**Empowering Barangays Through Partnership: A Needs Assessment of Barangay Newly Elected Officials in Western Visayas, Philippines**

**Abstract**

The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) strengthens its mandate to build local government capacity by partnering with universities to leverage research expertise for identifying knowledge gaps and designing targeted training programs. Acting as DILG’s research arm, the university conducted a descriptive survey among 3,968 newly elected barangay officials (BNEOs) in Western Visayas, Philippines, using an online questionnaire to assess socio-demographics, training needs, awareness of the Local Government Code (LGC), and functional competencies. Findings revealed that BNEOs possess moderate awareness of the LGC, particularly lacking understanding of autonomy in proprietary functions and economic enterprise management, while showing proficiency in corporate powers and cooperative undertakings. Key training needs identified include barangay development planning, government procurement, and disaster risk reduction and management. Functional competency analysis highlighted significant gaps in fiscal planning and budget allocation. These results underscore the critical need for evidence-based capacity-building interventions tailored to the specific requirements of BNEOs. The study’s data-driven insights directly inform the DILG’s BNEO Program, ensuring that training modules address actual competency gaps and sectoral needs. The DILG-university partnership facilitates effective knowledge transfer and the application of best practices, bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical governance. This collaborative, research-informed approach optimizes resource utilization, enhances the functional capacity of local officials, and ultimately contributes to more effective, accountable, and responsive local governance and community development in Western Visayas.

**Keywords***: barangay newly elected officials, Department of Interior and Local Government, functional competency, awareness of local government code*

**Implications and Contributions of the Study**

This study underscores the following implications:

* **Need for structured training among barangay newly elected officials (BNEOs) particularly to improve their awareness of Local Government code and functional competency.** The influx of inexperienced, first-term officials highlights the urgent need for comprehensive orientation and ongoing capacity-building programs. Targeted training and support can transform foundational skills into advanced competencies, leading to more effective and accountable local governance. Enhanced understanding of roles and responsibilities can cultivate greater accountability, integrity, and loyalty among public officials, benefiting constituents.
* **Existing risk of inefficiency and inconsistent service among local barangays.** This study highlights the existence ofmoderate competency and knowledge gaps, especially in administrative and procurement processes in the barangay, which may lead to inefficiencies and inconsistent delivery of public services.
* **Importance of policy awareness among barangay officials.** Limited familiarity with the Local Government Code of 1991 suggests a risk of non-compliance and suboptimal execution of official duties, underscoring the need for legal and procedural education.
* **Necessity for modernization and digital literacy among local officials.** Weaknesses in ICT and records management point to a need for digital skills development to enable efficient, transparent, and modern public administration.
* **Value of partnerships between local government unit, academia and other partner agencies.** Collaborations between universities, DILG, and other agencies can enhance training quality, promote research-driven policymaking, and foster continuous improvement.
* **Opportunity for community development through identified pressing training need.** Strengthening officials’ skills in barangay development planning and disaster risk management can lead to more resilient and proactive communities.

# **INTRODUCTION**

The Higher Education Institution and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) collaboration in research is important for strengthening good governance, enhancing service delivery, and fostering community development. Such partnerships enable evidence-based policy-making, empower civil society organizations, and promote transparency and accountability in local governance.

These collaborations also enhance the capacity of local governments through training and development programs, leveraging the expertise of university faculty and researchers. These collaborations facilitate meaningful engagement with local officials by understanding their contextualized needs, supporting their local planning and uniting all partners to achieve common development goals [1].

The local officials in the barangay are instrumental in the upliftment and wholistic development of the community as it is their primary mandate. Due to their proximity to the community, they are frontline service providers to cater to the needs, and concerns of the people. Local officials are the chief executives of the barangay government and has direct power among its constituents as stated in RA 7160 also known as Local Government Code of 1991. Such power should be judiciously exercised with the fundamental aim of promoting the welfare of the barangay and its inhabitants.

