



## Identifying Training Needs and Competency Gaps among Barangay Secretaries in LGU Siquijor: Basis for Capacity-Building

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Received: March 25, 2026

Revised: May 21, 2026

Accepted: June 4, 2026

Online: June 17, 2026

### Abstract

This community needs assessment examined the skills and training needs of barangay secretaries in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Siquijor in response to the growing issue of skills mismatch in public service delivery. Although previous studies have explored capacity challenges in public administration, localized evidence on the competencies and administrative experiences of barangay-level officials remains limited. Grounded in Max Weber's social action theory, the study employed a descriptive mixed-methods approach using structured questionnaires and thematic analysis of qualitative responses from 18 purposively selected barangay secretaries. Quantitative findings revealed moderate proficiency in administrative, communication, and management functions, with composite means ranging from 2.68 to 2.85. However, competency gaps were identified in project proposal development, monitoring and evaluation, and needs assessment, each obtaining a mean score of 2.39. Qualitative findings supported these results and identified challenges related to heavy workloads, limited digital literacy, inadequate legal knowledge, and resource constraints. Respondents also expressed high demand for training in digital archiving, program planning, participatory governance, ethical leadership, and advanced communication, with an overall composite mean of 3.69. The findings indicate that proficiency in routine tasks does not fully align with the competencies required for complex governance functions. The study provides an empirical basis for developing targeted and context-responsive capacity-building interventions for local government officials.

**Keywords:** *Community Needs Assessment, Barangay Secretaries, Skills Mismatch, Capacity Building, Mixed-Methods Study, Local Governance, Public Administration*

### INTRODUCTION

Skills mismatch has emerged as a persistent concern in both labor markets and public administration, referring to the misalignment between the competencies individuals possess and those required by their roles (International Labor Organization, 2020; McGuinness et al., 2018). This condition manifests in various forms, including over- or under-skilling—where individuals' educational backgrounds do not align with their occupational demands—and skills obsolescence, which reflects the inability to adapt to evolving technologies and practices or the gradual decline of unused competencies.

In the Philippine context, this issue has also been recognized in policy discussions as a factor affecting workforce readiness and employment outcomes (Crismundo, 2021). Within local governance, however, the implications of skills mismatch extend beyond employment concerns and directly influence the quality of public service delivery. Barangay officials, particularly barangay secretaries, play a crucial administrative role at the grassroots level, with responsibilities that include documentation, communication, coordination, and support for governance processes.

Despite the centrality of these functions, barangay secretaries often operate under conditions of limited resources, rising administrative demands, and uneven access to professional development opportunities. As governance systems continue to evolve—especially with the integration of digital tools and more complex reporting requirements—the expectations placed upon these officials have expanded, raising questions about whether existing competencies

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sufficiently meet these demands.

While previous studies have examined the competencies and challenges of barangay officials, these have generally focused on isolated skill areas or overall performance without integrating quantitative measures of proficiency with qualitative insights into lived administrative experiences. Moreover, there remains limited localized, mixed-methods research that captures how skills mismatch is experienced at the municipal level and how it translates into specific training needs. This gap constrains the development of targeted and context-responsive capacity-building interventions for barangay governance.

Community needs assessments have been recognized as an important mechanism for identifying local concerns and prioritizing interventions based on actual conditions rather than assumptions. [Castillo et al. \(2024\)](#) emphasized that systematic needs assessments provide a basis for determining community priorities and for designing extension and development programs that are responsive to identified needs. In the context of local governance, assessing the competencies and training needs of barangay secretaries is therefore essential in ensuring that capacity-building initiatives are evidence-based and aligned with the realities of grassroots public service.

In response to this gap, this study examines the competencies and training needs of barangay secretaries in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Siquijor. It seeks to assess their proficiency in administrative, communication, and management skills, identify the most evident competency gaps, and explore the challenges that affect their performance.

This study contributes theoretically by extending the application of Max Weber's Social Action Theory in understanding skills mismatch within the context of grassroots governance, emphasizing the interaction between individual competencies and institutional conditions. In practical terms, the findings provide an evidence-based foundation for designing targeted capacity-building programs and policy interventions to strengthen the competencies and effectiveness of barangay secretaries in local government service delivery.

To provide a theoretical lens for understanding these competency gaps and training needs, this study is anchored in Max Weber's Social Action Theory ([Avendaño, 2026](#)), which posits that meanings and intentions shape human behavior and the social contexts in which actions occur. Weber further argues that individuals act not in isolation but in relation to others, with their actions influenced by shared expectations, values, and social circumstances. In the context of barangay governance, this perspective suggests that the performance of secretaries cannot be understood solely in terms of technical competence but must also be viewed in relation to their interactions with community members, institutional expectations, and resource constraints. Through this lens, skills mismatch is interpreted not merely as an individual deficiency but as a reflection of the broader alignment between actors and the structural conditions within which they operate.

In this study, Social Action Theory is applied not to explain competency acquisition itself but to understand how barangay secretaries interpret and respond to institutional expectations, administrative demands, and governance responsibilities. Competency gaps and training needs are therefore viewed as outcomes of the interaction between individual capabilities and the social and organizational environments in which these officials perform their roles. This perspective provides a contextual explanation for why skills mismatch may emerge despite differences in educational attainment and work experience.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Administrative Skills**

The increasing complexity of public administration has drawn sustained scholarly attention to the relationship between skills, institutional demands, and governance outcomes. One of the most persistent concerns in this regard is skills mismatch, which refers to the misalignment

between the competencies individuals possess and those required by their roles (McGuinness et al., 2018).

