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Research paper



Competency Assessment of Public Administrators in Selected Cities of Batangas: An Interdisciplinary Approach Toward Economic and Administrative Capacity Development

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Abstract

This study assessed the competencies of public administrators and staff in the cities of Batangas, Lipa, and Tanauan to develop an integrated administrative and economic competency framework. Using a descriptive research design and survey questionnaire, it evaluated competencies in communication, client service, business understanding, teamwork, and judgment, and analyzed differences based on demographic profiles. Results showed that department heads demonstrated very high competency levels, particularly in leadership and decision-making, while staff members showed high competency levels with improvement areas in business understanding and strategic judgment. Significant differences were found across age, position, and years of service. Based on these findings, an Integrated Governance Competency Development Framework was formulated to enhance leadership capacity, administrative efficiency, and sustainable economic performance. The study highlights the need for continuous competency enhancement to strengthen local governance and support inclusive economic growth.

Keywords: *Competency Assessment; Governance; Public Administrators; Capacity Development; Local Economic Development.*

1. Introduction

Public administration plays a vital role in ensuring the efficient delivery of services, the effective implementation of government programs, and the promotion of good governance at both national and local levels. Local Government Units (LGUs) serve as frontline institutions that translate policies into concrete actions directly affecting the lives and economic well-being of citizens. The quality of governance and local economic performance, therefore, is largely shaped by the competencies of public administrators who oversee the planning, coordination, and management of government programs and resources. Empirical evidence reinforces this relationship: findings from the World Bank (2020) show that LGUs with stronger administrative capability attract more private investment and deliver faster regulatory processes, while Asian Development Bank studies (2021) confirm that competency development among local officials improves competitiveness, fiscal management, and infrastructure planning, key determinants of local economic outcomes.

Competency in public administration extends beyond technical knowledge and managerial expertise; it includes adaptability, proactive decision-making, effective communication, client service orientation, teamwork, business understanding, and sound judgment. These dimensions are also consistent with broader theoretical perspectives. Contemporary discussions on New Public Management (NPM), such as those presented by Andrews and Van de Walle (2013) and Cepiku and Meneguzzo (2018), emphasize performance-driven cultures and citizen-centered services that directly depend on well-developed competencies. The emphasis on continuous skill enhancement aligns with Human Capital Theory, as supported by recent public-sector evidence from Tan (2014) and the OECD (2020), demonstrating that capability investments improve innovation and public service effectiveness. These perspectives complement Institutional Economics, where works like Acemoglu and Robinson (2019) and North, Wallis, and Weingast (2009) argue that competent institutions reduce transaction costs, strengthen accountability, and enable sustained economic development. Empirical studies support this connection: Evans and Rauch (2019) show that bureaucracies with higher professional competence consistently achieve stronger economic performance, while Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock (2017) link organizational capability to successful implementation of development programs and measurable improvements in productivity and service delivery.

In the Philippine context, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) promote competency-based frameworks that embody principles found in NPM, Human Capital Theory, and Institutional Economics. Local research also upholds these frameworks. Studies by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2018; 2022) reveal that LGUs with more competent administrators exhibit stronger economic outcomes, including improved business friendliness, efficient tax collection, strengthened financial management, and more effective development planning. Similarly, Manasan (2020) and recent assessments of the National

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Competitiveness Council (2023) show that LGU competency levels are closely linked to higher competitiveness scores in economic dynamism, government efficiency, and infrastructure quality.

This study, therefore, seeks to assess the competencies of public administrators in the cities of Batangas, Lipa, and Tanauan through an interdisciplinary lens that integrates administrative science and economics. By evaluating adaptability, organization, proactiveness, communication skills, client service orientation, teamwork, business understanding, and judgment, the research aims to identify current strengths and areas for improvement in local governance capacity. Grounded in contemporary empirical findings and theoretical perspectives, the study contributes to the academic discourse on competency and public sector performance while providing a practical foundation for policy formulation, leadership development, and capacity-building initiatives that promote both effective administration and sustainable local economic growth.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed a descriptive research design to examine the competencies of public administrators in the context of both administrative performance and local economic capacity development. The design allowed for a systematic and detailed portrayal of the participants' characteristics and competency levels using statistical tools such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations (ADB, 2020). A structured survey questionnaire served as the primary data-gathering instrument, consistent with established practices in interdisciplinary research on governance and economic development (OECD, 2019).

The respondents consisted of department heads and employees from selected service-oriented departments of the local government units (LGUs) in Batangas City, Lipa City, and Tanauan City. The inclusion of both administrators and staff enabled a balanced and comprehensive evaluation of competencies from multiple organizational perspectives (DILG, 2020) [3]. Quota sampling was applied to ensure proportional representation across the three LGUs, reflecting variations in demographic and professional characteristics (Poljašević et al., 2020).

Data were collected through an adopted and validated survey instrument composed of two major sections. The first section gathered demographic and professional information, while the second measured competencies across eight domains: adaptability, organization, proactiveness, communication skills, client service, teamwork, business understanding, and judgment (CSC, 2017; Saidov & Abdurakhmanova, 2022). The instrument underwent expert validation and pilot testing with 30 respondents from Rosario, Batangas, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.887, which signifies high internal reliability (World Bank, 2021).

Before data collection, formal authorization was obtained from the city mayors of Batangas, Lipa, and Tanauan. All respondents were informed of the study's objectives, ethical safeguards, and their rights to voluntary participation, confidentiality, and withdrawal at any stage (OECD, 2019). The questionnaires were personally distributed and retrieved to ensure high response quality and accuracy.