Part of the Department of the Interior and Local Government’s (DILG) powers and functions is to strengthen the administrative, technical and fiscal capabilities of local government offices and personnel and provide assistance towards legislation regarding local governments. To further their functions, DILG promulgated Barangay Newly Elected Officials (BNEO) Framework Development. This program is precursor to a capacity development programs for barangay officials upon their election and assumption to office.

The Newly Elected Officials/Barangay Newly Elected Officials (NEO/BNEO) Program is a continuing capacity development program of the DILG designed and implemented through the Local Government Academy. It aims to prepare newly-elected officials of the local government in taking up their tasks and responsibilities as political leaders and area development managers to translate their vision and agenda for their Local Government Unit (LGU) into a feasible plan making their LGUs globally and regionally competitive institutions [2].

This program is equally helpful to both newly and re-elected barangay officials since it would help them be prepared on their functions as local chief executives, and challenges as community leaders so they could actively fulfill their role of ushering in development and progress to their respective barangays.

Part of the BNEO Framework Development is the conduct of the training needs assessment (TNA) prior to the capacity building training. Training needs assessment, also known as training needs analysis, is a step taken before training and a component of integrated training design to obtain a comprehensive picture of the material, time allocation, and learning strategies that should be used during the training process. The value of training needs assessment could simply not be underestimated. TNA provides clear guidelines on which professional deficits need to be remedied and what the profile of future trainees should be [3].

DILG highly promotes the training of the barangay officials deeming the program as a wise investment. However, TNA should be conducted first and foremost so as not to waste the limited resources of the barangay. The training agenda or training plan of the barangay should have a rational basis, i.e. it should be based on the needs of the barangay officials/staff in relation to the discharge of their mandated functions [4].

Another author also stressed prioritizing TNA so that organizations could get the most out of the training resources presently limited to their organizations. TNA is helpful in determining the timeliness of the training, the number of staff to be trained, and the availability of resources for the successful implementation of the training programs [5].

## **Gap in Training Needs Analysis**

Conducting a training needs assessment before development training programs are highly encouraged and promoted. Previously, it is a common pitfall of most organizations to just send their manpower to trainings without due assessment of the needs of the employee or organization. One reason for this is the lack of awareness on the process and benefits of TNA [3]. Added to the fact is that TNA is seen to be time consuming and expensive that is why it is not oftentimes practised in most countries [6].

Nonetheless, it is now highly advantageous to assess the training needs of the institution before developmental training or education is conducted. TNA could assess the precise and immediate needs of the organization on developmental training programs and in turn, address these needs based on priority, available resources, and present training opportunities. TNA could save unnecessary costs on training that do not actually meet the pressing needs of the organization, training that does not result in productive outputs from employees, or least prioritized training agenda.

## **Assessment on Awareness of Local Government Code and Functional Competency**

In 1991, Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code was enacted into law, transferring control and responsibility of delivering basic services to the hands of local government units (LGU). It aimed to enhance provision of services in the grass roots level as well as improve the efficiency in resource allocation. Further, it sought to widen the decision-making space by encouraging the participation of stakeholders, especially at the local level [7].

Lack of awareness on these guidelines in the Local Government Code could hamper good governance particularly in the performance of duties by the local officials. Duplication or overlapping of work could ensue along with malpractice of power and authority. There could also be improper coordination and poor response to the needs of the community. These could ultimately result in poor performance of duty and stagnated development of the barangay. The Barangay will largely be affected since they are in the direct line of these government units [8].

BNEO TNA aimed to assess the awareness of the elected local officials on local government code as it serves as guideline and enviable tool in carrying out their functions and responsibilities in the barangay. It also sought to assess their functional competency in delivering their key responsibilities. This assessment was foreseen to uncover the challenges, weaknesses, and prior knowledge of the participants in executing their sworn duty. Out of this analysis, trainings could be tailored to address these challenges and ensure that programs are appropriate and focused on their actual needs. With this, TNA identified and addressed the actual gaps in the required skills among the local officials. TNA ascertained that invested resources and expended training efforts were channeled into worthy investments which are knowledge, empowerment and upskilling of the local officials.

