

LIFELONG LEARNING AND EDUCATION NEED OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND FUNCTIONARIES

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ABSTRACT: *The socio-cultural development of a country like the Philippines is predicated on many aspects; one of which is the progress of a local community or barangay. That if the local community is progressive, the municipalities and cities, in turn, will also be progressive. The study was designed to determine the lifelong learning and education need of the local government officials and functionaries, particularly those at the barangays (local communities) and municipalities in the province of Misamis Oriental. Utilizing the descriptive design, the study collected quantitative data from the survey. These data were managed and analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. One of the salient findings reveals that lack or insufficiency of the budget is the most serious problem of the municipal and barangay government units covered in the study. The rest of the internal components of the problems, issues, and concerns cited by the respondents are minor ones attributable to the personal attitudes, knowledge and competencies, and misunderstandings among the officials and functionaries themselves. Corollary to this, the study concludes that indeed lifelong learning and education interventions both for the officials and functionaries in the local government units in the province of Misamis Oriental are needed. Hence, it is recommended that lifelong learning and education interventions for local government officials and functionaries in the Region be conducted.*

Keywords: Education, local governance, municipality, barangay, officials, functionaries, Philippines, Asia

1. INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Code of 1991 not only defined the multi-layers in government but also positioned the barangay as the more frontline in the delivery of basic services to the people. It is even said that if all the barangays are progressive, the municipalities, cities, and provinces will correspondingly be progressive, then the whole Philippines will likewise be progressive [1]. This shows how critical the role of the barangays in the socio-economic development of the country.

How any unit of government progresses depends to a large extent to the most important of its resources: the human resources which refer to both the elected and appointed officials and employees in the barangays. To optimize their contribution to the performance of their respective barangays, these officials and employees must be appropriately equipped not only with the knowledge and skills required of the positions they occupy but also with the desirable attitudes of government servants.

In addition, the "Philippines has an exhaustive decentralization code providing local governments with a high degree of discretion. But the concurrent upward and downward accountability mechanisms are weak resulting in inefficiency and ineffectiveness of local governments"[2]. Despite the degree of the local officials and functionaries' limitations such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the local governments, the leaders (mayors and barangay chairpersons) should exhaust means to address the problem.

The study argued that determining the local governments' lifelong education needs and designing corresponding competency enhancement training interventions can somehow address the gap among the officials and functionaries. For this matter, solid commitment of these individuals must be ascertained given their varied educational shortcomings. Otherwise, the government might be wasting financial allocation for projects and programs which are meant to improve the performance or services of local government officials and functionaries. "To help improve the quality of local governance competence, some policy inputs"

should be considered [3]. This also requires improving the individual performance of the officials and functionaries giving importance on updating, if not, enhancing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs).

The chief purpose of this study was to determine the lifelong learning and education needs of select officials and functionaries. In particular, it obtained data on 1) profile of the municipality/barangay officials as regards age, sex, marital status, educational attainment, current position, length of service in current position, in-service training interventions attended, and service-related awards received; 2) relevant achievements of the local government; 3) development plan of the municipalities/barangays; 4) extent of performing the functions of the municipalities/barangays performing devolved to them under the Local Government Code of 1991; 5) extent of exercising the devolved powers of the municipalities/barangays to attain fiscal autonomy as perceived by the local officials; 6) extent of practicing the principles of good governance; 7) means of the municipality/barangay officials and functionaries in measuring up in terms of knowledge to perform their respective roles in barangay governance; 8) the problems, issues, and concerns encountered by the officials and functionaries in the governance of the local government units; and 9) interventions that the academe can undertake to contribute to the lifelong learning and education of the local government officials and employees?

2. BRIEF LITERATURE

This section presents relevant legal provisions particularly on the Philippine Local Government Code of 1991. Given the scarcity of related literature, the discussion focuses only on related legal provisions, particularly in the Philippine context.

Functions Devolved to the Barangay. Section 384 of RA 7160 defines the role of the barangay as the basic political unit which "serves as the primary planning and implementing unit of government policies, plans, programs, and activities in the community, and as a forum wherein the collective views of the people may be expressed, crystallized and considered,

and where disputes may be amicably settled." This provision of the Local Government Code gives us an idea of the amount of knowledge and competencies which are needed by the barangay officials and employees.