Data analysis included descriptive statistics to determine competency levels and inferential tests such as t-tests and ANOVA to identify differences across demographic profiles, including age, sex, civil status, and educational attainment. The findings were interpreted not only in the context of administrative efficiency but also in terms of their implications for strengthening economic governance and local capacity development.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Profile of the respondents

The profile of the respondents, comprising 81 department heads and 95 staff from the cities of Batangas, Lipa, and Tanauan, provides a comprehensive understanding of the human resource landscape across the three LGUs. The distribution across age, sex, civil status, and educational attainment reveals notable demographic patterns that shape both administrative and economic capacities within local governance.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

Profile Variable	Category	Heads (n=81)	Staff (n=95)
Age	Gen Z (20–24)	2 (2.47%)	14 (14.74%)
	Millennials (25–34)	31 (38.27%)	41 (43.16%)
	Gen X (35–54)	45 (55.56%)	33 (34.74%)
	Baby Boomers (55+)	3 (3.70%)	7 (7.37%)
Sex	Male	37 (45.68%)	38 (40.00%)
	Female	44 (54.32%)	57 (60.00%)
Civil Status	Single	13 (16.05%)	38 (40.00%)
	Married	64 (79.01%)	53 (55.79%)
	Widowed	0 (0.00%)	2 (2.11%)
	Separated	4 (4.94%)	2 (2.11%)
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	46 (56.79%)	58 (61.05%)
	Master's Degree	35 (43.21%)	25 (26.32%)
	Doctorate	0 (0.00%)	1 (1.05%)
	Others (Vocational/Certifications)	0 (0.00%)	11 (11.58%)

The table shows that the respondents include 81 department heads and 95 staff from the cities of Batangas, Lipa, and Tanauan. Most department heads are Generation X (55.56%), while staff members are mainly Millennials (43.16%), indicating a mix of experienced leaders and younger, tech-savvy employees. Females constitute the majority in both groups, reflecting a female-dominated and increasingly gender-inclusive local bureaucracy. In terms of civil status, most heads are married (79.01%), suggesting leadership stability, while a higher proportion of staff are single respondents (40%). Educational levels are generally high, with most holding bachelor's degrees, and a significant portion of department heads (43.21%) have master's degrees. Staff display more diverse educational backgrounds, including vocational or certification-based training.

The profile of respondents highlights key competency patterns among public administrators in Batangas, Lipa, and Tanauan. The majority of Generation X in leadership roles and Millennials among staff suggest a workforce that blends experience with technological adaptability. Generation X employees typically exhibit strong judgment, reliability, and leadership maturity, enhancing administrative performance

(Andrews & Van de Walle, 2013), while Millennials contribute digital skills, flexibility, and innovation critical to modern public service (OECD, 2020). This generational mix supports a more adaptive and economically responsive LGU workforce.
The female-dominated workforce aligns with national trends in local governance and is linked to stronger communication, organizational skills, and client responsiveness, competencies vital for citizen-centered service and local economic development (World Bank, 2020). Civil status patterns, married department heads, and largely single staff, reflect differences in life-stage responsibilities, with married administrators demonstrating greater workplace commitment and single employees contributing energy and adaptability (ADB, 2021). High educational attainment, particularly among department heads with postgraduate degrees, reflects Human Capital Theory, which associates advanced education with enhanced analytical skills, decision-making, and productivity (Becker, 1993). This educational profile underscores the potential for evidence-based planning, strategic thinking, and integration of administrative and economic competencies in local governance.

3.2. Level of competencies of the administrators of the three cities in Batangas

3.2.1. Adaptability

Table 5 presents the adaptability competency of respondents, which was assessed across seven indicators, with results showing that both department heads and staff demonstrated moderate to high levels of adaptability.

Table 2: Level of Competencies of the Administrators According to Adaptability

	Head		Staff	
	M	VI	M	VI
1. Accepts others' points of view and recognizes the value of different approaches	3.85	VH	3.18	H
2. Changes strategy when an initially selected one is unsuccessful	3.44	H	3.21	H
3. Demonstrates openness to new organizational structures, procedures, and technology	3.45	H	3.04	H
4. Willingly allows change even when there is uncertainty or doubt	3.44	H	3.1	H
5. Willingly takes charge of co-workers' tasks when needed or required	3.65	VH	3.22	H
6. Works creatively within standard procedures to fit into a specific situation	3.33	H	3.15	H
7. Applies techniques to manage situations involving stress or change	3.26	H	3.15	H
Composite Mean	3.49	H	3.15	H

Department heads scored highest on the indicator "Accepts others' points of view and recognizes the value of different approaches," with a mean of 3.85, interpreted as very high (VH), suggesting strong openness to diverse perspectives in decision-making and problem-solving. Similarly, they exhibited very high adaptability when taking charge of coworkers' tasks when needed, with a mean of 3.65, classified as Very High, reflecting proactive involvement and flexibility in supporting colleagues. Other indicators for heads, such as changing strategies when initial approaches fail (mean = 3.44), demonstrating openness to new organizational procedures and technologies with a mean of 3.45, and willingly allowing change despite uncertainty with a mean of 3.44, were rated high (H), indicating consistent adaptability across multiple dimensions. The overall mean of 3.49 confirms that department heads maintain a high level of adaptability.
For staff, the highest-rated indicator was also "Willingly takes charge of co-workers' tasks when needed" with a mean of 3.22, or high, while the lowest was "Demonstrates openness to new organizational structures, procedures, and technology" with a mean of 3.04, High. All staff indicators fell within the high (H) category, with a composite mean of 3.15, indicating that staff members demonstrate a solid, though slightly lower, level of adaptability compared to department heads.
The findings indicate that department heads possess a very high level of adaptability, demonstrating openness to diverse perspectives, willingness to take charge of colleagues' tasks, and flexibility in adjusting strategies and embracing new procedures. This adaptability enables leaders to respond effectively to changing organizational demands and economic challenges, supporting innovative solutions and efficient decision-making. Staff members also exhibit a solid level of adaptability, particularly in assisting colleagues and maintaining operational continuity, though their openness to new structures and technologies is slightly lower. These results suggest a workforce where leadership models flexible and responsive behavior, and staff actively support these adaptive practices, contributing to a dynamic and resilient administrative environment.