**Objectives**

BNEO TNA aimed to determine the awareness on local government code and functional competency in their duties, functions and responsibilities among the Western Visayas elected barangay officials. Specifically, the study intended to generate a profile on the socio-demographic characteristics and trainings needed of the participants. Awareness was assessed in the area of corporate powers and cooperative undertakings. Functional competency included functional competency in terms fiscal planning and budget allocation, preparation of budget plans and annual budget submissions, oversight of budget execution, implementation or budget execution, organizational and procurement planning, general administrative services and planning ([9][10].

## **METHODS**

This descriptive survey was conducted to all elected officials in Region 6 Western Visayas with the positions of Punong Barangay, Sangguniang Barangay, Sangguniang Kabataan Chairman and Sangguniang Kabataan Kagawad. The questionnaire focused on socio-demographics, training needed, awareness of local government code and functional competency. Survey questionnaires were administered online to all elected barangay officials through the DILG Development Office Region 6 and a total of 3,968 participants responded. Data was tabulated and analyzed using SPSS. Statistical tools were frequency, percentage, and mean. Responses for awareness and functional competency were based on the 5-point Likert scale choices.

**Ethical Considerations**

Participation was voluntary and no risks were incurred to those who would not participate or withdrew their participation from the study. Participants were given a choice to answer or refuse the survey to indicate their consent. Consent was given upon the acceptance and completion of the online survey form. Participants could withdraw anytime by refusing to answer or stopping to answer at any part in the survey forms. Anonymity and confidentiality of the identity of the participants was strictly observed.

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### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Demographics**

The profile of the BNEO presented their socio-demographic characteristics which included their age, sex, highest educational attainment, eligibility, locality (barangay elected), term of office, number of years in all elected position, year of first election to public office, first elected position and position elected during the 2018 BSKE election.

Majority of the local officials were middle aged-adult (2,728 or 68.75%), male (2,451 or 61.77)%, college graduate (1,353 or 34.10%), no honor graduate or career exam eligibility (3,368 or 84.88%). As for their locality or barangay where they were elected, the majority were from Iloilo (1,604 or 40.42%) followed by Capiz (1,129 or 28.45%). 404 or 10.18% participants came from barangays considered as Geographically-Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) with the highest number from Iloilo provinces with 140 or 8.73% out of the total population. These findings suggest a concentration of leadership among a specific demographic and highlight potential gaps in educational attainment and geographic representation.

Most of the participants were elected in their first term of public office with 2,140 frequency or 53.93%, followed by second term in public office with 1,043 or 26.29%. Among those who were second termers, majority had been in office for 2 to 14 years (860 or 82.45%), first elected within the year 2011-2020 (776 or 74.40%), and first elected in the position of Sangguniang Barangay (779 or 74.69%). Among the third termers, majority had been in office for 4-14 years (565 or 75.95%), first elected within the year 1995-2019 (671 or 87.83%) and first elected in the position of Sangguniang Barangay (563 or 73.69%). During the 2018 BSKE election, majority were elected as Sangguniang Barangay (2,933 or 73.92%). With most participants serving their first term in public office, there is a clear opportunity to strengthen local governance by focusing on the development and training of these new officials.

**Suggested Training Topics by BNEO**

DILG encourages the BNEO’s attendance to trainings pertinent to their functions, responsibilities, and roles. All local officials should be given the opportunity to attend such seminars in order to equip them with pertinent skills and knowledge in fulfilling their mandate (DILG, 2018).

When asked regarding any further trainings they could attend relevant to their functions, most participants suggested topics on barangay development planning formulation (2,805 or 70.69%), followed by government procurement for barangay related (1,876 or 47.28%) and BDRRM-related training including First Aid, Basic Life Support (BLS), fire volunteers rescue and fire rescue training (1,826 or 46.02%).

