leadership qualities, and styles. The study involved three respondents: municipal elected officials (Mayor to Councilors), department heads (Chief Administrative Officer and Administrative Officer), and rank-and-file employees. The different department heads were the primary respondents. The claims of the department heads were validated by the elected employees in the municipality to which they belong, including the rank-and-file employees who directly work under their supervision.

A list of respondents was obtained from the 11 Municipal Human Resource Management offices of the different municipalities in Ifugao Province (Aguinaldo, Asipulo, Banaue, Hingyon, Hungduan, Kiangan, Lagawe, Lamut, Alista, Mayoyao, and Tinoc). Total enumeration was used for the elected officials and department heads, while cluster sampling was used to determine the number of respondents for the rank and file. A total of 106 Department Heads, 92 Elected Officials, and 449 rank-and-file employees participated in the study.

This study used a researcher-made instrument patterned from numerous open-sourced research by eminent authors. Thus, it was subjected to a validation process such as expert pooling, refinement, field, and reliability tests. Since Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.700$, the set of 77 measures is adequate for group measurement using SPSS. The research instrument's Cronbach alpha of .892 indicates acceptable reliability or internal consistency. The tool as a whole and by sections is valid and reliable. A 5-point Likert Scale Management System was used as the basis for determining the objectives of the study.

The data were analyzed and computer-processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. A comparative weighted mean was used to determine the respondents' perceptions of department heads' administrative capabilities, leadership qualities, and styles. The F-test was used to determine significant differences in the three respondents' perceptions of these qualities.

Results and Discussion

This section is divided into several sub-chapters, several things are explained, including (1) comparative mean on Leadership Dynamics (Administrative Capabilities) of Local Government Unit (LGU) - Department Heads in Ifugao Province; (2) Comparative Mean on Extent of Administrative Efficiency on Program Implementation by the Local Government Unit (LGU) - Department Heads; (3) Comparative mean on Leadership Qualities of the Local Government Unit (LGU) - Department Heads; (4) Leadership Approaches of the Local Government Unit (LGU) - Department Heads; and (5) f-test on Leadership Dynamics, Extent of Implementation, Leadership qualities, and Approaches of the Local Government Unit (LGU) Department Heads in Ifugao Province, Philippines when grouped by the type of respondents.

Leadership dynamics (administrative capabilities) of LGU - Department Heads in Ifugao Province

The comparative means of the leadership dynamics—administrative capabilities of the different department heads in the various municipalities of Ifugao (Figure 1) in terms of management functions such as planning, directing, organizing, and controlling as perceived by themselves (department heads), validated and supported by the elected officials and rank-and-file employees. It can be noted that the different department heads in the province of Ifugao are capable of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling the organization. The department heads believe they are very good at planning ($\bar{x}=4.22$). They are capable of conceptualizing/planning strategies and policies to achieve the institution's vision, mission, and goals. They can prepare budgets and strategic and action plans, including contingency plans with identified time frames and strategies. More so, they can identify and classify required activities based on organizational structure, group activities that are necessary for attaining organizational objectives, implement provisions for coordination horizontally and vertically in the organizational structure, create committees to carry out plans, establish linkages with other organizations and adopting a good level of organizational level and span management ($\bar{x}=4.12$).

Additionally, the different department heads of the other municipalities in the Province of Ifugao can exercise general supervision, integrating and using plans that improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency, observing and directing policies, conducting organizational diagnostics and considering

feedback, and intervening in the process of policy formation and implementation ($\bar{x}=4.04$). Lastly, department heads can implement their span of control, adopt clarity and delegation of authority, delegate power and authority to subordinates, formulate supporting objectives, policies, and programs, adopt and implement the principles of departmentalization, decentralize power and authority, set standards for control, and formulate strategies to improve personnel performance ($\bar{x}=4.12$). It can be noted that elected officials in the different municipalities of Ifugao believe that department heads are highly capable of planning ($\bar{x}=4.55$), organizing ($\bar{x}=4.25$), and directing ($\bar{x}=4.44$) the organization. On the other hand, rank-and-file employees agree that department heads in the municipalities of Ifugao can plan, organize, direct, and control the organization.