While this has often been examined in broader labor market contexts, its implications are more pronounced in governance settings, where the consequences are not merely economic but also directly affect the quality of public service delivery. In the Philippine local governance context, this mismatch is not an abstract concern—it is encountered in the everyday administrative realities of barangay officials who are expected to perform increasingly complex tasks with uneven preparation.

This misalignment may be understood through Max Weber's Social Action Theory, which posits that human actions are shaped by subjective meanings, intentions, and the social contexts in which individuals operate (Weber, 1978). In governance settings, this implies that the performance of public officials is determined not solely by their technical competencies but also by how they interpret their roles, respond to institutional expectations, and interact with the communities they serve (Kalberg, 1980).

Administrative skills are central to the performance of barangay secretaries because they support the execution of routine and technical functions such as documentation, record keeping, data organization, report preparation, and digital archiving. As governance systems continue to integrate digital technologies, the competencies required of public officials have evolved in ways that are not always matched by institutional support. The rise of e-governance has introduced new expectations related to data management, digital communication, and information systems.

Studies on digital government emphasize that technological investments alone are insufficient; what ultimately determines success is personnel's ability to meaningfully engage with these systems (Gil-Garcia et al., 2018). Administrative proficiency is often linked to confidence, as individuals with stronger administrative competencies are more likely to perform their responsibilities efficiently and adapt to evolving demands. Conversely, inadequate skills may reduce confidence and increase the difficulty of fulfilling governance functions. Digital literacy, in particular, has emerged as a critical point of tension. While local governments are increasingly expected to adopt digital systems, personnel capacity to utilize these technologies effectively remains uneven.

This becomes more evident when viewed from the perspective of local government units. In municipalities like Siquijor, where administrative work is often carried out under limited resources, the introduction of digital systems does not automatically translate into improved governance. Rather, it can produce a new layer of complexity. What appears to be modernization at the institutional level may, at the operational level, become an additional burden for officials already navigating heavy workloads and constrained capacity.

Viewed through the lens of Social Action Theory, the challenges associated with digital governance may be interpreted as a form of misalignment between institutional expectations and actors' capacity to assign meaning and respond effectively to new administrative demands (Weber, 1978; Kalberg, 1980). Thus, what appears as a technical gap—such as limited ICT skills—can also be understood as a socially situated constraint shaped by experience, training, exposure, and organizational context.

Studies further indicate that institutional readiness, organizational capacity, and personnel competencies significantly influence the successful adoption and utilization of digital technologies in local governance (David et al., 2023). These findings suggest that the effectiveness of digitalization initiatives depends not only on the availability of technological tools but also on the preparedness of institutions and personnel to integrate them into governance processes. Consequently, what may initially appear as a technical issue—such as limited ICT skills—can also reflect broader organizational and structural conditions that shape the implementation of digital

governance.

From a social action perspective, these limitations reflect the interaction between individual capacities and institutional environments, where the ability to perform governance functions is shaped not only by knowledge and skills but also by access to resources, organizational support, and experiential learning (Weber, 1978; Scott, 2014). Administrative proficiency and confidence are therefore influenced not only by individual technical competence but also by the institutional environment in which officials perform their functions.

### **Communication Skills**

In addition to administrative functions, communication skills play an essential role in ensuring effective governance at the barangay level. Communication competencies include interpersonal communication, information dissemination, coordination with stakeholders, and responsiveness to community concerns. Proficiency in communication is important because barangay officials operate in environments where interaction with citizens and agencies is constant.

At the same time, the literature suggests that effective governance cannot be reduced to technical proficiency alone. Competencies such as communication, coordination, and problem-solving remain central to public service performance (Kim, 2012). In the context of barangay governance, these skills are particularly significant because officials operate in proximity to the communities they serve. Governance at this level is not merely administrative—it is relational. It involves negotiation, mediation, and responsiveness to community needs. This relational dimension of governance aligns with Weber's concept of socially meaningful action, where administrative practices are shaped through interaction and interpretation rather than mere procedural compliance (Weber, 1978; Kalberg, 1980).

This is where participatory approaches to capacity development become relevant. Studies on participatory governance highlight that interventions are more effective when grounded in stakeholders' experiences and needs (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Rather than imposing standardized training models, these approaches emphasize the importance of contextual understanding. In practical terms, this means that capacity-building programs must be informed by the specific challenges barangay officials face, rather than relying on generalized assumptions about skill gaps.

Communication skills are particularly important in participatory governance because effective interaction with stakeholders requires the ability to convey information clearly, facilitate dialogue, and respond appropriately to community concerns. These competencies strengthen not only administrative relationships but also officials' confidence in carrying out their governance responsibilities. Effective communication competencies may enhance officials' confidence in engaging with stakeholders and responding to community concerns. Higher levels of confidence may strengthen participation and responsiveness, whereas limited communication skills may create hesitation in carrying out responsibilities.