Table 1. *Suggested Relevant Trainings for BNEO*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank** | **Topics** | **Frequency** | | **Percentage** |
| 1 | Barangay Development Planning Formulation | 2805 | 70.69% | |
| 2 | Government Procurement for Barangays | 1876 | 47.28% | |
| 3 | BDRRM-related training including First Aid, Basic life support (BLS), fire volunteers rescue, fire rescue training | 1826 | 46.02% | |
| 4 | Training on how to draft resolution and ordinances | 1651 | 41.61% | |
| 5 | Seminar of the Local Government Code and other Government policy issuances | 1591 | 40.10% | |
|  | Total number of respondents | 3968 |  | |

**Awareness on Local Government Code**

Every local government unit (LGU), as a corporation, shall have corporate powers such as: (1) to have continuous succession in its corporate name; (2) to sue and be sued; (3) to have and use a corporate seal; (4) to acquire and convey real or personal property; (5) to enter into contracts; and (6) to exercise such other powers as are granted to corporations, subject to the limitations provided in this Code and other laws (Section 2 par. a, Book I, Local Government Code).

Result showed that barangay officials were only moderately aware (M=3.02) of the Local Government Code particularly on corporate powers and cooperative undertakings among local government units. In corporate powers, they were least aware of autonomy in the exercise of proprietary functions and in the management of economic enterprises (M=2.97). Participants had the lowest awareness on the full autonomy in exercising

their proprietary functions and in managing their economic enterprise. This provides for the disposition, development, lease, obtainment and utilization of their own properties and resources for productive and developmental purposes ([11].

Table 2. *Level of Awareness on Local Government Code (n=3968)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Items | Mean | Description |
| 1. Corporate Powers |  |  |
| 1. Acquisition and conveyance of real or personal property | 3.02 | Moderately aware |
| 1. Entering into contracts | 3.00 | Moderately aware |
| 1. Autonomy in the exercise of proprietary functions and in the management of economic enterprises | 2.97 | Moderately aware |
| 1. Cooperative Undertakings Among Local Government Units |  |  |
| 1. Inter-LGU strategic planning on specific concerns | 3.06 | Moderately aware |
| 1. Resource management on shared areas and resources | 3.05 | Moderately aware |
| 1. Process in forming alliances with neighboring LGUs or LGUs under a common ecosystem | 3.03 | Moderately aware |
| Overall Mean | 3.02 | Moderately aware |

**Functional Competency**

Functional competency includes the abilities to use procedures, techniques and knowledge of a specialized field [12]. In LGU, functional competency refers to the specific knowledge and skills set possessed by local officials to perform their functions and duties including but not limited to fiscal planning and budget allocation, preparation of budget plans and annual budget submissions, oversight of budget execution, implementation or budget execution, organizational and procurement planning, general administrative services, and planning.

The participants demonstrated moderate functional competency, assessed at Level 3 on a 5-point scale. This indicates average knowledge and skills relevant to their roles as local officials. While they possess working knowledge of their responsibilities, they experience challenges in awareness, understanding, and execution of duties.

Among the seven domains in functional competency, general administrative services was the lowest competency of all (M=2.98). GAS services are mainly secretarial and clerical work which could also include administrative, information technology, and financial services. Second lowest competency was on organizational and procurement planning (M=3.04). Procurement planning enables the LGU to be cost efficient in its procurement, as it ensures a strong link between procurement needs and goals [13].