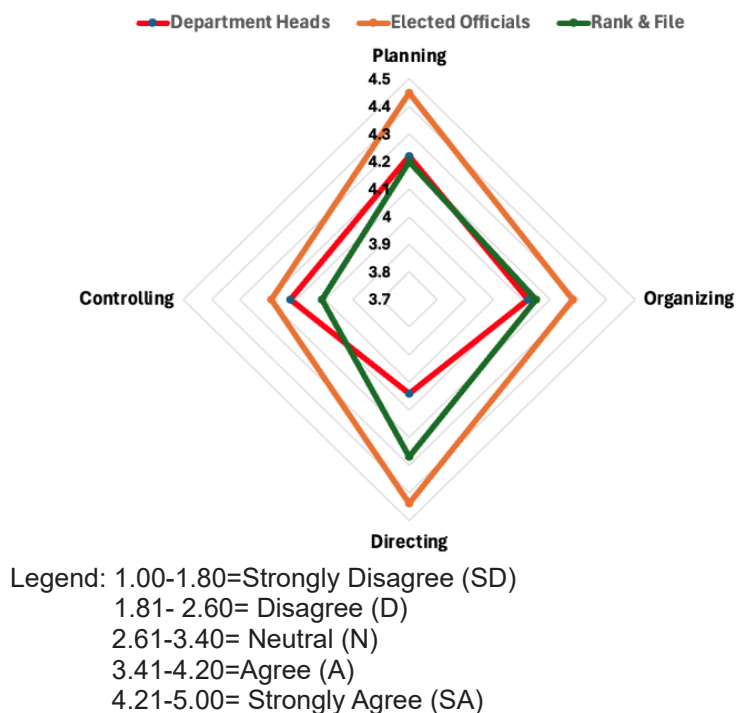


Figure 1.
Spider plot for the comparative mean on the administrative capabilities
of department heads in Ifugao Province
Source: Processed research results

Additionally, the different department heads of the other municipalities in the Province of Ifugao can exercise general supervision, integrating and using plans that improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency, observing and directing policies, conducting organizational diagnostics and considering feedback, and intervening in the process of policy formation and implementation ($\bar{x}=4.04$). Lastly, department heads can implement their span of control, adopt clarity and delegation of authority, delegate power and authority to subordinates, formulate supporting objectives, policies, and programs, adopt and implement the principles of departmentalization, decentralize power and authority, set standards for control, and formulate strategies to improve personnel performance ($\bar{x}=4.12$). It can be noted that elected officials in the different municipalities of Ifugao believe that department heads are highly capable of planning ($\bar{x}=4.55$), organizing ($\bar{x}=4.25$), and directing ($\bar{x}=4.44$) the organization. On the other hand, rank-and-file employees agree that department heads in the municipalities of Ifugao can plan, organize, direct, and control the organization.

The results of the study are consistent with previous studies. These studies researched management practices in different organizations vis-à-vis their planning, organizing, directing, and controlling functions. Management practices were observed in electric cooperatives in CARAGA, with planning getting the highest rating (Dumagit & Sal 2021). Similarly, cooperatives in Nueva Ecija also showed admirable practices in planning, and the boards have been noted to direct and attend to strategic development (Mina et al. 2022). The highest planning volume was recorded as the dominant factor in operational leadership at Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi Medan (Malikhah 2021). They recorded

the highest mean rating for performance management indicators in the police force of Tagum City (Aporbo et al. 2023). However, the centrality of all these management functions across the sectors collectively stands out in this study. All other recommendations included were to sustain the best practices, integrate all the successful strategies from different organizations, and maintain alignment with organizational goals. As proposed, a performance management system must be well thought out, user-friendly, and offer visible value-added 'benefits' to the organization.