### **Management Skills**

Beyond administrative and communication functions, management skills are necessary for carrying out broader governance responsibilities. These include planning, organizing, decision-making, problem-solving, monitoring, and coordinating programs and activities. Such competencies become increasingly important as local governance structures adopt more complex responsibilities and reporting systems.

Research on training and capacity-building offers an important lens through which to understand this tension. Studies have shown that structured training interventions can improve both the technical competencies and motivation of public servants (Tummers et al., 2015). This

raises a more fundamental issue: whether capacity-building efforts are addressing the right kind of gaps. It is not simply a question of equipping officials with new skills, but of understanding the conditions under which those skills are applied.

However, what is often understated is that training does not operate in a vacuum. Its effectiveness depends on how well it is aligned with the lived realities of those undergoing it. In contexts where institutional constraints persist, training may enhance skills without necessarily transforming practice.

Within this framework, capacity-building can be viewed not only as a technical intervention but as a process that shapes how local officials interpret their roles and enact their responsibilities, reinforcing the Weberian view that action is guided by meaning and context (Weber, 1978). As Grindle (2017) argues, governance challenges in developing contexts cannot be resolved through institutional reform alone; they require a parallel investment in human capacity that is responsive to contextual realities. This insight becomes particularly relevant when examining local governance in the Philippines, where decentralization has expanded responsibilities at the barangay level without always ensuring corresponding support mechanisms (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2011).

What emerges from this body of literature is not simply a need for training, but a deeper misalignment between institutional expectations and the actual capacities of local governance actors. Capacity-building, therefore, cannot be treated as a supplementary intervention. It must be understood as structurally necessary within resource-constrained barangay systems, where the ability to perform even routine administrative tasks is shaped by both individual competence and systemic limitations.

Management proficiency and confidence may therefore be strengthened when training interventions are aligned with actual workplace conditions, organizational support systems, and governance demands. Individuals with stronger management competencies are generally better equipped to handle planning, coordination, and decision-making responsibilities, whereas competency gaps may create uncertainty in carrying out governance functions.

### **Synthesis**

The use of mixed-methods research further strengthens the understanding of governance realities by integrating measurable indicators with lived experiences. Quantitative data provide measurable indicators of competencies, while qualitative insights reveal the experiences behind those findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Taken together, the literature points toward a more nuanced understanding of governance and capacity development. It suggests that while technological and institutional advancements have created new possibilities, they have also introduced new forms of misalignment.

The challenge, therefore, is not simply to improve skills but to rethink how capacity-building is conceptualized and implemented within local governance systems. In this study, Social Action Theory provides the analytical lens through which competency gaps, training needs, and governance challenges among barangay secretaries are interpreted—not merely as technical deficiencies, but as outcomes of the dynamic interaction between individual actors and the structural conditions of local governance (Weber, 1978).

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a descriptive convergent mixed-methods research design, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently, analyzed separately, and integrated during interpretation to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Consistent with the assumptions of mixed-methods inquiry, this approach draws from both post-positivist and interpretivist paradigms, allowing the study to

capture not only measurable competencies but also the contextual realities that shape them (Dawadi et al., 2021). Such a design was deemed appropriate as the study sought to assess the current proficiencies of barangay secretaries while simultaneously exploring their lived experiences, challenges, and perceived training needs, thereby enabling a more holistic understanding of skills mismatch in local governance.

The respondents in this study were 18 barangay secretaries from the municipality of Siquijor, which comprises 42 barangays. They were selected through purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly used to identify information-rich cases relevant to the study's objectives (Patton, 2015). Selection was based on the list provided by the Office of the Mayor and the Liga ng Barangay. Specific criteria, including active service as a barangay secretary, engagement in administrative and governance-related functions, and availability during the data collection period, also guided it. While not all barangays were represented, this was primarily due to logistical constraints such as geographic distance and scheduling limitations; nevertheless, the selected respondents were considered information-rich cases capable of providing relevant insights aligned with the study's objectives.

Data were gathered using a researcher-made structured questionnaire that underwent expert validation by three faculty members of the College of Teacher Education (COTE). The validation process involved evaluating the clarity, relevance, and alignment of the instrument items with the research objectives, and necessary revisions were incorporated prior to its administration. The instrument was composed of five sections: (1) demographic profile; (2) current proficiency and confidence in administrative, communication, and management skills; (3) perceived training needs and desire for enhancement; (4) preferred training modalities; and (5) open-ended questions.

To ensure the instrument's internal consistency, pilot testing was conducted with respondents with similar characteristics, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of at least 0.70, which is generally considered acceptable in social science research. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the responses, with corresponding interpretations ranging from basic to advanced levels of proficiency to ensure consistency in data interpretation.

For the qualitative component, credibility was strengthened by integrating quantitative and qualitative data and comparing and interpreting qualitative responses with quantitative findings to identify areas of convergence and divergence. This process enhanced the consistency and trustworthiness of the interpretations by allowing multiple forms of evidence to support emerging themes. The data collection took place in July 2025 through the in-person administration of the survey, following official coordination with the Office of the Mayor of LGU Siquijor and the Liga ng Barangay Office. Each respondent was given ample opportunity to complete the questionnaire independently.

Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency counts and percentages were used to summarize the demographic profile of respondents. Weighted means were employed to determine the average ratings for each indicator related to proficiency, confidence, and training needs, while composite means were computed to obtain overall scores across dimensions. These statistical measures facilitated the interpretation of responses according to the established Likert scale categories.