3.2.2. Organization

Table 3 presents the organization's competency assessed through seven indicators, focusing on planning, monitoring, and effectively managing work tasks.

Table 3: Level of Competencies of Administrators According to the Organization

	Head		Staff	
	M	VI	M	VI
1. Makes systems/ techniques to monitor the work in progress	3.85	VH	3.18	H
2. Completes tasks in a fast-paced, changing environment in the midst of interruptions and changing deadlines	3.44	H	3.21	H
3. Arranges information or materials properly	3.45	H	3.04	H
4. Plans ahead for meetings, travels, and conferences	3.44	H	3.1	H
5. Shows expertise on office policies and procedures.	3.65	VH	3.22	H
6. Reviews the accuracy of information in work reports provided by the management and/or organization	3.33	H	3.15	H
7. Categorizes what needs to be done and takes action before being asked or required to.	3.26	H	3.15	H
Composite Mean	3.49	H	3.15	H

Among department heads, the highest-rated indicators were "Makes systems/techniques to monitor the work in progress" with a mean of 3.85 (VH) and "Shows expertise on office policies and procedures" with a mean of 3.65 (VH), both interpreted as very high. These results indicate that heads are highly capable of structuring work processes, monitoring progress, and applying institutional knowledge to ensure efficiency. Other indicators, including completing tasks in fast-paced environments a mean of 3.44), arranging information properly a mean of 3.45), planning for meetings and travels a mean of 3.44, reviewing the accuracy of work reports (mean = 3.33), and proactively categorizing and taking action (mean = 3.26), were rated high (H). The composite mean of 3.49 confirms that department heads exhibit a high overall level of organizational competency.

Staff members scored slightly lower across all indicators, with the highest rating on "Shows expertise on office policies and procedures" (mean = 3.22, H) and the lowest on "Arranges information or materials properly" (mean = 3.04, H). The composite mean of 3.15 indicates that staff members demonstrate a high, though relatively moderate, level of organizational competency.

The findings indicate that department heads have strong organizational and procedural skills, allowing them to structure workflows, track progress, and effectively use institutional knowledge. Their very high ratings in monitoring tasks and policy expertise show that leadership is well-prepared to direct operations, ensure accuracy, and uphold efficiency within their units. Staff members, while slightly less skilled, still display high competence, especially in understanding office policies, which supports the overall functioning of the organization. The gap between department heads and staff may reflect differences in experience, training, and responsibility levels, emphasizing the role of leadership in setting standards and mentoring staff. These results point to a capable workforce that can sustain effective administrative processes and support local governance goals.

3.2.3. Proactive

Table 4 presents the proactiveness competency, which evaluates the extent to which respondents take initiative, anticipate challenges, and act beyond their assigned responsibilities.

Table 4: Level of Competencies of Administrators According to Being Proactive

	Head		Staff	
	M	VI	M	VI
1. Goes beyond the call of duty to get something done	3.63	VH	3.2	H
2. Shows initiative and takes the lead	3.38	VH	3.1	H
3. Suggest ideas on having the process and getting the result	3.56	VH	3.23	H
4. Acts over and above the expectations of the role	3.26	H	3.25	H
5. Initiates actions that cause change	3.49	H	3.15	H
6. Recognizes a potential problem as an opportunity	3.85	VH	3.19	H
7. Volunteers to act rather than waiting to be told what to do	3.67	VH	3.13	H
Composite Mean	3.55	VH	3.18	H

Department heads demonstrated a very high level of proactiveness, with top indicators including "Recognizes a potential problem as an opportunity" (mean = 3.85, VH), "Volunteers to act rather than waiting to be told what to do" (mean = 3.67, VH), "Goes beyond the call of duty to get something done" with a mean of 3.63, VH), and "Suggests ideas on improving processes and achieving results" (mean = 3.56, VH). Other aspects, such as "Shows initiative and takes the lead" a mean of 3.38, VH and "Acts over and above role expectations" (a mean = 3.26, H), were rated high. The composite mean of 3.55 confirms that department heads exhibit initiative, innovation, and a proactive approach to organizational challenges.

Staff respondents also displayed a commendable level of proactiveness, though slightly lower than heads, with all indicators rated high. Their highest scores were for "Acts over and above the expectations of the role" (mean = 3.25, H) and "Suggests ideas on improving processes and achieving results" (mean = 3.23, H), while the lowest was "Volunteers to act rather than waiting to be told what to do" (mean = 3.13, H). The composite mean of 3.18 indicates that staff members actively contribute to their roles and demonstrate initiative, though their proactiveness is less pronounced than that of department heads.