Extent of administrative efficiency on program implementation by the LGU - Department Heads in Ifugao, Philippines

Notably, all respondents vouched for similar perceptions on the level of program implementation by the different municipal department heads in Ifugao as perceived by the department heads, elected officials, and rank-and-file employees, with an overall mean of 4.06, 4.14, and 4.03, respectively, and a qualitative Description of "Moderate Extent." Figure 2 presents the level of program implementation by the department heads in the different municipalities in Ifugao as perceived by themselves, supported/validated by the elected officials, including rank-and-file employees.

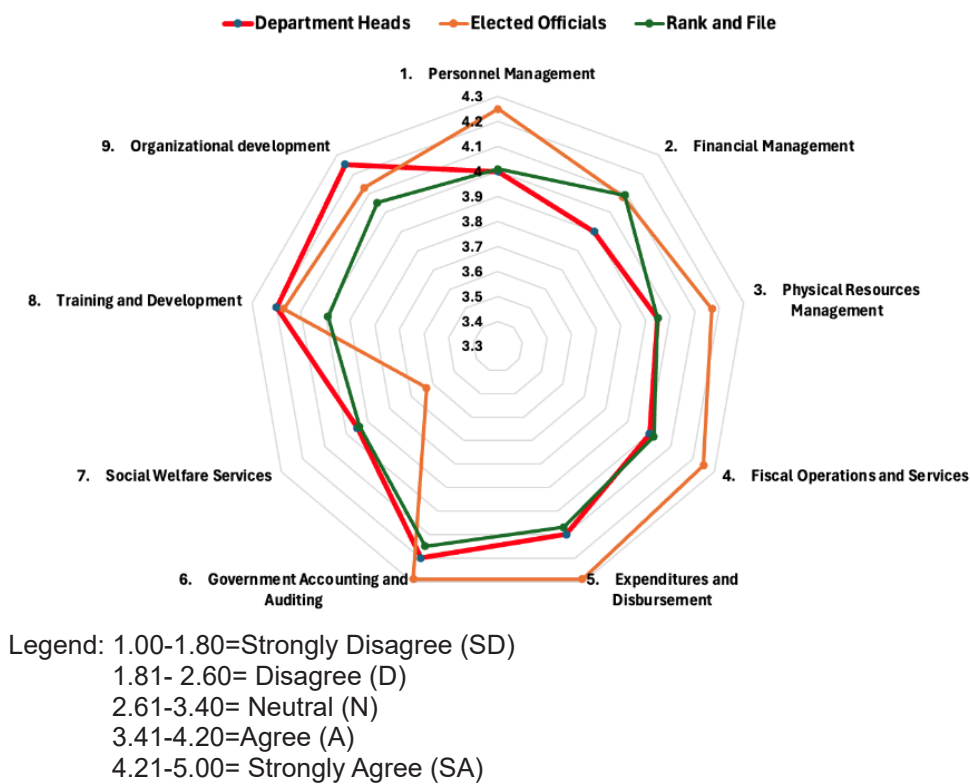


Figure 2.
 Spider plot for the comparative mean on the extent of administrative efficiency
 by the department heads in Ifugao, Philippines
 Source: Processed research results

Specifically, according to the primary respondents of the study, they support functions or the processes relating to staff influx, from recruitment, selection, onboarding, continued professional development (Personnel Management- $\bar{x}=4.00$), practice handling government finances in a way that allows it to be successful and compliant with regulations (Financial Management- $\bar{x}=3.90$), implement budgetary policies, such as revenue and expenditure measures, as well as issuance of public debt instruments and public debt management (Fiscal Operations and Services- $\bar{x}=4.00$), manage outgoing funds that are placed at the disposal of a recipient government or organization, or funds transferred between two separately reported activities, including outgoing funds that are spent on goods and services for the activity (Expenditures and Disbursements- $\bar{x}=4.10$), analyze, audit, and verify financial transactions, operations, accounts and reports of the organization for the purpose of determining their accuracy, integrity and authenticity, and satisfying the requirements of law, rules and regulations (Government Accounting and Auditing - $\bar{x}=4.20$), plan on the