Meanwhile, qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. This involved a systematic process of familiarization with the data, coding significant responses, categorizing codes into themes and sub-themes, and interpreting patterns in relation to the research questions, following the analytical approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). To enhance the credibility of the findings, initial codes were generated manually from participants' responses and grouped into categories based on conceptual similarities. Themes and sub-themes were subsequently reviewed and refined through repeated examination of the data

to ensure internal consistency, coherence, and alignment with the research objectives.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings was undertaken during the interpretation phase, where results were compared to identify convergences and divergences. In this way, quantitative data provided measurable indicators of competency levels, while qualitative insights offered deeper explanations of the contextual factors influencing these outcomes, thereby strengthening the study's overall validity.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Demographic Profile of Respondents**

**Table 1.** In Terms of Years in Service

| <b>Years in Service</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| less than 1 year        | 4                | 22.2              |
| 1-3 years               | 6                | 33.3              |
| 4-6 years               | 3                | 16.7              |
| more than 6 years       | 5                | 27.8              |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>18</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |

Table 1 shows the distribution of the years in service among respondents, revealing a range of experience levels. Specifically, 4 individuals, accounting for 22.2% of the total, have been in service for less than one year, indicating a relatively recent entry into their roles. The largest group, comprising 6 respondents (33.3%), has served between 1 and 3 years, suggesting a moderate level of experience within the team. Those with four to six years of service comprise 3 individuals (16.7%), while 5 respondents (27.8%) have been serving for more than six years, reflecting a significant level of long-term commitment and expertise. Overall, the total number of respondents is 18, constituting 100% of the surveyed population.

While these figures describe the distribution of experience, they also indicate that a substantial portion of respondents are in the early stages of their administrative roles. This suggests that many barangay secretaries may still be developing their competencies through practical experience rather than formal training, which may account for variations in proficiency levels observed in subsequent findings.

These findings are consistent with [Salazar's \(2022\)](#) study of barangay secretaries in Nabua, Camarines Sur, in which the majority had fewer than 6 years of service, and only a smaller proportion reported longer tenures. However, rather than merely indicating similarity, this pattern suggests that barangay administrative positions are often held by early- to mid-career personnel, underscoring the importance of structured capacity-building programs to support both newly appointed and more experienced officials in standardizing skills and improving performance.

**Table 2.** In Terms of the Highest Educational Attainment

| <b>Highest Educational Attainment</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| High School Graduate                  | 2                | 11.1              |
| College Level                         | 5                | 27.8              |
| College Graduate                      | 11               | 61.1              |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>18</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |

Examining the highest educational qualifications of the respondents, the data in Table 2.0 shows a diverse educational background. Two individuals, representing 11.1%, have completed high school, which is the minimum level of formal education reported. A larger segment, 5

respondents or 27.8%, are currently at the college level, working towards higher education degrees.

The majority, comprising 11 respondents (61.1%), are college graduates, indicating a strong academic foundation within the group. This composition of educational attainment provides insight into the overall competency and potential for professional growth within the workforce. The total number of respondents assessed in this category is 18, covering the full sample.

While the majority of respondents possess higher educational qualifications, this does not necessarily translate into advanced functional competencies in barangay governance tasks. The presence of college graduates alongside only moderate proficiency levels in subsequent findings suggests a potential gap between formal education and the practical, technical, and administrative demands of local governance.

These findings align with the study by [Gannaban \(2023\)](#) in Tuguegarao City, where “many respondents are tertiary graduates,” further confirming that among barangay secretaries, higher education is common and supports capacity for public service. However, rather than merely confirming similarity, this pattern suggests that educational attainment alone may not be sufficient to ensure proficiency in specialized governance functions, highlighting the need for targeted, continuous training to bridge the gap between academic preparation and actual administrative practice.

**Table 3. In Terms of Age Range**

| Age                    | Frequency | Percentage   |
|------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| 25-34 years old        | 2         | 11.1         |
| 35-44 years old        | 5         | 27.8         |
| 45-54 years old        | 11        | 61.1         |
| 55 years old and above | 0         | 0            |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>18</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Regarding the age demographics of the respondents, as shown in Table 3.0, most are middle-aged. Two respondents, representing 11.1%, are between 25 and 34 years old, indicating a younger segment of the workforce. The 35 to 44 years age group includes 5 individuals, or 27.8%, reflecting mid-career professionals. The largest age group comprises 11 respondents (61.1%), aged 45-54 years, suggesting a mature, experienced cohort that dominates the population. Notably, there are no respondents aged 55 and above, indicating the absence of senior members in the sample. The total number of respondents remains consistent at 18.

This distribution suggests that the majority of barangay secretaries are in the mid- to late-career stage, which may indicate accumulated practical experience in administrative tasks. However, age and experience do not necessarily equate to proficiency in meeting evolving governance demands, particularly in areas such as digital literacy and technical skills, as highlighted in later findings. The absence of older age groups may also imply limited long-term institutional continuity. At the same time, the concentration of respondents in the middle-aged bracket highlights the importance of continuous professional development to ensure that existing experience is complemented by the updated competencies required for modern local governance.

