



Journal of Exceptional Multidisciplinary Research (JEMR)

ISSN: 3007-8407 (Online)

Volume 2 Issue 1, (2025)

 <https://doi.org/10.69739/jemr.v2i1.494>

 <https://journals.stecab.com/jemr>

 Published by
Stecab Publishing

Research Article

Managerial Capabilities and Service Quality among Department Heads in the Local Government Unit of Paracelis, Mountain Province, Philippines

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About Article

Article History

Submission: March 13, 2025

Acceptance : April 15, 2025

Publication : April 19, 2025

Keywords

Department Heads Professionalism, Leadership Skills, Local Governance, Managerial Capabilities, Quality Service

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ABSTRACT

Government effectiveness mostly depends on public service leaders and senior civil servants who manage and improve important government functions. They translate political direction into policies and programs to sustain citizens' economic productivity, safety, and well-being. Thus, this descriptive correlational study aimed to evaluate the managerial capabilities and the quality of service of the Department Heads in the Municipal Local Government Unit (MLGU) of Paracelis, Mountain Province, with 114 rank-and-file employees serving as respondents. Statistical treatments such as weighted mean and Pearson r-correlation were utilized to analyze and interpret the data. Results revealed a "very satisfactory" extent of the general respondent perception of the factors in the management capability of the Department Heads as to flexibility, decisiveness, stress tolerance, interpersonal skills, ingenuity and innovativeness, and communication skills. Similar results were yielded on the respondents' perception of all the department heads' quality service in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, responsiveness to the public, professionalism, courtesy, interpersonal skills, and communication skills, which accounted for "very satisfactory." Moreover, a significant positive correlation was found between managerial capabilities and service quality, indicating that stronger leadership competencies contribute to enhanced service delivery in the local government unit. The study highlights the critical role of strong leadership in ensuring high-quality public service. Investing in leadership training, competency development, and governance reforms will enable LGU Paracelis to maintain and improve its administrative efficiency and responsiveness to public needs.

Citation Style:

Danggalan, J. O.- on, Dulnuan, J. F. F., Capua, R. D., & Malinao, C. W. (2025). Managerial Capabilities and Service Quality among Department Heads in the Local Government Unit of Paracelis, Mountain Province, Philippines. *Journal of Exceptional Multidisciplinary Research*, 2(1), 55-62. <https://doi.org/10.69739/jemr.v2i1.494>



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1. INTRODUCTION

Government effectiveness mostly depends on public service leaders and senior civil servants who manage and improve important government functions. They translate political direction into policies and programs to sustain citizens' economic productivity, safety, and well-being (Hernando & Malinao, 2025). Managerial capabilities are fundamental to the effectiveness of public administration, shaping decision-making processes and service delivery outcomes. Research highlights that managerial competencies are essential for efficient governance, influencing both organizational performance and the successful implementation of public policies (Vásquez Ortiz, 2022; Paixão, 2021). Competency management in public administration has been linked to improved efficiency, particularly in employee development and training, fostering an innovative culture, and effective time management (Dler & Tawfeq, 2021). The interplay between managerial competencies and organizational effectiveness underscores the need for continuous skill development among public sector managers. In local governance, department heads are pivotal in ensuring effective service delivery and community engagement. Their managerial and technical skills directly impact revenue targets and administrative accountability, with weak leadership often leading to inefficiencies and service failures (Ngumbela, 2022). Effective governance relies on leadership capabilities and participatory mechanisms that encourage community involvement, social capital development, and culturally relevant management approaches (Malemane & Nel-Sanders, 2021; Nkambule, 2023). Consequently, skilled leadership and community participation create a foundation for improved governance and service provision.