Section 17(1) of the Local Government Code devolves to the barangay the most basic of the services of governance, to wit: 1) agricultural support services which include planting materials distribution system and operation of farm produce collection and buying stations; 2) health and social welfare services which include maintenance of barangay health center and day-care center; 3) services and facilities related to general hygiene and sanitation, beautification, and solid waste collection; 4) maintenance of *Katarungan Pambarangay* (Barangay Justice System); 5) maintenance of barangay roads and bridges and water supply systems; 6) infrastructure facilities such as multi-purpose hall, multi-purpose pavement, plaza, sports center, and other similar facilities; 7) information and reading center, and 8) satellite or public market, where viable. The on-site research extension services are assigned to the municipal and provincial government units.

Functions Devolved to the Municipality. The functions devolved to the municipalities are provided for under Section 17(2) of the LGC which include: 1) extension and on-site research services and facilities related to agriculture and fishery activities; 2) subject to supervision, control and review of the DENR, implementation of community-based forestry projects and similar projects; 3) health services which include the implementation of programs and projects on primary health care, maternal and child care, and communicable and non-communicable diseases; 4) social welfare services which include programs and projects on child and youth welfare, family and community welfare, women's welfare, welfare of the elderly and disabled person; 5) information services which include investments and job-placement information systems, and maintenance of a public library; 6) solid waste disposal system or environmental management system and services or facilities related to general hygiene and sanitation; 7) municipal buildings, cultural centers, public parks including freedom parks, playgrounds, and sports facilities and equipment, and other similar facilities; 8) infrastructure facilities intended primarily to service the needs of residents of the municipality and which are funded out of municipal funds; 9) public markets slaughterhouses and other municipal enterprises; 10) public cemetery; 11) tourism facilities and other tourist attractions; and 12) sites for police and fire stations and substations and the municipal jail.

Such functions should be performed sufficiently despite minor changes if any. However, the "changes in the roles and functions of local authorities have had a marked impact on the nature of local political leadership" [4].

The Barangay Governance Structure. The function of barangay governance is played by the *punong barangay* (barangay chairperson), the *Sangguniang barangay* (barangay council) with seven members, a *barangay* secretary, a *barangay* treasurer, and some other appointed employees. The *punong barangay* and the *Sangguniang* members are elected by the *barangay* residents, while the secretary, the

treasurer, and other employees are appointed subject to the Civil Service Commission Law.

Section 399 of the LGC creates the *Lupong Tagapamayapa* (Barangay Justice Committee) headed by the *punong barangay* and 10 to 20 members whose appointment is good for three years. The *lupon* (committee) shall exercise administrative supervision over the conciliation panel provided therein; meet regularly once a month to provide a forum for matters relevant to the amicable settlement of disputes, enable various conciliation panel members to share with one another their observations and experiences in effecting speedy resolution of disputes; and exercise such other powers and perform such other duties and functions as may be prescribed by law and ordinances.

Section 423 provides that every barangay shall have a *Sangguniang kabataan* (youth council) composed of a chairman and seven members, a secretary and a treasurer to take care of the concerns of the youth.

The Municipality Governance Structure. The structure of the municipality as provided for under Section 443 of the LGC include the following elected officials, namely: municipal mayor; municipal vice-mayor; *Sangguniang Bayan* (municipal council) members; secretary to the *Sangguniang Bayan*, municipal treasurer; municipal assessor; municipal accountant; municipal budget officer; municipal planning and development coordinator; municipal engineer/building official; municipal health officer; and municipal civil registrar.

Participative Governance. People's participation in barangay governance is ensured through the Barangay Assembly. Section 397 of the LGC provides that this assembly shall be composed of all persons who are actual residents of the barangay for at least six months, 15 years of age or over, a citizen of the Philippines, and duly registered in the list of barangay assembly members. This barangay assembly is expected to "meet at least twice a year to hear and discuss the semestral report of the *Sangguniang barangay* concerning its activities and finances as well as problems affecting the barangay".