**Current Proficiency and Confidence in Administrative, Communication, and Management Skills**

**Table 4.** Proficiency and Confidence in Administrative and Documentation Skills

| Indicators   | Mean        | Verbal Description |
|--|-------------|--------------------|
| I draft clear, precise, and context-sensitive official letters, resolutions, and diverse barangay forms that reflect the needs and dignity of our constituents.          | 2.67        | Proficient         |
| I efficiently capture accurate, well-organized minutes for various meetings, including online sessions, ensuring actions and decisions are clear and actionable.         | 2.94        | Proficient         |
| I maintain a systematic and accessible physical filing system, making document retrieval quick while preserving the integrity of records.                                | 2.94        | Proficient         |
| I manage digital records and archives using computers and online tools, ensuring files are organized, secure, and easily retrievable when needed.                        | 2.72        | Proficient         |
| I ensure that all administrative communications with community members are clear, compassionate, and consistent, fostering trust and connection in our barangay service. | 3.00        | Proficient         |
| <b>Composite Mean</b>  | <b>2.85</b> | <b>Proficient</b>  |

Participants reported their ability to draft clear, precise, and context-sensitive official letters, resolutions, and various barangay forms, with a mean score of 2.67, categorized as proficient. Capturing accurate and well-organized minutes for diverse meetings, including online sessions, received a slightly higher mean of 2.94, emphasizing proficiency in ensuring clarity and actionability in records. Maintaining a systematic and accessible physical filing system, crucial for quick document retrieval while preserving document integrity, also scored 2.94, underscoring strong organizational skills.

Managing digital records and archives through computers and online tools averaged a mean of 2.72, indicating proficiency in technological document management. Finally, ensuring that all administrative communications with community members are clear, compassionate, and consistent earned the highest mean of 3.00, demonstrating confident engagement for fostering trust within the barangay service. The composite mean across all indicators is 2.85, indicating an overall proficient level of ability in administrative tasks.

While these results indicate general proficiency, the relatively modest composite mean suggests that respondents' competencies are more operational than specialized. This pattern may reflect the realities of barangay administration, where routine documentation tasks are frequently performed and reinforced through experience. In contrast, functions requiring legal precision, technological integration, and advanced administrative decision-making may receive less formal training and exposure.

For example, the mean score of 2.67 in drafting official documents suggests that although respondents can complete required outputs, there may be inconsistencies in clarity, structure, and contextual appropriateness, which are critical in formal governance documentation. Similarly, the moderate score in digital records management (M = 2.72) indicates partial adaptation to digital systems, rather than full competence in digital governance practices.

These findings align with those of [Salazar \(2022\)](#), who assessed office competencies among barangay secretaries in Nabua, Camarines Sur. Salazar found that competencies such as records

management, office management, and communication were rated satisfactorily, although performance in computer operation was relatively weaker. Rather than merely indicating similarity, this pattern *may suggest* that barangay secretaries develop administrative competencies through accumulated experience. In contrast, digital and technical competencies *may require* more structured training and institutional support.

**Table 5.** Proficiency and Confidence in Communication and Engagement Skills

| Indicators   | Mean        | Verbal Description |
|--|-------------|--------------------|
| I deliver strategic public speaking and dynamic presentations in diverse community settings.     | 2.83        | Proficient         |
| I craft impactful and targeted public announcements for social media and local broadcasts.       | 2.61        | Proficient         |
| I write comprehensive and persuasive reports for barangay activities and initiatives.            | 2.61        | Proficient         |
| I plan and effectively facilitate complex community gatherings and assemblies.                   | 2.83        | Proficient         |
| I manage group dynamics and apply conflict resolution techniques during meetings and assemblies. | 2.50        | Proficient         |
| <b>Composite Mean</b>  | <b>2.68</b> | <b>Proficient</b>  |

Table 5 presents an evaluation of communication and engagement skills, with respondents rating various indicators related to public interaction and group facilitation. Delivering strategic public speaking and dynamic presentations in diverse community settings achieved a mean score of 2.83, classified as proficient, reflecting effective oral communication skills. Crafting impactful, targeted public announcements for social media and local broadcasts had a mean score of 2.61, indicating proficiency in tailored messaging.

Writing comprehensive and persuasive reports on barangay activities and initiatives also earned a mean of 2.61, demonstrating competency in written communication. Additionally, respondents reported proficiency in planning and facilitating complex community gatherings and assemblies, achieving a mean of 2.83. Managing group dynamics and applying conflict resolution techniques during meetings and assemblies had a mean of 2.50, still within the proficient range but slightly lower, suggesting an area for potential growth. Collectively, the composite mean of 2.68 indicates generally proficient communication and engagement skills.

Although the results fall within the “proficient” category, the composite mean of 2.68 suggests that these competencies are situational rather than consistently strategic. This indicates that while respondents can communicate effectively in routine contexts, they may face challenges in more complex situations that require facilitation, negotiation, or conflict resolution. The lower mean score in conflict resolution (M = 2.50) is particularly significant, as it suggests that respondents may have limited capacity to manage interpersonal tensions or mediate disputes—skills that are essential in participatory and community-based governance.

These findings are consistent with [Nodado et al. \(2024\)](#), who emphasized that the effectiveness of barangay officials in performing their duties depends not only on technical knowledge but also on their ability to communicate clearly, engage the community, and adapt to emerging administrative demands such as digital communication. However, beyond confirming similarity, the present findings indicate that communication competencies among barangay secretaries are functional but require further development to support more complex governance

roles involving community participation and conflict management.