acquisition of physical resources, obtaining the resources, ensuring availability and. monitoring the systems (Physical Resource Management- $\bar{x}=3.95$), organize public or private social services for the assistance of disadvantaged groups (Social Welfare Services- $\bar{x}=3.95$), and initiate educational activities that advances a worker’s knowledge and skill sets and instilling greater motivation to enhance job performance within an organization (Training and Development - $\bar{x}=4.20$), to a moderate extent. Lastly, department heads exert their efforts on improving an organization’s capability through the alignment of strategy, structure, people, rewards, metrics, and management processes to a great extent ($\bar{x}=4.25$).

Remarkably, elected officials in the different municipalities in Ifugao believe that department heads implement personnel management, fiscal operations and services, expenditures and disbursements, Government Accounting, and Auditing to a great extent. Rank-and-file employees supported the department heads’ claims that they moderately implement various programs in their organization. Priono et al. (2019) state that financial management directly influences public service provision. Internal controls and the competence of the personnel ensure sound financial management. Training and development programs are perceived to benefit employee performance in municipal offices (Queja et al. 2024). According to the Department of the Interior and Local Governance [DILG], LGUs should deliver efficient, effective, and responsive essential services, among others, to help create peaceful, self-reliant, and progressive communities.

Leadership qualities of the LGU - Department Heads in Ifugao, Philippines

The spider plot in Figure 3 presents the comparative mean on the leadership qualities of different department heads in the 11 municipalities in Ifugao as perceived by the respondents, supported/validated by the elected officers, and rank-and-file employees. It can be noted that department heads believe that they possess the qualities of a good leader, with an overall mean of 3.96 and a qualitative description of Agree on a five-point Likert scale. Notably, both elected officials and rank-and-file employees support the claims of department heads with an overall mean of 4.08 and 3.90, respectively.