The very high level of proactiveness among department heads reflects strong administrative-economic competencies, as their ability to recognize problems as opportunities, volunteer for tasks, exceed role expectations, and suggest process improvements demonstrates both effective management and strategic thinking. Such behaviors enable leaders to anticipate organizational and economic challenges, optimize workflows, and implement initiatives that support local economic development objectives. Staff members, while slightly less proactive, also contribute meaningfully by suggesting improvements and going beyond basic duties, indicating a workforce capable of operational efficiency and adaptive responses. The combination of leadership initiative and staff engagement fosters a workforce that not only ensures administrative effectiveness but also enhances the LGU's capacity to support evidence-based, economically responsive governance.

3.2.4. Communication skills

The communication skills competency evaluates the ability of respondents to effectively convey, interpret, and exchange information in both oral and written forms, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Level of Competencies of the Administrators According to their Communication Skills

	Head		Staff	
	M	VI	M	VI
1. Listens attentively to others' ideas.	3.46	H	3.18	H
2. Speaks clearly and can be easily understood.	3.43	H	3.21	H
3. Provides explanation and/or options to resolve difficult or confrontational situations	3.48	H	3.04	H
4. Expresses ideas clearly and concisely in writing	3.45	H	3.10	H
5. Uses appropriate business writing style	3.62	VH	3.22	H
6. Explains pertinent information to clients and co-workers	3.49	H	3.05	H
7. Demonstrate correct use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation in all produced documents.	3.51	VH	3.15	H
Composite Mean	3.49	H	3.14	H

Department heads consistently demonstrated high proficiency across all indicators, with very high ratings for "Uses appropriate business writing style" a mean of 3.62, VH) and "Demonstrates correct use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation in all produced documents" with a mean of 3.51, VH). Other indicators, including listening attentively to others' ideas (mean = 3.46, H), speaking clearly (mean = 3.43, H), providing explanations in difficult situations (mean = 3.48, H), expressing ideas clearly in writing (mean = 3.45, H), and explaining pertinent information to clients and co-workers (mean = 3.49, H), were rated high. The composite mean of 3.49 indicates that department heads possess a high overall level of communication competency, reflecting their ability to articulate ideas, convey instructions, and interact effectively with staff and stakeholders.

Staff members also exhibited high communication skills, with all indicators rated high. The highest staff ratings were for "Speaks clearly and can be easily understood" (mean = 3.21, H) and "Uses appropriate business writing style" (mean = 3.22, H), while the lowest was for "Provides explanation and/or options to resolve difficult or confrontational situations" (mean = 3.04, H). The composite mean of 3.14

indicates that staff members are capable communicators, able to perform their tasks and coordinate with colleagues, though their communication proficiency is slightly lower than that of department heads.

The results indicate that department heads demonstrate a high level of communication competency, with very high proficiency in business writing and correct use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Their ability to listen attentively, speak clearly, explain complex situations, and convey information effectively to staff and stakeholders reflects strong administrative skills that support coordination, clarity in decision-making, and effective stakeholder engagement. Staff members also exhibit high communication skills, particularly in speaking clearly and using proper business writing, though their ability to handle difficult or confrontational situations is slightly lower. These findings suggest a workforce capable of clear and effective communication, where leadership sets a standard for articulating ideas and instructions, while staff maintain strong foundational communication skills that support smooth operational and administrative processes.

3.2.5. Client service

Table 6 presents the client service competency, assessing respondents' ability to respond effectively, courteously, and professionally to clients' needs while ensuring accurate and timely service delivery.

Table 6: Level of Competencies of Administrators According to Client Service

	Head		Staff	
	M	VI	M	VI
1. Responds with courtesy, clarity, and accuracy to inquiries from clients and other departments	3.58	VH	3.18	H
2. Shows a strong sense of urgency about solving problems and getting work done	3.58	VH	3.21	H
3. Asks clear, concise questions to obtain needed information from the clients	3.46	H	3.04	H
4. Behaves courteously and calmly to acknowledge the concerns of clients who may be hostile, nude, confused, and/or frustrated	3.44	H	3.10	H
5. Effectively disseminate information on difficult or confrontational situations	3.28	H	3.22	H
6. Applies sound judgment when responding to requests and dealing with confidential information	3.26	H	3.15	H
7. Demonstrates understanding of regulations, policies, and guidelines to assist clients	3.59	VH	3.15	H
Composite Mean	3.46	H	3.16	H

The table demonstrated that the Department heads exhibited very high proficiency in several key indicators, including "Responds with courtesy, clarity, and accuracy to inquiries from clients and other departments" (mean = 3.58, VH), "Shows a strong sense of urgency about solving problems and getting work done" (mean = 3.58, VH), and "Demonstrates understanding of regulations, policies, and guidelines to assist clients" (mean = 3.59, VH). Other indicators, such as asking clear and concise questions (mean = 3.46, H), behaving courteously with challenging clients (mean = 3.44, H), effectively disseminating information (mean = 3.28, H), and applying sound judgment in handling requests and confidential information (mean = 3.26, H), were rated high. The composite mean of 3.46 confirms that department heads demonstrate a high level of client service competency, reflecting their ability to balance efficiency, courtesy, and regulatory compliance in serving clients.

Staff members also showed a high level of competency in client service, though slightly lower than the heads. Indicators such as "Shows a strong sense of urgency about solving problems and getting work done" (mean = 3.21, H) and "Effectively disseminates information on difficult or confrontational situations" (mean = 3.22, H) were among the highest, while "Asks clear and concise questions to obtain needed information from clients" (mean = 3.04, H) and "Behaves courteously and calmly to acknowledge client concerns" (mean = 3.10, H) were lower but still within the high range. The composite mean of 3.16 indicates that staff members are capable of providing competent client service, though their performance is slightly less pronounced than that of department heads.