**Table 6.** Proficiency and Confidence in Management & Project Development Skills

| Indicators  | Mean        | Verbal Description |
|---|-------------|--------------------|
| I conduct in-depth needs assessments to identify genuine community problems.                            | 2.39        | Basic              |
| I develop comprehensive program and project proposals, including objectives, activities, and budgeting. | 2.39        | Basic              |
| I prepare basic budgets for barangay projects and identify diversified funding sources.                 | 2.44        | Proficient         |
| I design and implement basic monitoring and evaluation frameworks for projects.                         | 2.39        | Basic              |
| I contribute to strategic planning and long-term visioning for our barangay.                            | 2.89        | Proficient         |
| I take proactive leadership roles in administrative tasks and team initiatives.                         | 2.44        | Proficient         |
| <b>Composite Mean</b>   | <b>2.68</b> | <b>Proficient</b>  |

Table 6 assesses respondents' proficiency in management and project development. Conducting in-depth needs assessments to identify genuine community problems accurately received a mean score of 2.39, categorized as basic, indicating room for further development. Developing comprehensive program and project proposals, including detailed objectives, activities, and budgets, also averaged 2.39, suggesting that foundational skills in project planning may be enhanced.

Preparing basic budgets for barangay projects and identifying diversified funding sources showed a slightly higher mean of 2.44, rated as proficient, indicating some level of financial planning competence. Designing and implementing basic monitoring and evaluation frameworks for projects yielded a mean of 2.39, within the basic proficiency range, indicating a need for capacity building in project oversight.

Conversely, contributing to strategic planning and long-term visioning for the barangay received a mean of 2.89, classified as proficient, highlighting stronger skills in forward-thinking and leadership. Taking proactive leadership roles in administrative tasks and team initiatives had a mean of 2.44 and was rated proficient, indicating moderate leadership involvement. The composite mean score of 2.68 indicates an overall proficient level in management and project development, though specific areas still need improvement.

Despite the overall classification of “proficient,” multiple indicators in the “basic” range reveal a critical gap in higher-order governance competencies, particularly in needs assessment, project development, and monitoring and evaluation. These functions require analytical and technical skills that go beyond routine administrative work.

This suggests that while barangay secretaries can participate in planning and administrative processes, they may not be fully equipped to independently design, implement, and evaluate development programs. The relatively higher score in strategic planning (M = 2.89) may reflect involvement in planning discussions rather than technical expertise in planning processes.

Qualitative responses further support this gap. As one participant stated, “I find it difficult to prepare project proposals, especially when budgeting and planning activities are involved” (P2). At the same time, another noted, “I am not confident in evaluating projects because I lack proper training in monitoring and evaluation” (P11). These responses highlight that the identified gaps are not only measurable but also experienced directly by respondents.

These findings are in line with [Valera and Briones \(2024\)](#), who found that targeted training interventions were associated with improved capacity of barangay officials in project management, budgeting, and monitoring. Rather than making broad generalizations, these results suggest that targeted, context-specific training programs are necessary to strengthen the technical competencies required for development-oriented governance.

**Table 7.** Training Needs and Desire for Enhancement

| <b>Indicators</b>   | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Verbal Description</b> |
|---|-------------|---------------------------|
| Advanced Drafting of Official Letters and Barangay Forms    | 3.56        | Highly Needed             |
| Optimizing Minute-Taking for All Meetings                   | 3.56        | Highly Needed             |
| Systematic Record Organization and Archiving                | 3.44        | Highly Needed             |
| Clear and Empathetic Administrative Communication           | 3.56        | Highly Needed             |
| Strategic Public Speaking and Dynamic Presentations         | 3.78        | Highly Needed             |
| Crafting Impactful Announcements and Reports                | 3.72        | Highly Needed             |
| Advanced Planning and Facilitation of Community Gatherings  | 3.72        | Highly Needed             |
| Fostering Participation and Conflict Resolution in Meetings | 3.83        | Highly Needed             |
| Comprehensive Program and Project Proposal Development      | 3.72        | Highly Needed             |
| Advanced Monitoring and Evaluation for Projects             | 3.83        | Highly Needed             |
| Strategic Planning for Barangay Development                 | 3.83        | Highly Needed             |
| Leadership Development and Ethical Governance               | 3.67        | Highly Needed             |
| <b>Composite Mean</b>                                       | <b>3.69</b> | <b>Highly Needed</b>      |

Table 7 captures the expressed training needs and the desire for skill enhancement across various competencies critical to effective barangay governance and administration. All listed training areas received high mean scores, indicating a strong consensus on their importance. The composite mean of 3.69 clearly reflects a high level of perceived need for further training and professional development.

The consistently high ratings across all indicators suggest that respondents are aware of the limitations of their current competencies and recognize the need for continuous capacity-building. This indicates that training needs are not arbitrary but are directly linked to the challenges encountered in their daily administrative and governance functions.

This observation is consistent with [Ybañez et al. \(2025\)](#), who found that rural stakeholders, including local government personnel, reported significant gaps in administrative and digital competencies and limited access to formal training opportunities. Their study further emphasized that training interventions are most effective when they are grounded in actual community needs and aligned with the specific contexts in which participants perform their functions.