Local Government Units (LGUs) in the Philippines illustrate the multifaceted nature of managerial responsibilities in public administration. LGUs are responsible for various public services, including food safety, transportation, disaster risk management, and healthcare workforce recruitment (Tejero *et al.*, 2021; Yusay & Caelian, 2022). Studies suggest adopting risk-based approaches, co-design methods, and strategic human resource management can enhance policy implementation and service delivery (Atif & Macdonald, 2021). These findings emphasize the critical role of managerial competencies in addressing operational challenges and optimizing public services (Perez *et al.*, 2021). Decentralization has further empowered LGUs by granting them fiscal independence and increased decision-making authority. However, governance challenges persist, particularly in policy implementation (Nishimura, 2022). The "Mandanas-Garcia Ruling" and Executive Order 138 have increased LGU's financial resources, enhancing its ability to fulfill service delivery mandates (Lubos *et al.*, 2023). These governance dynamics mirror global decentralization efforts, such as in Uganda, where local governments strive to balance empowerment with accountability (Johnson, 2023).

The effectiveness of municipal administration is deeply connected to the managerial competencies of department heads. Their ability to engage with stakeholders, manage budgets, and implement policies significantly influences service quality and transparency (Kugay, 2024; Ramadhan, 2023). Governance frameworks, such as the King IV municipal supplement,

provide structured approaches for municipal management, promoting stakeholder confidence and operational efficiency (Chauke, 2021). However, municipal service delivery faces persistent challenges (Magagula *et al.*, 2022; Nel-Sanders & Malomane, 2022; Mamokhere *et al.*, 2022). Recent studies further highlight significant gaps in managerial capabilities across various organizational contexts. In Tanzanian local government authorities, department heads' financial management skills have been found to influence departmental performance critically, reinforcing the need for targeted capacity-building initiatives (Aquino, 2023; Gamala & Marpa, 2022; Rony *et al.*, 2023).

Enhancing managerial capabilities is essential for improving service quality in public administration. Employee competence directly influences service outcomes (Sitorus *et al.*, 2024). Thus, this study examines department heads' managerial capabilities in the LGU of Paracelis, Mountain Province, and their impact on service quality. This study is significant for multiple stakeholders. For LGU officials, it provides insights into how managerial competencies influence governance and service outcomes. Policymakers can use the findings to develop training programs and competency frameworks for department heads. Researchers and academics can benefit from the study's contribution to public administration literature, particularly in the context of municipal governance in the Philippines. Moreover, improving managerial capabilities can lead to better service delivery, benefiting local communities by enhancing their access to efficient public services.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Dynamic Capabilities Theory emphasizes the importance of firms' abilities to adapt and innovate in changing environments. Research shows that dynamic capabilities are crucial for eco-innovation, with innovation capabilities and eco-innovation being interrelated and complementary. These capabilities, along with entrepreneurial capabilities, can lead to superior financial and strategic performance, particularly in SMEs (Vu, 2020). The theory highlights adaptability as a key component, allowing organizations to adjust their strategies in response to market needs. During crises, dynamic capabilities play a vital role in business survival and performance. A study of Polish SMEs during lockdown demonstrated that specific dynamic capabilities were essential for maintaining value creation and capture, including employee retention, production levels, cash flow, and revenues (Dyduch *et al.*, 2021).

2.1. Managerial Capabilities

Managerial capabilities play a crucial role in ensuring efficient public service delivery. Research indicates that managers' perceptions and capabilities positively impact organizational success, with time management and creating an innovative culture being key priorities (Dler & Tawfeq, 2021). Knowledge management practices are essential for service innovation readiness in the public sector, encompassing knowledge core competence, organizational structure, responsiveness to change, and innovativeness (Ojiako *et al.*, 2022). Developing public servants' competencies through internships can enhance public service delivery, addressing common perceptions of inefficiency. Public sector organizations can develop innovation



capabilities in two forms: low-routinized, based on individual entrepreneurial and leadership skills, and highly routinized, emerging from organizational processes and structures. Both forms lead to continuous development and implementation of radical and incremental innovations in public services (Gullmark, 2021).