Section 398 of the LGC defines the powers of the barangay assembly as follows: 1) initiate legislative processes by recommending to the *Sangguniang barangay* the adoption of measures for the welfare of the barangay and the city or municipality concerned; 2) decide on the adoption of initiative as a legal process whereby the registered voters of the barangay may directly propose, enact, or amend any ordinance; and 3) hear and pass upon the semestral report of the *Sangguniang barangay* concerning its activities and finances.

Fiscal Autonomy. The devolved functions will not be significant without the corresponding power for the local government units to generate their own sources of funds. The local government units are entitled to 30% of the revenue taxes collected by the national government as their internal revenue allocation (IRA) annually. Section 285 of the Local Government Code provides that the share of the LGUs by level on this national revenue allotment shall be as follows: provinces – 23%; cities – 23%; municipalities – 34%; and barangays – 20%. The share of each province, city and municipality shall be determined on the bases of the

following formula: population – 50%; land area – 25%; and equal sharing – 25%.

To reduce dependence on IRA, Section 152 of the Local Government Code provides that “The barangays may levy taxes, fees and charges, as provided in this article, which shall exclusively accrue to them: 1) taxes – On stores or retailers with fixed business establishments with gross sales or receipt of the preceding calendar year of fifty thousand pesos (Php50,000.00) or less in the case of cities, and thirty thousand pesos (Php30,000.00) or less in the case of municipalities, at the rate not exceeding 1% on such gross sales or receipts; and 2) service fees or charges – Barangays may collect reasonable fees or charges for services rendered in connection with the regulation or the use of barangay-owned properties or service facilities such as palay, copra, or tobacco dryers; 3) barangay clearance – No city or municipality may issue any license or permit for any business or activity unless a clearance is first obtained from the barangay where such business or activity is located or conducted. For such clearance, the *Sangguniang barangay* may impose a reasonable fee. The application for clearance shall be acted upon within seven working days from the filing thereof. In the event that the clearance is not issued within the said period, the city or municipality may issue the said license or permit; 4) other fees and charges – The barangay may levy reasonable fees and charges on commercial breeding of fighting cocks, cockfights, and cockpits; places of recreation which charge admission fees; and billboards signboards, neon signs, and outdoor advertisements.

In addition to the above specific items, Section 186 under the Miscellaneous Provisions of the Code, LGUs "may exercise the power to levy taxes, fees or charges on any base or subject not otherwise specifically enumerated herein or taxed under the provision of the National Internal Revenue Code, as amended or other applicable laws: Provided that the taxes, fees, or charges shall not be unjust, excessive, oppressive, confiscatory or contrary to declared national policy: Provided, further, that the ordinance levying such taxes, fees or charges shall not be enacted without any prior public hearing conducted for the purpose." (p. 21). Along this line, it was asserted that “the inefficient tax assignment has constrained the mobilization of local tax revenues even as local government units have become very dependent on the intergovernmental fiscal transfer, called the internal revenue allotment” [5].

Development Plan. The direction of a local government unit (LGU) should be guided by a development plan. For this purpose, Section 106 of the LGC mandates that “Each local government unit shall have a comprehensive multi-sectoral development plan to be initiated by its development council and approved by its *sanggunian*.” Section 107 provides that the barangay development council shall be headed by the *punong barangay* with the members of the *Sangguniang barangay*, representatives of non-government organizations operating in the barangay, who shall constitute not less than one-fourth of the members of the fully organized council, and a representative of the congressman as members.

Section 109 (b) defines the functions of the barangay development council as follows: 1) mobilize people’s participation in local development efforts; 2) prepare

barangay development plans based on local requirements; 3) monitor and evaluate the implementation of national or local programs and projects; and 4) perform such other functions as may be provided by law or competent authority.

Budgeting. Devolution implies that the barangay shall enjoy fiscal autonomy which means that it has the power to decide on how to utilize such funds. This is confirmed in Section 329 of the Code which provides that “all the income of the *barangay* from whatever source shall accrue to its general funds and shall, at the option of the barangay concerned, be kept as trust fund in the custody of the city or municipal treasurer or be deposited in a bank, preferably government-owned, situated in or nearest to its area of jurisdiction.”