The findings mean that department heads demonstrate a very high level of client service competency, particularly in responding to inquiries with courtesy and accuracy, acting with urgency, and applying regulations to assist clients. Other indicators, such as asking clear questions, remaining courteous with difficult clients, disseminating information, and exercising sound judgment, were also rated high, resulting in a composite mean of 3.46. This reflects strong capability in balancing efficiency, professionalism, and regulatory compliance in service delivery. Moreover, staff members also exhibit high client service competency, with notable strengths in problem-solving, urgency, and providing information in challenging situations. Slightly lower ratings in asking clear questions and maintaining courtesy with difficult clients indicate room for improvement, but still fall within the high category. With a composite mean of 3.16, staff members contribute effectively to frontline service delivery, although their performance is slightly lower than that of department heads.

3.2.6. Business understanding

Table 7 presents the business understanding competency, evaluating the respondents' ability to align their actions with organizational goals, anticipate challenges, and apply strategic thinking in achieving targets.

Table 7: Level of Competencies of Administrators According to Business Understanding

	Head		Staff	
	M	VI	M	VI
1. Adheres to policies, procedures, and guidelines of the Government purchasing agency	3.38	H	3.12	H
2. Considers the organization's strategy and goals to achieve the target	3.49	H	3.11	H
3. Applies strategies anchored in the business's goals to achieve the target.	3.56	VH	3.1	H
4. Recognizes a problem before others in the organization do	3.63	VH	3.15	H
5. Considers the organization's strategy and goals in deciding on a course of action	3.26	H	2.94	H
composite mean	3.55	VH	3.11	H

Department heads demonstrated a very high level of competency, having a composite mean of 3.55. The highest-rated indicators were recognizing problems before others in the organization and applying strategies anchored in business goals to achieve targets, both of which reflected strong strategic awareness. Other indicators, such as adherence to policies, consideration of organizational strategy, and goal alignment, were rated highly, demonstrating a consistent capability in integrating business objectives into administrative decisions.

Staff members showed a high level of competency, having a composite mean of 3.11. Their highest-rated indicator was recognizing problems early, while the lowest was considering organizational strategy in decision-making. These results indicate that while staff possess solid business understanding, their strategic and analytical insights are less developed compared to department heads, suggesting a need for enhanced training in organizational and economic planning.

3.2.7. Team player

The teamwork competency assesses respondents' ability to collaborate, foster cooperation, and constructively engage with colleagues to achieve organizational goals.

Table 8: Level of Competencies of Administrators Being a Team Player

	Head		Staff	
	M	VI	M	VI
1. Considers the value of working with all the members in the team to achieve common goals	3.56	VH	3.22	H
2. Listens constructively to the ideas of the members in the team	3.45	H	3.10	H
3. Disagrees constructively, like suggesting alternatives that may be acceptable to the group.	3.62	VH	3.15	H
4. Promotes cooperation among and with other departments or agencies	3.75	VH	2.94	H
5. Respects the individual differences of the members by recognizing their actions	3.86	VH	3.10	H
6. Compliments and gives praises to completely done tasks.	3.47	H	3.01	H
Composite Mean	3.62	VH	3.09	H

Department heads demonstrated a very high level of teamwork competency, having a composite mean of 3.62. The highest-rated indicators were respecting individual differences, promoting cooperation across departments, and constructively disagreeing by suggesting acceptable alternatives, showing strong interpersonal and collaborative skills. Other indicators, including valuing teamwork, listening constructively, and giving recognition, were rated high, reflecting their ability to build cohesive and motivated teams that enhance organizational performance.

Staff members exhibited a high level of teamwork competency, having a composite mean of 3.09. Their highest-rated indicator was valuing collaboration to achieve common goals, while the lowest was promoting cooperation among departments. This suggests that staff are effective collaborators within their teams but have limited cross-departmental engagement, indicating the need to strengthen inter-unit cooperation and communication for greater organizational synergy.

3.2.8. Computer/technical skills

The competency in computer/technical skills evaluates the ability of administrators to apply technology in accomplishing work tasks, manage information systems, and comply with IT-related policies and practices, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Level of Competencies of Administrators According to Computer/Technical Skills

	Head	Staff			Client	
	M	VI	M	VI	M	VI
1. Applies technical knowledge to solve problems with office equipment and computerized business machines	3.25	H	3.22	H	3.34	H
2. Establishes and maintains electronic and paper filing systems so that information can be readily retrieved.	3.22	H	3.18	H	3.39	H
3. Demonstrate ability to use office software to create, format, and edit forms and presentations	3.25	H	3.11	H	3.23	H
4. Efficiently retrieves, inputs, formats to transmit, and links electronic file data	3.18	H	3.17	H	3.1	H
5. Accurately creates, generates, and maintains diverse reports and documents utilizing databases, spreadsheets, and communications	3.25	H	3.13	H	3.15	H
6. Demonstrates knowledge of Information technology policies about office-level processes, procedures, and practices.	3.33	H	3.01	H	3.18	H
7. Uses electronic mail in a manner consistent with the government's email management policy and guidelines	3.45	H	3.14	H	3.23	H
ct8 Consistently applies management of government policies and guidelines with the use of electronic devices	3.48	H	3.13	H	3.18	H
Composite Mean	3.30	H	3.14	H	3.23	H

For department heads, the composite mean of 3.30 (High) indicates that they are generally proficient in using technology to support office operations. Their highest-rated competency was "Consistently applies management of government policies and guidelines with the use of electronic devices" (mean = 3.48, H), followed by "Uses electronic mail in a manner consistent with government's email management policy and guidelines" (mean = 3.45, H). This reflects that heads are particularly mindful of compliance and responsible use of digital tools in line with government protocols. The lowest-rated area was "Efficiently retrieves, inputs, formats to transmit and link electronic file data" (mean = 3.18, H), suggesting room for improvement in handling more complex electronic file management tasks.