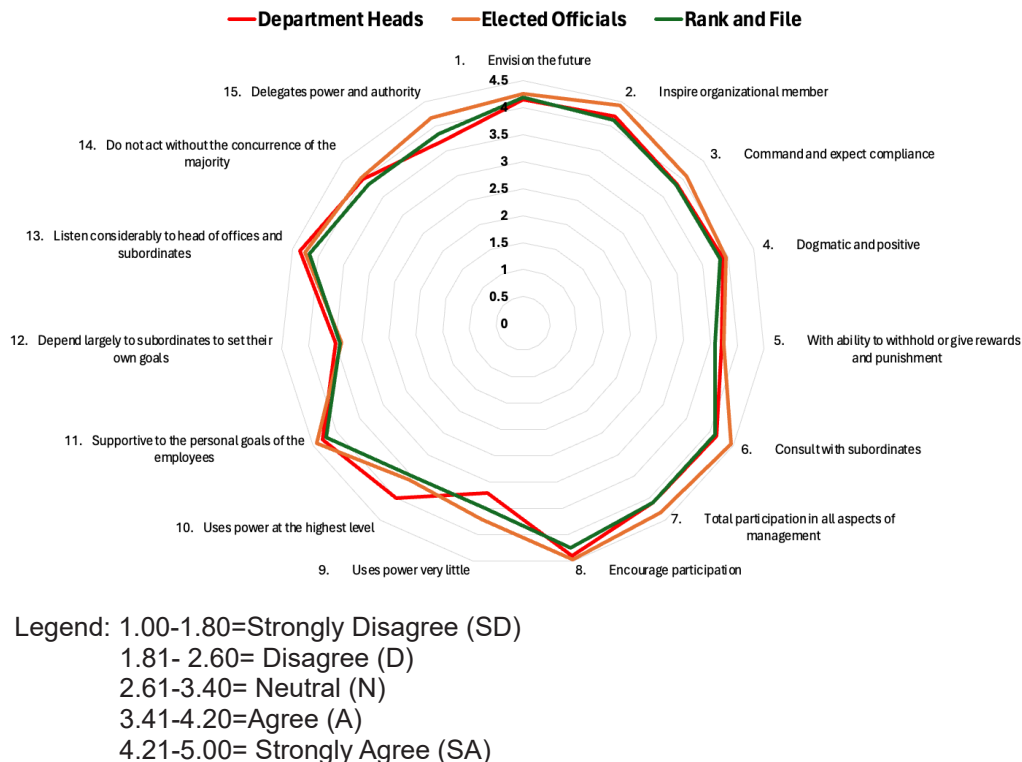


Figure 3.
Spider plot for the comparative mean on leadership qualities
of the department heads in Ifugao, Philippines
Source: Processed research results

In visionary leadership, department heads are rated highest in “envisioning the future” and “inspiring organizational members.” There is a firm consensus across all groups in this regard. This suggests department heads are seen as motivational leaders who do an excellent job setting direction and inspiring their teams. Moreover, the department heads are also perceived to be participative leaders as they try to involve subordinates in all decisions made, as reflected by high scores in “consulting with subordinates,” “encouraging participation,” and “total participation in management.”

Moreover, the heads effectively use the principle of delegation of authority since strong ratings about “delegate power and authority.” This is supported by the fact that lower ratings for “uses power very little” and “uses power at the highest level” reveal that departmental heads do not rely too much on positional power or exhaustive control but lead through collaboration and empowerment. The chart, overall, indicates that leadership is in a state of balance, where heads of departments are visionary, collaborative, and participative, minus any authoritarian leadership styles. That all three groups can arrive at this consensus shows that the departmental heads practice leadership qualities such as inclusiveness, with decisions being taken collectively, quite befitting modern management principles.

In this context, relevant leadership qualities that can be required from local government officials to provide effective governance and social innovation include facets such as honesty, commitment, decision-making ability, and command responsibility (Eutaquio 2023). A leader should have purposefulness, initiative, and the ability to influence and unite followers. Facilitative leadership, which emphasizes collaboration and empowering others, is appropriate for local government. Successful leaders are characterized by empowering, goal-oriented, and consultative features, using bottom-up and top-down approaches. They must be resource mobilizers and supportive of their teams accordingly. The leadership competence in local government should be based on administrative, educational, legal, and psychological skills (Gallardo 2019).

Leadership approaches of the LGU - Department Heads in Ifugao, Philippines

Figure 4 shows that the departments in the different municipalities in Ifugao use varied leadership styles to manage the human resources of various government offices. Remarkably, department heads and elected officials strongly agree that department heads use a participative leadership style.

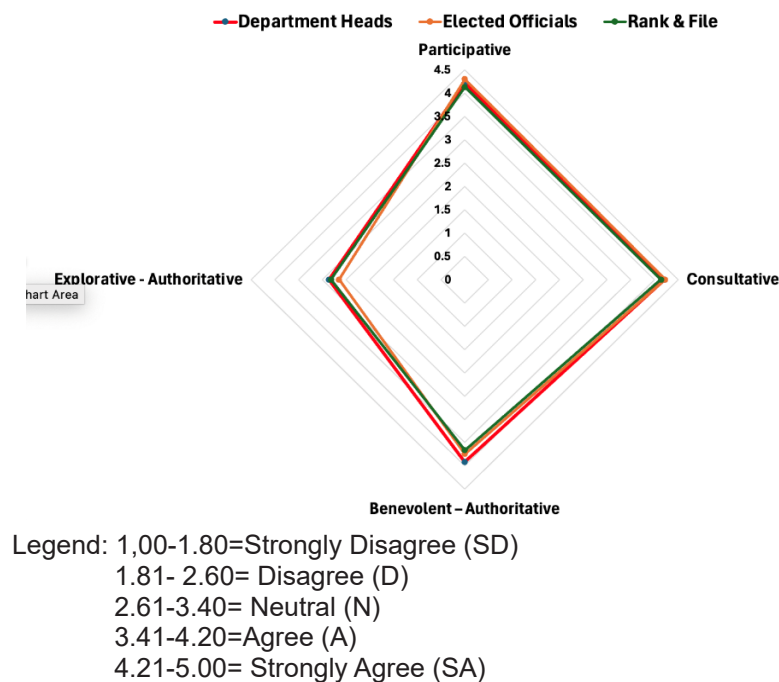


Figure 4.
Spider plot for the comparative mean on leadership approaches
of the department heads in Ifugao, Philippines
Source: Author Excel Results