2.2. Quality Service

Quality service delivery in local government is crucial for effective governance and community development. Lack of autonomy can significantly hinder service delivery, as seen in Nigerian local governments (Okorie *et al.*, 2023). Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among employees is positively associated with improved service delivery in Ugandan local governments, emphasizing the importance of effective leadership and staff empowerment (Turyasingura & Nabaho, 2021). In Somalia, the Benadir local government's service quality delivery shows mixed results, with reliability, responsiveness, and assurance dimensions slightly satisfying citizens, while empathy and tangibility fall short (Abdullahi & Osman, 2023). Corporate governance also plays a significant role in service delivery quality, as demonstrated in Masvingo Municipality, Zimbabwe, where challenges such as nepotism, corruption, and political interference negatively impact service delivery (Maibeki *et al.*, 2022). Addressing these issues and implementing good governance practices are essential for improving local government service delivery.

2.3. Managerial Capabilities and Quality Service

Recent studies have explored the relationship between managerial capabilities and service quality. Managerial skills, particularly technical and human skills, have positively impacted internal service quality in city administrations (Melkamu, 2023). Similarly, a strong positive relationship between management skills and service quality was observed in a Peruvian municipality (Tasayco *et al.*, 2024). In the context of cooperatives, managerial abilities, and service quality were shown to influence member satisfaction. Furthermore, in educational settings, school administrators' total quality management practices and managerial capabilities had a significant positive relationship with teachers' performance (Monteroso *et al.*, 2023). These findings collectively suggest that enhancing managerial capabilities can improve service quality and organizational performance across different sectors.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a descriptive research design, which involves systematically describing, recording, analyzing, and interpreting the current nature, composition, and processes of the phenomenon under investigation. This approach is appropriate as it allows for an in-depth assessment of managerial capabilities and service quality among department heads in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Paracelis, Mountain Province, as perceived by rank-and-file employees. The descriptive method facilitates the identification of patterns, relationships, and areas for improvement within the managerial functions of department heads.

3.2. Research Respondents

The study was conducted within the Municipal Local Government Unit (MLGU) of Paracelis, Mountain Province, during 2023. The target population includes all rank-and-file employees in every department of the MLGU. The MLGU of Paracelis consists of 147 employees, categorized as follows: 12 Elective officials, 17 Department Heads, 114 Rank-and-file employees, 2 Co-terminus employees, and 2 Casual employees. The study employed a total population sampling technique for the rank-and-file employees, ensuring comprehensive representation.

3.3. Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used was a structured questionnaire patterned from Guinichon's study (2015). To ensure its applicability to the local government context, the questionnaire underwent a pre-testing phase among selected Job Order employees of other government agencies in Paracelis. Feedback from the pre-test was incorporated to enhance clarity, validity, and reliability. To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument, Expert validation was conducted by professionals in public administration and organizational management. A pilot test was conducted to refine questionnaire items based on respondent feedback. Reliability testing was performed using Cronbach's Alpha, ensuring the internal consistency of the questionnaire. According to the findings, the components' dependability coefficients varied from .813 to .910. Cronbach's alpha has a minimum acceptable value of .70. The standard range's internal consistency is below this threshold. In the meantime, 0.95 is the highest predicted value; any number higher than this is interpreted as duplication or redundancy. The redundant elements must be eliminated from both products that measure the same construct element exactly. The set of 60 measures is sufficient for group measurement using SPSS since Cronbach alpha > 0.700. Before administering the survey, formal approval was obtained from the Local Chief Executive of Paracelis. The surveys were personally distributed and collected to ensure a high response rate and address any immediate concerns from respondents. Ethical considerations, such as voluntary participation and confidentiality, were strictly observed.