For staff members, the composite mean of 3.14 (High) shows that they also demonstrate good proficiency in technical competencies, although consistently lower compared to heads. Their strongest skills were in "Applies technical knowledge to solve problems with office equipment and computerized business machines" (mean = 3.22, H) and "Establishes and maintains electronic and paper filing systems so that information can be readily retrieved" (mean = 3.18, H). The lowest rating was on "Demonstrates knowledge in IT policies about office level processes, procedures and practices" (mean = 3.01, H), suggesting limited awareness or application of formal IT governance policies among staff.

3.2.9. Judgment

Table 10 presents the competency in judgment that evaluates the administrators' ability to make sound decisions, solve problems effectively, and apply logical reasoning in organizational contexts.

Table 10: Level of Competencies of Administrators According to Judgment

	Head		Staff	
	M	VI	M	VI
1. Makes decisions daily	3.67	VH	3.19	H
2. Is aggressive in solving difficult problems	3.72	VH	3.22	H
3. Gives various options before coming up with conclusions	3.56	VH	3.05	H
4. Helps resolve a group problem	3.27	H	3.11	H
5. Deals with problems that have a significant impact on all parts of the organization	3.86	VH	3.22	H

6. Accomplishes a satisfactory output in difficult situations faced by the organization	3.51	VH	3.15	H
7. Has logical reasoning in dealing with concerns and issues of the department	3.48	H	3.18	H
Composite Mean	3.58	VH	3.16	H

For department heads, the composite mean of 3.58 (Very High) indicates a strong level of judgment skills. The highest-rated item was "Deals with problems that have a significant impact in all parts of the organization" (mean = 3.86, VH), highlighting that heads are trusted to manage complex and far-reaching issues. Other very high ratings include "Is aggressive in solving difficult problems" (mean = 3.72, VH), "Makes decisions daily" (mean = 3.67, VH), and "Gives various options before coming up with conclusions" (mean = 3.56, VH). These results suggest that heads consistently exercise critical thinking and decisiveness. The lowest mean score was on "Helps resolve a group problem" (mean = 3.27, H), showing that while they excel individually, there may be opportunities to strengthen collaborative problem-solving within teams.

For staff members, the composite mean of 3.16 (High) shows that they also demonstrate good judgment, though not as advanced as department heads. The highest ratings were for "Is aggressive in solving difficult problems" and "Deals with problems that have a significant impact in all parts of the organization" (both mean = 3.22, H), suggesting that staff are capable of problem-solving but at a more limited scope compared to heads. The lowest rating was on "Gives various options before coming up with conclusions" (mean = 3.05, H), indicating that staff may rely more on direct solutions rather than exploring multiple alternatives.

The results reveal that the high technical competency of department heads strengthens administrative-economic performance by ensuring efficient, compliant, and well-coordinated digital operations. Their strong adherence to government IT policies supports transparent processes and reliable data management, both essential for economic planning and service delivery. The lower rating in electronic file management highlights a skill area that, if improved, could further enhance data-driven decision-making. Further, staff members also contribute to administrative efficiency through strong operational skills in troubleshooting equipment and maintaining filing systems. However, their limited awareness of IT policies indicates a gap in digital governance readiness, which may affect consistency and compliance in economic and administrative processes. Strengthening staff knowledge in this area would help align workforce competencies with modern digital governance demands.

3.3. Comparison of the responses based on the respondents' profiles

Table 11: Summary of Competency Differences by Demographic Profile

Profile Category	Group	Overall Competency Level	Highest Competencies	Lowest Competencies
Age	Gen Z	High	Client Service, Proactiveness, Judgment	Organization
	Millennials	High	Organization, Communication, Teamwork	Business Understanding
	Gen X	High (lowest among groups)	Teamwork, Adaptability	Judgment, Proactiveness
	Baby Boomers	High (highest among groups)	Client Service, Proactiveness, Judgment	Technical Skills
Sex	Male	High	Teamwork	Organization
	Female	High (higher than males)	Organization, Judgment, Adaptability, Business Understanding	Technical Skills
Civil Status	Single	High–Very High	Client Service, Proactiveness, Business Understanding	Adaptability
	Married	High	Adaptability, Technical Skills	Client Service, Proactiveness
	Widowed	High	Teamwork, Adaptability, Judgment	Business Understanding
	Separated	High	Communication, Client Service	Judgment, Technical Skills
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	High	Client Service, Adaptability, Proactiveness	Technical Skills
	Master's Degree	High	Technical Skills	Client Service, Proactiveness
	Doctorate	High	Teamwork	Client Service
	Others (Vocational/Certificates)	High–Very High	Organization, Communication, Adaptability, Proactiveness	Technical Skills

The assessment of public administrators' competencies across age, sex, civil status, and educational attainment revealed consistently high to very high performance in key domains such as organization, communication, teamwork, adaptability, client service, proactiveness, technical skills, business understanding, and judgment. Despite the overall strong performance, notable variations emerged among specific demographic groups, highlighting differences in experience, initiative, and professional orientation.