According to Bhatti et al. (2019), participative leadership is a non-authoritative behavior that gives opportunities to subordinates to take part in the decision-making process and receive input from employees to make a quality decision. In participative decision-making, the leader encourages employees to express their ideas and suggestions. A participative leader acts as a coach who facilitates all employees openly demonstrating their ideas and utilizes this valuable information in decision-making. A participative leader empowers employees and eradicates all obstructions to achieve outcomes during the process. According to the path-goal theory of Sagnak (2016), influential leaders motivate subordinates to become involved in decision-making to attain goals effectively. The purpose is to increase employee motivation and empowerment and make the organization's members more productive. Managers should adopt a participative leadership style because it is consultative.

However, this leadership style, versatility, and innovation can be concocted in problem-solving. A participative leader builds human capability, ability, and a sense of responsibility through involvement in decision-making. Participation in decision-making creates self-efficacy and psychological empowerment and enables subordinates to feel that they are valuable assets of an organization. A participative leader develops a climate of open communication in which employees feel empowered, and their resistance towards any organizational change can be handled. This leadership is characterized by less formalization, an inclination for respect, power sharing, mutual understanding, and eradicating reciprocal threats and antagonism. This leadership style works best in an organic organizational structure, where employees are primarily involved in creativity and have a good sense of their job responsibilities. Participative leadership produces enviable results, where employees are passionate about learning from their leader. Participative leadership significantly impacts work outcomes, such as increased employee performance, intrinsic motivation, knowledge sharing, and OCB (Yan 2011).

Significant differences in the leadership dynamics, extent of implementation, leadership qualities, and approaches of the LGU Department Heads when grouped by the type of respondents

Table 1 presents the significant differences in leadership dynamics, administrative efficiency, leadership abilities, and approaches of the LGU- department heads in the province of Ifugao, Philippines, when grouped according to the type of respondent. Notably, the ANOVA results indicate no significant differences in perceptions regarding leadership dynamics, administrative efficiency, leadership qualities, and leadership approaches from the perceptions of the department heads, elected officials, and rank-and-file employees. For leadership dynamics, the F ratio is 3.75, less than the F-critical value of 4.26, meaning all groups perceive leadership dynamics similarly. Such consistency could imply that the leadership practices are uniformly understood across governance levels and would help effect cohesive leadership and administrative reforms. The F-ratio of administrative efficiency has a value of 0.34, far below the critical value of 5.14, which suggests that department heads are equally effective according to the perceptions of each respondent in their administrative roles. This reflects standardized governance, which stabilizes processes across all departments. However, it may indicate an increasing need for flexibility or innovation to satisfy local needs.

The F-ratio for leadership qualities is low, at 0.35, compared to the critical value of 3.88; hence, leadership traits regarding decision-making and vision are perceived similarly across groups. This is good for governance because it inspires trust and stability within leadership. The close similarity evinced from the near-perfect values of the F-statistic and F-critical in leadership approaches ($0.03 < 4.26$) represents consensus about participatory styles of leading. This can be taken to mean that decision-making processes are participatory and democratic. Hence, a culture of transparency and accountability abounds.

The lack of significant differences in perceptions indicates a unified understanding of leadership and administrative practices across the groups. This can strengthen governance since it minimizes internal conflicts and promotes smoother reforms. On the other hand, this unity suggests some opportunities to differentiate leadership more effectively for distinct local challenges. Similarly, the fact that respondents shared perceptions means that reforms can be implemented with minimal opposition; thus, governance is adaptable and efficient in responding to emerging needs.