3.4. Data Analysis

Collected data were tallied, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Weighted means were utilized to assess managerial capabilities and service quality. Inferential statistical method, such as Pearson r correlation, was used to identify relationships between variables. Data were processed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to ensure accurate and efficient analysis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Managerial Capabilities

The research findings indicate that the managerial capabilities of department heads in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Paracelis, Mountain Province, are "Very Satisfactory." This suggests that employees generally regard their department heads as effective managers across multiple dimensions of leadership. Specifically, Flexibility ($\bar{x} = 3.79$) and Decisiveness ($\bar{x} = 3.75$)



are the highest-rated capabilities of department heads in LGU Paracelis. This suggests that department heads adapt to changing circumstances and make sound, timely decisions. Stress Tolerance ($\bar{x} = 3.61$) and Interpersonal Skills ($\bar{x} = 3.70$) indicate that department heads can manage stress effectively while maintaining positive team relationships. Ingenuity and Innovativeness ($\bar{x} = 3.67$) highlight the ability of department heads to introduce creative solutions and improvements. Communication Skills ($\bar{x} = 3.54$) received the lowest rating

among the competencies, suggesting a relative area for growth. Effective communication is critical for organizational clarity, transparency, and employee engagement. While the department heads demonstrate strong managerial capabilities, continuous improvement efforts—particularly in communication—can further enhance governance effectiveness. Policies emphasizing leadership development, innovation, and employee engagement can contribute to a more dynamic and responsive local government administration in Paracelis.

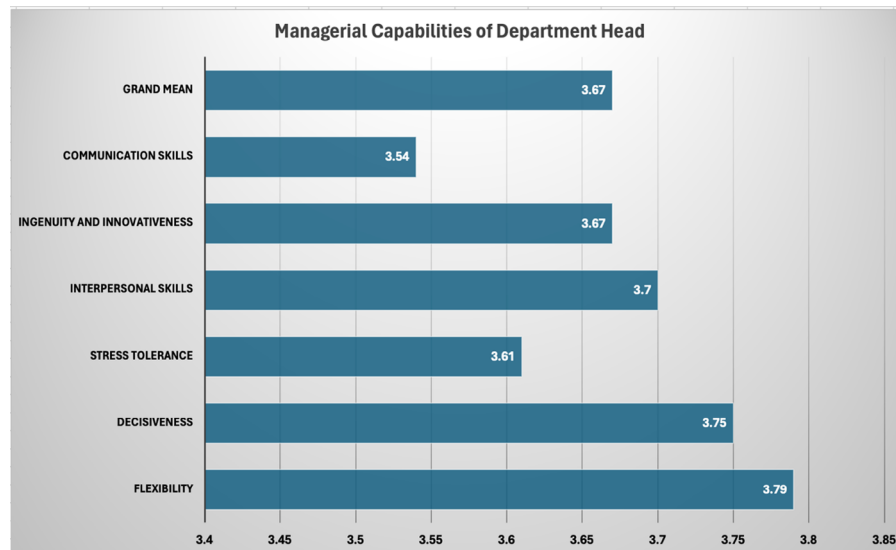


Figure 1. Managerial Capabilities of Department Heads in LGU- Paracelis, Mountain Province, Philippines

Department heads in local government units (LGUs) demonstrate varying levels of competence across different skills. While some LGUs show strengths in flexibility and decisiveness, others need improvement in interpersonal communication skills (Lazo, 2019). Officials' capabilities and decision-making processes influence the effectiveness of local governance. To enhance governance, capacity-building programs for LGU officials are recommended, potentially in collaboration with higher education institutions (Cabaguing *et*

al., 2024). Adopting management principles, such as discipline, division of work, and unity of command, has contributed to effective leadership and governance in municipal settings (Bacud, 2020). Continuous improvement efforts, particularly in communication and leadership development, can further enhance governance effectiveness in Philippine LGUs (Lazo, 2019; Cabaguing *et al.*, 2024).