Table 3. *Overall Functional Competency (n=3968)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Functional Competency | Mean | Level of Functional Competency |
| 1. 7 | Planning | 3.15 | Moderately competent |
| 1. 2 | Preparation of Budget Plans and Annual Budget Submission | 3.14 | Moderately competent |
| 1. 3 | Oversight of Budget Execution | 3.12 | Moderately competent |
| 1. 1 | Fiscal Planning and Budget Allocation | 3.10 | Moderately competent |
| 1. 4 | Implementation or Budget Execution | 3.06 | Moderately competent |
| 1. 5 | Organizational and Procurement Planning | 3.04 | Moderately competent |
| 1. 6 | General Administrative Services | 2.98 | Moderately competent |
|  | Overall Mean | 3.08 | Moderately competent |

For a more thorough analysis, indicators under each competency domain were analyzed. For fiscal planning and budget allocation, participants were moderately competent (M=3.10). The lowest rated skill was on “checking the arithmetical accuracy and authorization of source documents” (M=3.08). Participants also had the least knowledge on “basic forecasting and statistical concepts and methodologies” (M=2.98). The moderate competency level in fiscal planning and budget allocation, coupled with moderate proficiency in verifying source document accuracy and understanding basic forecasting and statistical methods, indicates gaps in critical financial oversight and analytical skills among participants.

Table 4. *Functional Competency in Fiscal Planning and Budget Allocation (n=3968)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Items | Mean | Description |
| 1. Skills |  |  |
| 1. Reviewing and validating data input against source documents to ensure completeness and accuracy | 3.16 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Maintaining filing systems in an organized and accurate manner | 3.15 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Checking the arithmetical accuracy and authorization of source documents | 3.08 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Knowledge |  |  |
| 1. Policy objectives and priority programs of government | 3.18 | moderately knowledgeable |
| 1. Legislative requirements and regulations on budgeting | 3.17 | moderately knowledgeable |
| 1. Basic forecasting and statistical concepts and methodologies | 2.98 | moderately knowledgeable |
| Level of Competency | 3.10 | moderately competent |

Level of skills was measured in the preparation of budget plans and annual budget submission. Among its indicators, the lowest rated skill was “collecting and analyzing information efficiently and effectively using analytical tools and facilities” (M=3.12). Data gathering has been an affirmed difficulty of many localities. Gathering data and other relevant information for development planning has been a challenge that in most cases stalled the planning process [14].

Table 5. *Functional Competency in Preparation of Budget Plans and Annual Budget Submission (n=3968)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Items | Mean | Description |
| 1. Skills |  |  |
| 1. Supervising staff to achieve predetermined outputs for the annual budget formulation | 3.17 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Inputting data and updating records using the financial reports | 3.14 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Collecting and analyzing information efficiently and effectively using analytical tools and facilities | 3.12 | moderately skilled |
| Level of Competency | 3.14 | moderately competent |

For the oversight of budget execution competency, participants were moderately competent (M=3.12). Lowest rated skill was on “cultivates a robust network of connections and working relationships” (M=3.08) whereas lowest rated knowledge was on “tools and techniques for data extraction, analysis and evaluation” (M=3.07).

Among local barangay units, linkages and networks are highly endorsed as it is one of their mandates to “enter in joint ventures and cooperative arrangements with people’s and nongovernmental organizations in the delivery of certain basic services, capability-building and livelihood projects... ” [11]. The moderate competency in budget execution oversight, combined with weak skills in networking and limited knowledge of data extraction and analysis tools, implies that participants may struggle to effectively collaborate with potential partners and utilize any data they have for informed decision-making. This could hinder their pursuit towards local autonomy.

Table 6. *Functional Competency in Oversight of Budget Execution (n=3968)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Items | Mean | Description |
| 1. Skills |  |  |
| 1. Checking budget expenditure and variation requests for completeness and accuracy | 3.16 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Cultivates a robust network of connections and working relationships | 3.08 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Knowledge |  |  |
| 1. The relationship of budget realignment and variation, and expenditures to achieving better outcomes and policy priorities | 3.15 | moderately knowledgeable |
| 1. Legislative and regulatory requirements on budget execution and accountability | 3.14 | moderately knowledgeable |
| 1. Tools and techniques for data extraction, analysis and evaluation | 3.07 | moderately knowledgeable |
| Level of Competency | 3.12 | moderately competent |

For implementation or budget execution, participants indicated that they were moderately competent (M=3.06). Skills that they found to be most challenging is on “applying the Unified Accounts Code Structure (UACS) and code updates” (M=2.90). They also reported that they were least knowledgeable in “hierarchy of approvals for budget adjustment information and data that can be obtained from financial reports” and “data validation tools and techniques, their strengths, and limitations” as both indicators scored the lowest rating (M=3.07).