It is understood that budgeting at the barangay level should observe the standard budget cycle in the public sector. Section 331 of the Code provides that: 1) upon receipt of the statement of income from the treasurer, the *punong barangay* shall prepare the barangay budget for the ensuing fiscal year in the manner and within the period prescribed in this title and submit the annual *barangay* budget to the *Sangguniang barangay* for legislative enactment; 2) the total annual appropriations for personal services of a barangay for one fiscal year shall not exceed 55% of the total annual income actually realized from local sources during the next preceding fiscal year, and 3) the barangay budget shall likewise be subject to the same budgetary requirements and limitations hereinabove prescribed.

Legislation. The legislative power in the barangay lies in the hands of the *Sangguniang barangay* headed by the *punong barangay* as the presiding officer and seven regular *Sangguniang barangay* members elected at large, and *Sangguniang kabataan* chairman, as members.

Article 103 of the IRR implementing the Local Government Code of 1991 provides that on the first regular session following the election of its members and within 90 days thereafter, the *Sangguniang* of the local government unit concerned shall adopt or update its existing rules of procedure. These rules of procedure shall be the guide of actions and behavior of the *Sangguniang* members concerned during the legislative process.

Sessions of the *Sangguniang barangay* may be either regular or special and its legislative actions can be classified either as ordinances or resolutions. Article 107 of the IRR defines an ordinance as a legislative action of a general and permanent character, while those of which are of temporary character as a resolution. Matters of proprietary functions and private concerns shall also be acted upon by resolution.

Barangay ordinances are subject to review of the *Sangguniang panglunsod* (city council) or *Sangguniang bayan* concerned. Article 111 of the IRR implementing the local government code of 1991, provides that: 1) within 10 days after its enactment, the *Sangguniang barangay* shall furnish copies of all barangay ordinances to the *Sangguniang panglunsod* or *Sangguniang bayan* concerned for review as to whether the ordinance is consistent with law and the city or municipal ordinances; 2) if the *Sangguniang panglunsod* or *Sangguniang bayan*, as the case may be, fails to take action on the barangay ordinances within 30 days from receipt thereof, the same shall be deemed approved; and 3) if the *Sangguniang panglunsod* or *Sangguniang bayan*, as the case

may be, finds the *barangay* ordinances inconsistent with law or city or municipal ordinances, the *Sangguniang* concerned shall within 30 days from receipt thereof, return the same with its comments and recommendations to the *Sangguniang barangay* concerned for adjustment, amendment or modification, in which case, the effectivity of the *barangay* ordinance is suspended until such time as the revision called for is effected.

Article 114 of the IRR requires that ordinances with penal sanctions shall be posted at conspicuous places in the provincial capital, or city, municipal or *barangay* hall, as the case may be, for a minimum period of three consecutive weeks. Such ordinances shall also be published in a newspaper of general circulation, where available, within the territorial jurisdiction of the LGU concerned, except in the case of *barangay* ordinances.

Knowledge and Competencies Requirement. Considering the range of expectations from the *barangay* government, its officials and employees must have the corresponding knowledge, skills, and attitudes to cope with their respective positions. Although the Local Government Code has been in existence for the last two and a half decades, the elective officials serve only for three years per term, and if re-elected, they can serve for three terms or a total of nine years. Knowledge and skills are acquired not only through formal training and education but also through experience.

For this purpose, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) issued MC No. 2014-18 on February 12, 2014, on the subject Guidelines in the Conduct of the *Barangay* Newly Elected Officials (BNEO) Program to prepare the *barangay* officials who were elected during the 2013 *barangay* election. The BNEO Program consisted of four components, namely: 1-Reinventing Public Service: A Guide to Action; 2-Looking Forward to Better Governance; 3-Competency Enhancement and 4-Enhancing *Barangay* Performance. It is component 3 that is most relevant to the competencies of *barangay* officials and functionaries. This component consisted of demand-driven specialized courses through “face to face training conducted to enhance the competencies of the *barangay* officials and functionaries in areas such as planning, budgeting, legislation and national priorities involving different sectors and stakeholders.”