4.2. Service Quality

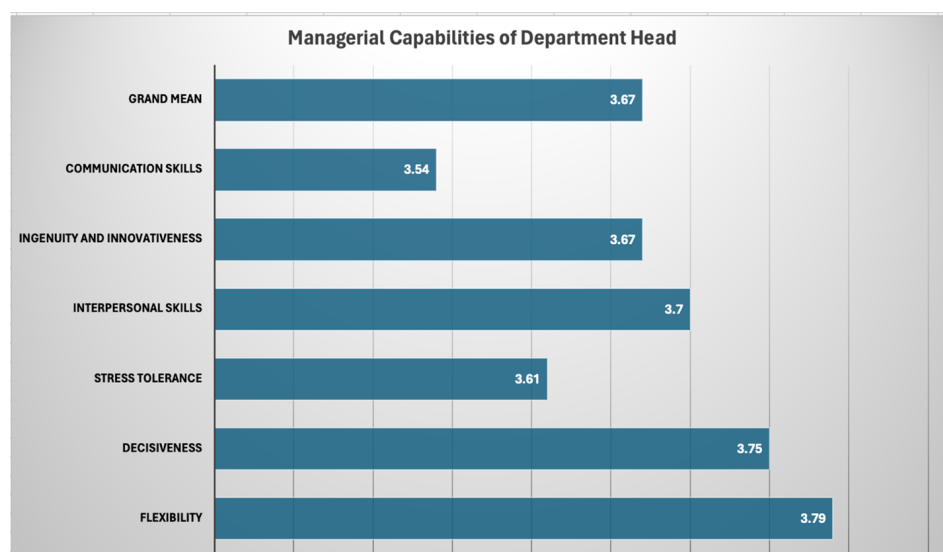


Figure 2. Service Quality of Department Heads in LGU- Paracelis, Mountain Province, Philippines



The research findings indicate that the quality of service provided by department heads in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Paracelis, Mountain Province, as perceived by rank-and-file employees, is overall “Very Satisfactory” (Overall Mean = 3.87). This suggests that department heads demonstrate competence across various service dimensions, fostering efficiency, responsiveness, and professionalism in local governance. Public Responsiveness (\bar{x} = 3.98) and Professionalism in Service Delivery (\bar{x} = 3.98) received the highest ratings, highlighting that department heads effectively address public concerns and uphold ethical and professional standards. This reflects a governance culture prioritizing accountability, integrity, and citizen-centered service. Furthermore, Interpersonal Relationship Management (\bar{x} = 3.89) and Communication Effectiveness (Mean = 3.81) were also rated highly, indicating that department heads maintain positive workplace relationships and communicate effectively with stakeholders. However, Service Efficiency and Effectiveness (\bar{x} = 3.77) and Courtesy and Respect (\bar{x} = 3.78), while still rated “Very Satisfactory,” received comparatively lower mean scores, suggesting potential areas for enhancement. The LGU may implement capacity-building programs focused on process optimization, resource management, and service-oriented leadership to improve governance performance further. Additionally, reinforcing a culture of empathy and inclusivity through customer service training and ethical governance workshops can further strengthen service delivery. Generally, the findings suggest that while the managerial capabilities of department heads in Paracelis are commendable, continuous improvement initiatives focusing on efficiency and relationship-building will further enhance the quality of public service and governance effectiveness.

The quality of public service delivery encompasses several critical dimensions, including service efficiency and effectiveness, public responsiveness, professionalism, courtesy, interpersonal relationship management, and communication effectiveness. Each aspect plays a vital role in ensuring that public services meet citizens’ needs while maintaining high standards of integrity and respect. Public services must be timely and organized, utilizing resources efficiently to achieve desired outcomes. Effective public service management enhances service delivery by focusing on interaction quality, speed, and accessibility (Akbar & Tjenreng, 2025). Department heads should proactively address public needs and feedback, essential for citizen satisfaction (Kadyrova, 2023). Adherence to ethical standards and competence is crucial for maintaining public trust. Professionalism is linked to the quality of interactions between public servants and citizens, impacting overall service perception (Akbar & Tjenreng, 2025).