The Unified Accounts Code Structure or UACS is a government-wide harmonized budgetary, treasury and accounting code classification framework jointly developed by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the Commission on Audit (COA), and other government agencies to facilitate reporting of all financial transactions of agencies including revenue reporting [15]. Result implied that participants found this area to be very challenging.

Table 7. *Functional Competency in Implementation or Budget Execution (n=3968)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Items | Mean | Description |
| 1. Skills |  |  |
| 1. Reviewing and validating data input against source documents | 3.12 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Maintaining filing systems in an organized and accurate manner | 3.09 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Applying the Unified Accounts Code Structure (UACS) and code updates | 2.90 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Knowledge |  |  |
| 1. Motivation theories and techniques to improve performance | 3.12 | moderately knowledgeable |
| 1. Hierarchy of approvals for budget adjustment information and data that can be obtained from financial reports | 3.07 | moderately knowledgeable |
| 1. Data validation tools and techniques, their strengths, and limitations | 3.07 | moderately knowledgeable |
| Level of Competency | 3.06 | moderately competent |

For organizational and procurement planning, participants were discovered to have moderate competency (M=3.04). Participants experienced the most difficulty with their inadequate skill in “using ICT tools including word processing, spreadsheets and presentation software for procurement process” (M=2.92). They were also least knowledgeable in “ICT systems available for procurement tasks” (M=2.95). This result implies a digital literacy gap  that can lead to negative outcomes such as inefficient procurement processes, increased administrative burdens, higher susceptibility to errors, and missed opportunities for cost savings and transparency that modern digital tools offer.

Table 8. *Functional Competency in Organizational and Procurement Planning*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Items | Mean | Description |
| 1. Skills |  |  |
| 1. Setting up and maintaining the integrity of records required for procurement planning | 3.12 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Using ICT tools including word processing, spreadsheets and presentation software for procurement process | 2.92 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Knowledge |  |  |
| 1. Health and safety requirements and building safety issues relevant to preparing contracts. | 3.16 | moderately knowledgeable |
| 1. Implications of non-compliance with public procurement policy and process. | 3.0 | moderately knowledgeable |
| 1. ICT systems available for procurement tasks. | 2.95 | moderately knowledgeable |
| Level of Competency | 3.04 | moderately competent |

Participants were reported to be moderately competent (M=2.98) in General Administrative Services. Under the Records Management indicator, they encountered the most difficulty in “applying knowledge of records management software applications and their use” (M=3.03). Under the Computer Skills indicator, participants admitted that they find the most difficulty in “installing and uninstalling various programs and hardware” (M=2.77). This result implies a significant gap in essential digital and technical skills among participants. This deficiency can lead to inefficient records handling, increased downtime, and reduced overall productivity in administrative functions.

Table 9. *Functional Competency in General Administrative Services*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Items | Mean | Description |
| 1. Skills in the Record Management |  |  |
| 1. Quickly retrieves employees’ records upon request and willingly and immediately responds to clients | 3.16 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Maintains personnel records in a methodical and organized manner using own initiative to facilitate easy retrieval | 3.13 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Applies knowledge of records management software applications and their use | 3.03 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Computer Skills |  |  |
| 1. Applies basic computer skills in work using basic MS Office application | 2.86 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Uses e-mail system | 2.86 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Installs and uninstalls various programs and hardware | 2.77 | moderately skilled |
| Level of Competency | 2.98 | moderately competent |

Planning domain has eight subscales which are strategic planning, formulating and integrating development plans, generating reports and documents, monitoring and evaluation, risk assessment and management, partnering with other government agencies, barangay development planning facilitation skills and policy interpretation and implementation. Each subscale has their own set of indicators. Results indicated that participants were still moderately competent in the planning. Nonetheless, they were mostly challenged with their skill in partnering with other government agencies (M=3.06). This result implies limited collaboration skills and inter-agency coordination among participants which can result in fragmented efforts, reduced resource sharing, and less cohesive implementation of community development initiatives.