Notably, the highest-rated areas—conflict resolution, monitoring and evaluation, and strategic planning (M = 3.83)—correspond to the lowest-performing competencies identified in Table 6.0. This alignment suggests a clear awareness among respondents of their own skill gaps, reinforcing the validity of the findings.

As one respondent explained, “We need more training on planning and evaluating projects because these are the tasks we struggle with the most” (P6). At the same time, another emphasized that “continuous seminars on leadership and communication would really help us improve how we deal with the community” (P10).

These findings echo [Bona and Camara \(2021\)](#), who emphasized that barangay officials’ effectiveness is greatly enhanced by continuous training in leadership, communication, and digital literacy. However, within the context of this study, the results should be interpreted as indicative of localized training needs rather than broadly generalizable conclusions, given the limited sample

size and descriptive design.

**Table 8.** Qualitative Insights

| <b>Research Question</b>     | <b>Major Themes (with Sub-Themes)</b>   | <b>Representative Codes / Expressions</b>  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Q1 – Top Challenges          | Administrative Duties (Resolutions, Minutes, Certificates); Workload & Time; Limited Resources; Communication & Interpersonal Demands | <p>“I spend most of my time making resolutions and processing documents, which becomes overwhelming when tasks pile up.” (P1)</p> <p>“There is a lot of paperwork, and sometimes I struggle to finish everything on time.” (P4)</p> <p>“The workload is heavy, especially when multiple reports and deadlines come at the same time.” (P6)</p> <p>“I lack skills in using Excel, which makes it difficult to organize reports efficiently.” (P3)</p> <p>“Public speaking is challenging, especially when addressing large community gatherings.” (P5)</p>  |
| Q2 – Needed Skills/Knowledge | Digital Literacy; Professional Development; Administrative Skills; Communication; Legal Knowledge                                     | <p>“I need to improve my computer literacy, especially in using Excel and other digital tools for reporting.” (P3)</p> <p>“Enhancement trainings are necessary because we rely mostly on experience rather than formal learning.” (P12)</p> <p>“I find drafting resolutions difficult because I am not always confident with the format and legal terms.” (P8)</p> <p>“Handling confidential documents requires proper knowledge, and I feel I still need guidance in this area.” (P7)</p> <p>“We need more knowledge about laws and policies to ensure that our work is accurate and compliant.” (P9)</p> |
| Q3 – Suggestions for Network | Capacity Building; Monitoring; Digitization; Repository; Sustainability   | <p>“Consistent training should be provided so we can continuously improve our skills.” (P10)</p> <p>“Digitization of records will make our work faster and more organized.” (P2)</p> <p>“There should be a repository of knowledge where we can access templates and guidelines.” (P11)</p> <p>“Sustainable support from the LGU is needed so training programs will not stop.” (P13)</p>  |

*Participant responses are coded as P1, P2, etc. to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.*

The qualitative results reveal three major areas of concern that complement one another. First, respondents identified administrative and documentation duties, workload demands, and limited resources as their top challenges.

Participants described their experiences in more detailed terms, with one noting, “There is

too much paperwork, and sometimes it becomes overwhelming to complete everything on time” (P1), while another shared, “Our workload is heavy, especially when there are multiple reports and deadlines at the same time” (P4). These statements indicate that workload pressures are not only frequent but also constrain respondents' ability to perform tasks efficiently, potentially affecting the overall quality and timeliness of public service delivery.

Second, their perceived skill gaps center on digital literacy, professional training, administrative competencies, and communication. For instance, one respondent stated, “I lack sufficient skills in using Excel, especially when organizing reports and tracking data” (P3), while another expressed difficulty in documentation, saying, “Drafting resolutions is challenging because I am not always sure about the correct format and content” These responses suggest that competency gaps are not limited to isolated technical skills but extend to core administrative functions that require both technical knowledge and procedural understanding.

Finally, their suggestions emphasize capacity building through consistent training, stronger monitoring systems, improved digitization, and sustainability mechanisms. A participant emphasized, “We need consistent training so we can keep improving our skills and not rely only on experience” (P12), reinforcing the need for structured, continuous development programs. This reflects respondents' recognition that experiential learning alone is insufficient to meet the evolving demands of barangay governance, particularly in areas requiring technical and strategic competencies. This observation is consistent with the findings of [Sebrero and Relacion \(2025\)](#), who reported that newly elected barangay officials frequently encounter administrative difficulties and uncertainty in performing governance functions due to inadequate training and limited practical orientation. Their study further emphasized the importance of targeted capacity-building initiatives and continuous professional development to help local officials effectively perform their roles and responsibilities in community governance.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that the challenges experienced by barangay secretaries are not merely individual skill deficiencies but are shaped by broader structural conditions, including workload pressures, limited institutional support, and restricted access to continuous training opportunities. This suggests that addressing skills mismatch in barangay governance requires not only individual capacity-building interventions but also organizational and systemic support mechanisms.

### **Integration of the Quantitative and Qualitative Findings**

These qualitative insights reinforce the patterns observed in the quantitative data. While the quantitative results show that respondents already possess proficiency in administrative, communication, and project management skills, this proficiency is largely concentrated in routine and operational tasks rather than in higher-order governance functions. The qualitative data reveal their recognition of gaps in more advanced functions such as conflict resolution, strategic planning, and project monitoring, indicating that respondents are aware of the limitations of their current competencies in addressing more complex governance demands.