4.3. Significant Relationship between managerial capabilities and service quality among LGU Paracelis department heads.

The research findings reveal a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.457$, $p = 0.000$) between the managerial capabilities of department heads and the quality of service they provide in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Paracelis, Mountain Province. This suggests that as managerial capabilities improve, service

Table 1. Pearson r correlation on significant Relationship between managerial capabilities and service quality among LGU Paracelis department heads.

		Quality Service
Managerial Capabilities	Pearson Correlation	.457
	Sig 2-tailed	.000
	Remarks	Significant

Significant at .05

quality correspondingly enhances. While the correlation is moderate, it underscores the critical role of leadership effectiveness in ensuring efficient, responsive, and professional public service delivery. The significance of this relationship implies that department heads who exhibit strong decision-making, communication, flexibility, and interpersonal skills are more likely to lead teams that deliver timely, ethical, and high-quality services to the public. From a policy perspective, this finding highlights the necessity of continuous leadership development programs, competency-based training, and strategic mentorship initiatives to strengthen managerial capabilities further. Investing in capacity-building efforts—such as leadership coaching, conflict resolution workshops, and data-driven decision-making training—can contribute to more effective governance. Moreover, integrating performance evaluation mechanisms that align managerial competencies with service quality metrics can help the LGU maintain and enhance its public service standards. Overall, the study reinforces the idea that strong leadership is a fundamental driver of effective local governance, making it imperative for LGU Paracelis to adopt policies and programs that foster continuous professional growth among its department heads. Recent studies have demonstrated a significant relationship between managerial capabilities and service quality. In a Peruvian municipality, a strong positive correlation was found between management skills and service quality (Tasayco *et al.*, 2024). Similarly, research on Pos-PAUD in Indonesia revealed that management’s managerial competence significantly influences institutional service quality (Wahyuni *et al.*, 2021).

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study highlights that the managerial capabilities of department heads in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Paracelis, Mountain Province, are generally rated as “Very Satisfactory,” with strengths in flexibility, decisiveness, and interpersonal skills. While communication skills received the lowest rating, targeted development could enhance leadership effectiveness. Similarly, the quality of service provided by department heads is perceived as “Very Satisfactory,” with notable strengths in public responsiveness and professionalism. However, service efficiency and courtesy suggest opportunities for refinement through capacity-building initiatives. A significant positive correlation between managerial capabilities and service quality underscores the vital role of leadership effectiveness in governance. This finding reinforces the need for continuous leadership development, competency-based



training, and structured performance evaluations to sustain and enhance governance effectiveness. LGU Paracelis can strengthen its administrative leadership by investing in professional growth initiatives, leading to improved service delivery and a more responsive local government.

5.1. Implications to Theory and Practice

The findings of this study have significant implications for both leadership theory and practical governance. Theoretically, the research reinforces the established link between leadership effectiveness and organizational performance, particularly in the public sector. The positive correlation between managerial capabilities and service quality aligns with transformational and servant leadership theories, emphasizing the critical role of leadership in fostering organizational success. Additionally, the study supports competency-based leadership models by demonstrating that key managerial skills—such as flexibility, decisiveness, and interpersonal competence—are essential for effective governance. The lower rating of communication skills suggests a theoretical gap, highlighting the need for further research on the role of communication in public administration leadership and its direct impact on service delivery.

The study underscores the necessity of continuous leadership development initiatives to enhance managerial effectiveness. LGU Paracelis should implement targeted training programs that improve decision-making, adaptability, and communication skills to strengthen leadership capacity further. Moreover, the findings suggest optimizing service efficiency through capacity-building programs that enhance process management, resource utilization, and customer service. Establishing a structured performance evaluation framework that links managerial competencies with service quality indicators can help sustain governance improvements. Furthermore, fostering a citizen-centered governance approach—reinforcing ethical leadership, inclusivity, and stakeholder engagement—can enhance public trust and satisfaction. The study contributes to theory and practice by affirming the role of strong leadership in improving service quality. It highlights the importance of investing in leadership development, competency-based training, and governance reforms to ensure a responsive and effective local government administration in Paracelis.

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