In the Local Government Research Series entitled Capacity and Competency Requirements in Local Government [6], it was written that:

“Governments are increasingly adopting competency management as a system for both clarifying the specific knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed for a given job, and ensuring effective performance from employees. According to the OECD [2011:125], competency management is seen as a vehicle for bringing about cultural change and injecting more flexibility, adaptability, and entrepreneurship into organizations. They add that competency management is often introduced as part of a broader program of cultural and organizational reform and can have multiple associated objectives including creating a more flexible organization that easily adapts to challenges confronting the government, increasing efficiency and consistency in

HR policies, and ensuring better strategic alignment between the individual and the organization.”

In the paper titled, “HRD and Globalization: Improving Competencies at the Local Government Level” [7], in responding to the challenges brought about by globalization, “the local government's role has to go beyond being a service provider. It has to be an enabler by providing the right kind of environment where the community will grow and flourish into a vibrant economic and social unit.” This is a big challenge to the training institutions which call for how to design and undertake training programs that can bring about a shift in the minds of local government officials and functionaries from being service deliverer to enabling the community.

The foregoing sections clarify the nature and amount of knowledge, skills, and attitude (KSAs) expected to be possessed by both the elected and appointed officials and employees of the local government units in the Philippines, particularly at the *barangay* level. Such KSAs are not only confined to their roles as service providers but as well as, enabler or empowering their communities of concern. Have they acquired these KSAs in their formal education? The nature and scope of governance is constantly evolving, and so should the KSAs of those involved in governance functions, hence, the need for continuous learning or lifelong learning and education to keep them always abreast with their present positions or career in local governance.

Seal of Good Local Governance. To encourage local government units to perform well, DILG issued Memorandum Circular No. 2014-39 known as the 2014 Seal of Good Local Governance, establishing six criteria in evaluating the performance of provinces, cities, and municipalities including the Administrative Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). These include 1) good financial housekeeping; 2) disaster preparedness; 3) social protection; 4) business-friendliness and competitiveness; 5) peace and order, and 6) environmental management.

2. METHODOLOGY

This section discusses clear-cut procedures or system of research methods which was considered in the conduct of the study.

The study used descriptive research design employing quantitative data. Primary data were gathered through a survey that was conducted in the respective *barangays* and municipalities considered in the study.

The study was conducted in Misamis Oriental which is one of the 25 provinces in Mindanao, Philippines. It is composed of Cagayan de Oro City – a highly urbanized city and regional center of Northern Mindanao. Besides, the province also consists of two-component cities – Gingoog and El Salvador, and 23 municipalities of which nine municipalities are located in the Western portion and 14 in the Eastern portion.

The respondents of the study included a total of 351 municipality/*barangay* officials and functionaries in Misamis Oriental. They have served in their respective government units as elected and appointed officials and/or employees up to the current term.

The research project identified 23 municipalities in Misamis Oriental, 11 from the east coast and 10 from the west coast. Considering the modest fund allocation, the project included only those barangays in municipalities that are highly accessible by geographical location.

The survey questionnaire was used in gathering the data. It consisted of eight sub-sections, namely: personal profile, service delivery, quality of services rendered, fiscal autonomy, principles of good governance, ordinances and resolutions passed during the last three years, standing committees, learning and education interventions. The instrument mainly allows them to provide baseline data on their knowledge and competencies required of their respective positions and other desirable traits of government servants. Generally, the data were used as bases of designing lifelong learning and education intervention project for them.

The survey instrument was subjected to validation by three experts: professor of public administration, researching government employee, and data analyst. They were invited to critique the instrument for content and face validity purposes. Then, the instrument was tried to five potential respondents of the study to see and understand some issues on the instrument such as comprehensibility and validity.

The study followed certain steps of data collection which were performed accordingly. At the outset, a letter request was sent to the mayors of the municipalities concerned to seek endorsement to gather data from the officials of the municipality and the identified barangays. After obtaining permission, the field enumerators administered the validated survey questionnaires to the respondents of the study in separate occasions. The data were sorted and scored thereafter.

The quantitative data management and analysis was performed using descriptive statistical tools such as mean, percentage, and standard deviation. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to process quantitative data. The results of the study would have been more meaningful and comprehensive should the team find ample time to conduct a focus group discussion with select participants.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was designed to determine the lifelong learning and education needs of the local government officials and functionaries, particularly those at the barangays and municipalities in Region X. Due to limited resources, the study considered only the province of Misamis Oriental [8] from which the municipalities and barangays were sampled. It was assumed that lifelong learning and education needs could be determined from the performance of the officials and functionaries in their respective roles in governance leading to the achievements attained by the local government unit concerned. Based on this assumption, this study was conducted. The data to answer these questions were gathered through questionnaires that were answered by the officials and functionaries themselves from the sampled municipalities and barangays.