Table 10. *Functional Competency in Planning*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Items | Mean | Description |
| 1. Skills in barangay development planning facilitation skills | 3.33 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Skills in policy interpretation and implementation | 3.24 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Skills in risk assessment and management | 3.19 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Skills in monitoring and evaluation | 3.14 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Skills in generating reports and documents | 3.12 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Formulating and integrating development plans | 3.08 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Strategic planning | 3.07 | moderately skilled |
| 1. Skills in partnering with other government agencies | 3.06 | moderately skilled |
| Level of Competency | 3.15 | moderately competent |

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The majority of local officials are middle-aged males with no honor graduate or career exam eligibility, and predominantly elected from Iloilo and Capiz. A significant portion of officials serve in non-GIDA areas, though a notable minority represent geographically isolated and disadvantaged barangays, especially in Iloilo. The majority of participants are first-term public officials, indicating a significant influx of new leaders in local governance. This profile highlights the need for a comprehensive orientation, training, and support programs to equip these majority officials with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective public service.

Local officials identified capacity-building in barangay development planning, procurement processes, and disaster risk reduction and management as their most immediate training needs. This reflects their recognition of the need for practical skills to effectively manage community development and emergency response.

There is crucial necessity in bolstering the knowledge and awareness of the local officials due to their moderate or average awareness level with the Local Government Code of 1991 which is supposed to serve as an anchor and guideline on the execution of their powers and performance of their duties. While participants demonstrate working knowledge of their functions and responsibilities, they continue to face challenges in awareness, comprehension, and effective execution of duties. Knowing their duties and functions could help them exhibit accountability, integrity and loyalty to the people who elected them.

The overall moderate functional competency of participants, positioned at Level 3 on a 5-point scale, reveals that local officials possess an average but foundational grasp of their roles and responsibilities. While this level reflects a neutral baseline—neither deficient nor highly proficient—it underscores a critical gap between basic knowledge and the advanced skills required for optimal governance. The fact that officials, with most of them being first termers, still face challenges in awareness, understanding, execution, and performance suggests that their current skills and experience may not fully equip them to meet the complexities and demands of their positions. This competency plateau can lead to inconsistent service delivery, inefficiencies, and missed opportunities for proactive leadership and community development.

The lowest competency in general administrative services and procurement planning identified among barangay officials suggests potential inefficiencies in records management, computer skills, and cost-effective resource allocation. These gaps may hinder the effective delivery of services, implementation of government programs and the alignment of procurement activities with local priorities.

Investing in the training and capability development of local officials is therefore recommended and could be developed and delivered in partnership with universities and other partner agencies. Most suggested trainings in barangay development planning, procurement processes, and disaster risk reduction and management could improve overall barangay performance and accountability as deemed necesarry by most of the barangay officials. Trainings to equip newly elected local officials with the knowledge and skills required to fulfill their duties under the Local Government Code of 1991 is also suggested to promote accountability, integrity, and loyalty to their constituents. Trainings in information and communications technology (ICT) could also enhance the digital skills essential for modern governance and efficient public service among the local officials.

Collaboration between universities and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in research should be strengthened for evidence-based policy-making and effective local governance. This partnership allows for rigorous analysis of local issues, the development of innovative solutions, and the translation of research findings into actionable policies that enhance service delivery, promote transparency, and strengthen the capacity of local governments to address community needs effectively. Ultimately, this collaboration fosters a cycle of continuous improvement in local governance, driven by data and informed by practical realities.

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