Table 1.

F-test on the significant differences in the leadership dynamics, extent of implementation, leadership qualities, and approaches of the LGU Department Heads when grouped by the type of respondents

Category	Source of Variation	Sums of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F-Ratio	F- Critical Value
Leadership Dynamics	Between Groups	0.2054	2	0.1027	3.75	4.26 (at 0.05 level)
	Within Groups	0.2463	9	0.027367		
	Total	0.4517				
Administrative Efficiency	Between Groups	0.056622	2	0.028311	0.34	5.14 (at 0.05 level)
	Within Groups	0.505578	6	0.084263		
	Total	0.5622				
Leadership Qualities	Between Groups	0.260338	2	0.130169	0.35	3.88 (at 0.05 level)
	Within Groups	4.417293	12	0.368108		
	Total	4.677631				
Leadership Approaches	Between Groups	0.0248	2	0.0124	0.03	4.26 (at 0.05 level)
	Within Groups	4.1444	9	0.460489		
	Total	4.1692				

Source: SPSS analysis results

Shared vision, communication, and collaboration are key to effective leadership implementation (Gabriel & Medina 2022). Similarly, in local government, public support for structural reforms significantly influences residents' perceptions of governance and democracy (Beerli & Zaidan 2021). Despite challenges, adopting Henri Fayol's management principles in organizational settings has contributed to effective leadership and governance. Administrative reforms have positively impacted women's leadership development in local governance in South and Southeast Asia, although socio-political, economic, and cultural barriers persist (Azizuddin & Shamsuzzoha 2023).

Conclusion

The department heads in Ifugao's municipalities are perceived to effectively manage their departments in planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Respondents agree on the consistency of program implementation across municipalities, with department heads recognized for their leadership qualities and use of a participative leadership style. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of leadership styles, qualities, and administrative capabilities. The study highlights the department heads' competence in strategic planning, organization, and supervision, supported by elected officials and rank-and-file employees. These capabilities are crucial for good governance, ensuring alignment with municipal goals and improving service delivery.

The study suggests that municipalities should invest in leadership development programs, enhance communication in planning, and offer rank-and-file employees more opportunities for input, increasing their ownership and satisfaction. Further development in leadership training, especially in supervision and delegation, would benefit department heads. Improving the directing function and fostering mentorship programs could also standardize department leadership. Municipalities should also focus on enhancing organizational structures, interdepartmental cooperation, and performance evaluation systems to improve accountability and resource management. Capacity-building efforts in personnel and financial management will ensure more effective program implementation, ultimately leading to better outcomes and resource utilization. Future studies may consider using a mixed-method approach to comprehensively assess the study's variables. A correlational research may also be conducted on the variables mentioned and the organizational performance of LGUs. The competencies and skills of leaders may also be included in the study. The involvement of satisfaction rates of the services in each municipality may strengthen the study's claims.

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Author Biographies

Fernando G. Hernando is currently the Dean of the College of Advanced Education, distinguished by his extensive educational qualifications and multifaceted expertise. He is a full-fledged Professor II at Ifugao State University—Lagawe Campus, Lagawe, Ifugao, Philippines. He specializes in industrial technology education, public administration, and higher education.

Client William M. Malinao is an academician and researcher distinguished by his extensive educational qualifications and multifaceted expertise. He holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration with a major in Marketing Management, a master’s degree from Northeastern College, and a Doctorate in Commerce from Saint Mary’s University—each institution recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines. Dr. Malinao is currently advancing his academic pursuits by working toward a PhD in Educational Leadership and Management at Isabela State University. As an Assistant Professor IV and the Program Chairperson of the College of Advanced Education at Ifugao State University – Potia Campus, he imparts knowledge across both undergraduate and graduate programs, specializing in Business Administration, Management, Entrepreneurship, Education, and Social Sciences.