These data include the profile of the respondent municipal and barangay officials and functionaries, the existence and nature of development plans, the extent to which these development plans have been implemented, the extent of the delivery of the devolved functions, the extent to which the goal of fiscal autonomy has been attained, the observance of the principles of good governance, the performance of the standing committees, the problems encountered by the subject municipalities and barangays, and the interest and commitment of the respondents in attending lifelong learning and education interventions given the opportunity.

The findings of the study show that the majority of the respondents are still in the brink of their life being 60 years of age and below and with a good balance between males and females. Most of them are already stable being married with a very insignificant percentage being widowed and separated from their respective life partners.

A great majority of those from the municipal government units are college graduates with few at the master's level and master's graduates. Only an insignificant few are at the high school level and high school graduates. These are indicators that they are very much in a position to participate and even share their knowledge and experience with each other in lifelong learning and education interventions to upgrade their competencies in local governance.

The majority of those from the barangay government units have not finished college. Only 38.5% are college graduates and two or 0.9% are at the master's level. This is a clear indication that the officials and functionaries of the barangay government units should be the main target beneficiaries of the lifelong learning and education interventions to be designed. Participants from this level of the local government units should also be given opportunities to earn high school diplomas through the Alternative Learning System of DepEd and undergraduate degrees through the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP) or alternative delivery systems of the University of Science

and Technology of Southern Philippines (USTP). This is where the Extension Services and Community Relations Division of USTP can play its role in the pursuit of the inclusive development goal of the Philippines Vision Natin 2040 as far as local government is concerned. Who are these respondents from the barangays? A great majority of them are elective officials: 54.1% are barangay councilors and 30.8% are barangay chairpersons. The rest are barangay secretaries, barangay treasurers, and others. In addition to the regular modules, specialized modules can be designed particularly for these secretaries and treasurers.

Responses to the question on the nature of in-service training interventions attended by the respondents from the municipalities show that their attendances were on fiscal administration, public administration, strategic planning, environmental management and climate change mitigation, disaster risk reduction management, and legislation and parliamentary procedures, among others.

There were 18 thematic classifications of the training interventions attended by the respondents from the municipalities, but only one of them was on research which was only on data-gathering, analysis, and interpretation. It seems that the importance of research in governance has been overlooked. Research plays a very important role in the policy cycle, particularly in problem identification and definition, policy analysis and policy evaluation stages.

The other aforementioned top of the list interventions are also as important, especially the one on fiscal administration, but it is important to include in this area not only the expenditure side but also the income-generation aspect of it in order for the municipalities to realize a meaningful fiscal autonomy envisioned in the local government code of 1991.

In the case of the respondents from the barangays, the majority of them attended the training for the barangay newly elected officials (BNEO) as required by DILG. Following the BNEO are peace and order, livelihood development and social services which are very reasonable considering the role of the barangays being the frontliners of the government. Immediately following are theories and practices in governance which rank fifth in the 15 in-service training interventions attended by the barangay respondents. These suggest the need for collaboration with appropriate national government agencies such as the DILG, the Civil Service Commission (CSC), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) as sources of experts in the implementation of the lifelong learning and education interventions by USTP.

Again, this is very reasonable because knowledge of theories is needed for the informed practice of governance. Actuations of local government officials and functionaries may be greatly guided by their knowledge of the difference between government and governance, why local government units exist, the meaning of public office being a public trust, the significance of participatory governance, and public accountability, and others. Theories of Government and Governance and current innovations in this discipline should be included as a module in the lifelong learning and education program for local government officials and functionaries.

Service-related awards received by the local government officials and functionaries are an indication of their dedication to and performance in their positions. There were 11 and 12 awards received by the municipal and barangay officials, respectively. Three of those from the municipalities received awards for their length of service and one for loyalty to the service. The more significant awards received by the respondents from the municipalities are those given in recognition of their outstanding or exemplary performance and there were seven of them who received such awards. All the 12 awards given to the respondents from the barangay government units were in recognition of their outstanding performance.