When examined by age, younger administrators from Generation Z exhibited high levels of client service, proactiveness, and judgment, reflecting their inclination toward initiative-taking, responsiveness to clients, and active contribution in organizational settings. Millennials consistently scored in the mid-range of high across all competencies, indicating stable and balanced performance that aligns with their role as the dominant workforce group. Generation X respondents showed relatively lower scores, particularly in judgment and proactiveness, suggesting potential areas for leadership development and strategic decision-making enhancement. In contrast, Baby Boomers obtained the highest ratings overall, especially in client service, proactiveness, and judgment, reflecting the benefits of accumulated experience, institutional knowledge, and leadership maturity.

Gender differences were also apparent. Female administrators consistently outperformed their male counterparts across all competency domains, with particularly high scores in organization, judgment, adaptability, and business understanding. Male respondents demonstrated strengths in teamwork, highlighting their collaborative contributions, but scored lower in planning, structuring, and systematic workflow management. These findings suggest that women bring a more strategic, systematic, and adaptable approach to administrative functions, which is crucial for effective governance and the integration of economic planning.

Civil status similarly influenced competency profiles. Single administrators scored very high in proactiveness, client service, and business understanding, demonstrating initiative, responsiveness, and strategic alignment with organizational goals. Married respondents excelled

in adaptability and technical skills but showed lower performance in client service and proactiveness, likely due to balancing multiple professional and personal responsibilities. Widowed administrators exhibited strengths in teamwork, adaptability, and judgment, reflecting resilience and accumulated work experience, while separated respondents demonstrated strong communication and client service skills but lower scores in judgment and technical proficiency. These patterns indicate that life-stage factors shape the emphasis placed on different competencies, with implications for both administrative efficiency and economic responsiveness.

Educational attainment further differentiated competency profiles. Bachelor's degree holders displayed very high performance in client service, adaptability, proactiveness, and business understanding, though their technical skills were relatively lower. Master's degree holders excelled in technical skills but scored lower in client service and proactiveness, reflecting a focus on specialized knowledge and analytical capabilities. Doctorate holders demonstrated very high teamwork skills but lower client service ratings, suggesting orientation toward research, policy, or leadership functions rather than direct service delivery. Respondents with vocational or professional qualifications showed very high performance in organization, communication, adaptability, and proactiveness, highlighting the value of practical experience, though their technical skills remained an area for development.

Significant differences in the assessed competency levels of public administrators when grouped according to their demographic profiles

Table 12: Significant Differences of the Respondents' Assessment when Grouped According to Profile

Profile Variable	Test Used	Computed Value	p-value	Decision
Sex	t-test	0.842	0.401	Not Significant
Civil Status	ANOVA	1.263	0.287	Not Significant
Age	ANOVA	4.215	0.007	Significant
Educational Attainment	ANOVA	5.086	0.003	Significant
Position	t-test	6.473	0.000	Significant
Length of Service	ANOVA	3.911	0.009	Significant
Years of Residency	ANOVA	1.017	0.369	Not Significant

The results in Table 12 show that differences in respondents' competency assessments vary depending on their profile characteristics. Among the variables tested, age, educational attainment, position, and length of service showed significant differences, indicating that these factors meaningfully influence how respondents perceive or demonstrate administrative and economic competencies.

Age produced a significant result ($p = 0.007$), suggesting that generational groups differ in their competency levels, likely reflecting variations in experience, technological adaptability, work behavior, and leadership tendencies. Educational attainment was also significant ($p = 0.003$), meaning that competency levels vary with academic preparation. This aligns with the idea that advanced education provides specialized knowledge and skills relevant to administrative and economic functions. Position yielded a highly significant result ($p = 0.000$), showing that supervisors, department heads, and staff differ in their competencies, as expected, since job responsibilities, decision-making authority, and exposure to administrative tasks increase with organizational rank. Length of service also showed significant differences ($p = 0.009$), indicating that tenure contributes to competency development, as those with longer experience may have more institutional knowledge and better mastery of administrative processes.

On the other hand, sex, civil status, and years of residency showed no significant differences, with p-values greater than 0.05. This indicates that these demographic factors do not meaningfully affect competency levels. Regardless of being male or female, single or married, or having lived longer in the community, respondents possess comparable competencies.

Further, the findings suggest that professional factors—age, education, position, and experience- play a more influential role in shaping administrative and economic competencies than personal demographic characteristics. This implies that capacity-building programs, training, and job-specific development initiatives may have the strongest impact when aligned with employees' career stage, educational background, and tenure in government service. The challenges encountered by public administrators in managing their respective departments or units, particularly in areas affecting administrative and economic performance

To gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing administrative efficiency and economic performance, the study also identified the major challenges faced by public administrators in their respective departments and units. The responses were gathered through open-ended survey items and supported by focus group feedback. The identified challenges were grouped into five key dimensions: human resource constraints, budget and fiscal limitations, bureaucratic processes, technological adaptation, and external economic pressures.

The results highlight several competency challenges that have direct implications for local economic development in Batangas' urban governance context. Gaps in client service, particularly among doctorate holders (2.28) and married respondents (2.79), suggest inefficiencies in public engagement and responsiveness—key factors affecting citizen satisfaction and investor confidence. Inconsistent client relations can hinder the delivery of services that support local businesses, employment programs, and community-based enterprises.