It can be gleaned from the findings of the study that the nature of the standing committees is related to the devolved functions of the local government units concerned. Viewed both from the number of chairmanship and accomplishments of the standing committees, it can be gleaned that the top concern of the local government units both at the municipal and barangay level are matters related to finance.

Another important area of practice in good local governance is on development planning and plan execution. To the question regarding the existence of a development plan, 100% of the respondents from the municipalities answered "yes", and only two or 5.4% of the respondents from the barangay governments answered "no". The rest of the respondents both from the municipalities and the barangays failed to answer this question, signifying that they may not know whether their respective barangay government units have or do not have a development plan. Ideally, the development plan approved at the management level must be scaled down to all levels of the organization to ensure synergy in the organization's pursuit of its vision, mission, goals and objectives (VMGOs).

To bring the government closer to the people is the essence of decentralization. To decentralize service delivery, the local government code of 1991 devolved certain services to the different levels of the local government units. The citizen satisfaction level in the delivery of these devolved services based on the perception of the respondents is included in the study. The respondents from the barangay government units included in the study rated the delivery of health and social welfare services the highest among the seven services devolved to the barangays considering Section 17 of the local government code with the satellite or public market rated the lowest. On the whole, it appears that the perception of the respondents on the extent of delivery of the services devolved to the barangays is at an average level.

The most meaningful provision on decentralization of the local government code is the power and authority given to LGUs to generate their own funds to support their respective devolved functions. The study shows that the municipal government units are still more dependent on IRA than on their own internally-generated incomes at a mean ratio of 65% to 35%, respectively. The barangays are almost totally dependent on IRA which constitutes a mean of 90% of their annual budgets for the fiscal years 2014-2016.

Another important subject included in the study was the extent to which the subject LGUs adhered to the principles of good local governance in its operations. The parameters used

to measure this was based on the DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2014-39, otherwise known as the 2014 Seal of Good Local Governance containing six items, namely: good financial housekeeping, disaster preparedness, social protection, business-friendliness and competitiveness, peace and order, and environmental management. The perception of the respondents pointed to a little above average performance of both the municipalities and the barangays in the practice of good local governance.

The introduction of new programs and/or projects, rules and regulations to be undertaken or implemented by an LGU or the improvement of existing ones are done through the enactment of ordinances. The study shows that during the period of 2014 to 2016, the municipalities included in the study enacted a total of 11 ordinances; four on the subject of environmental management, three in peace and order, two on business-friendliness and competitiveness, and one each on social protection and tourism, culture and the arts. Among these, there was only one ordinance enacted to adopt the comprehensive land-use plan (CLUP).

The barangays, on the other hand, enacted a total of 103 ordinances, 17 of which were on the subject of fiscal administration. Like the case of the municipalities, ordinances on environmental management top the list with a total of 38 ordinances enacted by the *Sangguniang barangays* followed by 29 on peace and order.

The findings of the study show the accomplishments of the standing committees of both the *Sangguniang bayan* and the *Sangguniang barangay*. It appears that these standing committees have played their usual role in the legislative process. As usual, health and social welfare ranked top of the list at both the municipal and barangay levels. From the traditional expectation, the long list of accomplishments warrants a score of very satisfactory. However, what is missing among the accomplishments is something in the area of innovations, or doing things in governance differently. This involves research and experimentation.

The study also attempted to look into the question of the problems, issues, and concerns encountered by the sample LGUs. The respondents' perception of these matters is divided into two classifications, namely: the internal components which are those attributed to the LGUs and the people within these institutions; and the external or those factors attributed to the environment in the jurisdiction of the LGU concerned affecting their governance.

The findings reveal that lack or insufficiency of the budget is the most serious problem of the municipal and barangay government units covered in the study. The rest of the internal components of the problems, issues, and concerns cited by the respondents are minor ones attributable to the personal attitudes, knowledge and competencies, and

misunderstandings among the officials and functionaries themselves. The practice of the political dynasty has also been cited, but this cannot be resolved through learning interventions. The external components of the problems, issues, and concerns of the communities are likewise the common ones that can easily be resolved through the practice of good local governance, real community empowerment, and the exercise of political will on the part of the local officials.