Limited proactiveness among master's degree holders (2.79) and married administrators (2.81) indicates a reactive governance culture, which can slow policy innovation and economic responsiveness. In local economic systems, proactive administrators are essential for anticipating market changes, mobilizing resources, and implementing development projects efficiently.

The observed technical skills gap among bachelor's degree holders (2.92) and those with other qualifications (2.90) also poses a challenge, as digital competency is increasingly vital for e-governance, fiscal management, and data-driven decision-making, tools that enhance transparency and economic competitiveness. Differences in judgment and decision-making, especially among separated (2.90) and doctorate (3.17) respondents, reveal inconsistencies in strategic thinking and resource allocation, which may affect the prioritization of local development initiatives. Gender and generational disparities further compound these issues. While female administrators exhibit stronger organizational skills (3.65), male counterparts scored lower across most areas, suggesting the need for balanced leadership development. Baby Boomers, who scored highest in judgment (3.45) and client service (3.46), contribute valuable institutional knowledge, whereas Gen X administrators, with lower scores, may face mid-career stagnation that limits innovative contributions.

In general, these findings imply that competency gaps, particularly in initiative, adaptability, and digital literacy, can slow economic governance, weaken policy implementation, and reduce the overall efficiency of local public institutions. Strengthening these competencies is therefore essential not only for administrative efficiency but also for stimulating sustainable local economic development through better service delivery, business facilitation, and inclusive community growth.

Output of the Study

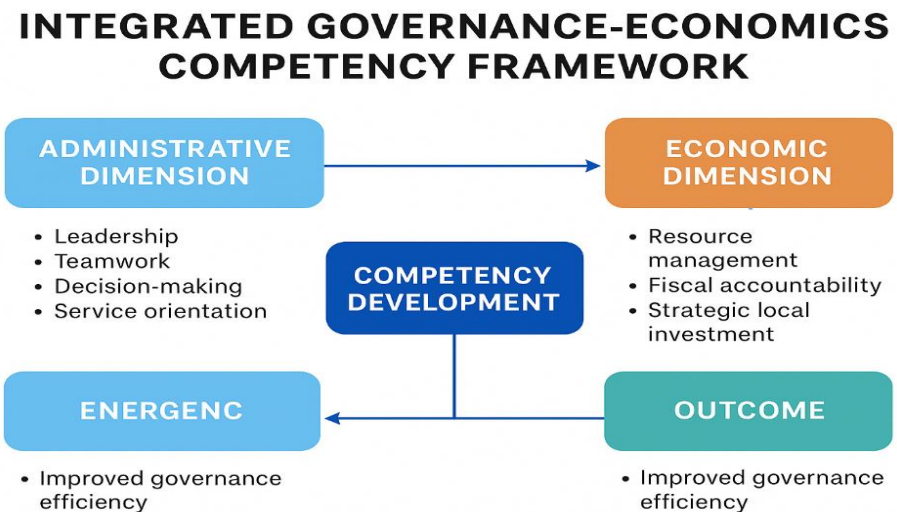


Fig. 1: Integrated Governance–Economics Competency Framework (IGECF).

The Integrated Governance–Economics Competency Framework (IGECF) highlights how gaps in administrative competencies directly influence local economic performance. Weak areas such as limited proactiveness, uneven client service, and inadequate technical and digital skills can slow permit processing, reduce business satisfaction, and weaken fiscal management. These competency gaps manifest in measurable economic indicators, including fewer new business registrations, longer service turnaround times, lower business satisfaction ratings, and inconsistencies in revenue collection or budget execution. When public administrators lack strong business understanding and sound judgment, the LGU's capacity to attract investments, support enterprise growth, and sustain fiscal stability is reduced.

To address these gaps, LGUs must integrate competency development with strategic economic policies. Digital transformation is essential. Implementing online permitting systems, standardizing electronic records management, and strengthening IT governance can significantly reduce administrative delays and enhance transparency, key factors that improve investor confidence and raise business satisfaction. Complementary organizational development initiatives, such as role-based training, mentorship programs, and the creation of specialized investor liaison units, can further strengthen client service, decision-making, and responsiveness.

These reforms reinforce the core principle of the IGECF: that administrative capability and economic performance operate in a mutually reinforcing cycle. By improving competencies that directly affect service delivery and regulatory efficiency, LGUs can stimulate local investment flows and improve fiscal outcomes. In turn, these economic gains provide resources for additional training, innovation, and institutional strengthening. Through targeted digital strategies and competency-based organizational development, LGUs can ensure that human capital improvements translate into measurable, sustainable local economic growth.

4. Conclusions

The foregoing findings prompted the following conclusions:

1) The majority of public administrators are experienced Generation X professionals, majority female and degree holders, while staff members are mostly Millennials, creating a balanced mix of experience and innovation in local governance.
2) Both department heads and staff demonstrated high to very high competency levels, with heads showing stronger leadership and organizational skills, indicating that LGUs in Batangas maintain a capable yet continuously improving administrative workforce.
3) Significant competency differences by age and educational attainment highlight that experience and advanced education enhance adaptability, judgment, and business understanding, emphasizing the need for targeted and continuous professional development programs.
4) Public administrators face challenges such as limited resources, rapid digitalization, rising transparency demands, and the need to align governance with economic goals, underscoring the importance of adaptive and data-driven leadership.
5) The Integrated Governance and Economic Competency Framework (IGECF) was developed to link administrative capability with economic performance, promoting sustainable local development through continuous competency enhancement and policy innovation.

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