Are the respondents interested to participate in lifelong learning and education interventions? Generally, their answer is a "Yes". Only two from the municipality answered, "No" with one "Undecided". Three from the barangays answered "Undecided". All the rest answered, "Yes". The motive of those from the municipalities is to prepare themselves for future opportunities and to stay abreast of the changing nature of their work. The majority of the respondents from the barangays admitted that their motive in attending such interventions is to catch up with the present job requirements and to prepare for future opportunities.

The majority of the respondents from the municipalities and the barangays, 60.35% and 62.8% respectively, said that they prefer seminar/workshop as the mode of the learning interventions. Less than twenty percent of them preferred on-the-job training mode, and only 7% was in favor of online training mode. About 15% of those from the municipalities and over 11% of those from the barangays were interested in going through an alternative learning system to earn higher degrees to elevate their educational qualifications. These responses are useful inputs in the design of lifelong learning and educations interventions. Considering the number of municipal and barangay officials and functionaries in Region X, even only 10% of them are determined to pursue bachelor's and master's degrees in public administration and governance can be a sufficient ground for the restoration of ETEEAP in USTP for this University to help local government official and functionaries to progress in their careers in governance, and for USTP to have significant contribution to the improvement of governance in this region. From the viewpoint of careerism of an individual, expenditure in educational qualification is an investment, the individuals concerned should be willing to spend their personal funds for their own lifelong learning and education, especially in the case of those who are interested to earn degrees. Likewise is it from the human resource development perspective of an organization, hence, the organization should have funds included in their annual budgets for this purpose. The findings of the study reveal that a great majority of the respondents preferred that their respective local government units shall provide the funding for their participation in the learning and education interventions. Some are looking forward to sponsors and very insignificant number of them are willing to spend their own funds for this purpose.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study indicate the need for lifelong learning and education interventions for the elective officials and the appointed person in the local government units in the province of Misamis Oriental. The fact that the municipalities and barangays in this province were considered as samples in the whole of Region X in this study, it follows that the recommendations made here also apply to the whole region itself.

Based on the findings of the study as reflected in the above conclusions, the study recommends that USTP should secure the consent and endorsement of the Department of the Interior and Local Government R-X (DILG-RX) and the Civil Service Commission R-X (CSC-RX) to conduct lifelong learning and education interventions for local government officials and functionaries in the Region. Likewise, these two government agencies may help improve the contents of the modules designed by the University as reflected in the conclusions of this study. USTP may enter into a joint memorandum of agreement with DILG-RX and the CSC R-X to formalize this collaboration.

In pursuance of the academic freedom granted to SUCs by RA 8292, USTP should resume the implementation of the alternative delivery mode which was duly approved by its governing board to help deserving participants in the modular courses earn an undergraduate degree in public administration and governance. The University should also partner with a private university to accredit the certificates of the deserving participants in the lifelong learning and education modules who prefer to pursue a master's degree in public management. It should expedite the introduction of the master's degree program in public service innovations to replace the master's in public administration degree. Alternatively, the present Master in Public Administration (MPA) program may be redesigned and continued to integrate subjects on innovations as components of the major courses and as thesis requirements. The University should optimize the use of the internal expertise and physical resources of the USTP Cagayan de Oro Campus including its campuses in Jasaan, Panaon, and Oroquieta City, to attain maximum efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of the learning modules.

Moreover, expert resource persons from DILG-RX and CSC-RX and other national government agencies may be invited to strengthen the implementation and relevance of such interventions. It should formalize the Institute of Lifelong Learning and Education as a permanent component of its Extension and Community Relations Department. An example of this is the Institute of Management, Governance and Continuing Studies (IMaGoCS) of the Davao del Norte State College in Panabo City. The recommendation for this purpose has already been submitted to the administration of USTP. It is also recommended that continuing research

projects be done on this subject of lifelong learning and education, particularly on the relevance and effectiveness of the interventions conducted and on the details of the modules for continuing improvements.

Furthermore, the research team recommends that a follow-up study on the life-long learning and education need of public officials and functionaries be carried in other barangays and municipalities in the Philippines. Data collection should also be strengthened by applying a methodological triangulation technique.

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