The strong training needs expressed—particularly in leadership, digital literacy, and participatory governance—mirror the high mean scores for desired skill enhancement in the survey, suggesting a clear alignment between perceived skill deficiencies and prioritized areas for capacity development. These findings are consistent with [Lardera and Bagolong \(2024\)](#), who identified that barangay officials in Southern Philippines also face challenges stemming from limited resources, project implementation difficulties, and capacity limitations, indicating that such constraints may be characteristic of similar local governance contexts rather than isolated cases.

Together, the quantitative and qualitative data present a consistent narrative. Although respondents demonstrate adequate proficiency in basic skills, they face significant workload

pressures and resource constraints that limit their ability to fully apply and further develop these competencies in practice. This convergence of findings suggests that skills mismatch at the barangay level is not solely a matter of individual capability but is also shaped by structural and institutional conditions.

Rather than providing broadly generalizable conclusions, these results offer context-specific insights into the interplay between competency levels, operational challenges, and training needs among barangay secretaries in LGU Siquijor. These insights may inform the design of targeted extension programs by the College of Teacher Education, particularly those that address both measurable skill gaps and the contextual realities that influence performance, while remaining mindful of the study's limited sample size and descriptive scope.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The findings of this study indicate that barangay secretaries in the Municipality of Siquijor demonstrate functional proficiency in administrative, communication, and management tasks; however, this proficiency is primarily evident in routine and operational activities rather than in higher-order governance functions. Specifically, competencies related to project development, monitoring and evaluation, and strategic planning were found to be less developed, indicating a skills mismatch between existing capabilities and the increasing demands of barangay governance.

This pattern suggests that while barangay secretaries can sustain day-to-day administrative operations, they may face limitations when undertaking more complex, development-oriented responsibilities that require analytical, technical, and strategic competencies. As governance expectations continue to expand—particularly in areas such as participatory planning, digital administration, and performance monitoring—the gap between required and existing skills becomes more pronounced.

These results directly address the research objective of assessing current competencies and identifying training needs, as the study reveals that while basic administrative functions are generally performed adequately, there is a clear need for enhancement in more complex and technical areas of governance. The convergence of quantitative proficiency levels and qualitative accounts of challenges further reinforces the validity of these findings, showing that respondents not only demonstrate measurable gaps but also explicitly recognize these limitations in their day-to-day work.

The challenges identified—such as heavy workload, limited resources, and insufficient access to continuous professional development—suggest that these capacity limitations are experienced within the day-to-day operational context of barangay secretaries. These conditions shape how competencies are applied, developed, or constrained in practice, indicating that performance is influenced not only by individual ability but also by the working environment in which these roles are carried out. However, given the study's descriptive nature and limited sample size, these findings should be interpreted as context-specific and indicative rather than broadly generalizable across all local government units.

## **Theoretical Implications**

Viewed through the lens of Weber's Social Action Theory, the findings highlight that the competencies of barangay secretaries are not solely technical attributes but are shaped by their interactions, roles, and responsibilities within the social context of governance. The expressed need for training in leadership, communication, and participatory governance reflects how individuals interpret and respond to the expectations of their roles, consistent with Weber's notion that social action is oriented toward others and influenced by shared meanings.

In this context, the identified skills mismatch can be understood not merely as a deficit in

technical capability but as a reflection of how barangay secretaries navigate their roles within evolving governance expectations. Their expressed need for capacity building demonstrates a form of purposive social action, in which individuals seek to adapt their competencies in response to institutional demands and community expectations.

Thus, capacity-building initiatives may be viewed not only as technical interventions but also as mechanisms that influence how local officials construct meaning around their roles, responsibilities, and engagement with the community. This reinforces the relevance of Social Action Theory in explaining how competencies are developed and enacted within specific social and organizational contexts.

### **Practical Implications**

From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest the need for targeted and context-responsive training programs that focus on higher-order competencies such as project planning, monitoring and evaluation, conflict resolution, and digital literacy. Rather than implying a broad restructuring of institutional systems, the results point to the importance of strengthening existing capacity-building initiatives to better align with the actual needs and experiences of barangay secretaries.

In particular, training programs may be designed to move beyond basic administrative instruction toward more applied, scenario-based learning, enabling participants to engage with real governance challenges, such as program implementation, data management, and community facilitation. This approach may help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, a recurring issue identified in the findings.

These insights may inform the College of Teacher Education's extension programs by emphasizing training designs that integrate technical skill development with practical application, particularly in areas identified as weak in the study. Additionally, continuous and structured training opportunities may help bridge the gap between existing competencies and the evolving demands of local governance.

Moreover, the findings suggest that capacity-building efforts may benefit from incorporating sustained support mechanisms—such as follow-up sessions, mentoring, or resource provision—to ensure that newly acquired skills are effectively applied in the workplace. Such approaches may enhance not only individual competency but also the overall responsiveness and effectiveness of barangay governance.

### **LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study, while providing meaningful insights into the skills and training needs of barangay secretaries in the Municipality of Siquijor, is not without its limitations. First, the use of purposive sampling and the relatively small sample size ( $n = 18$ ) limit the generalizability of the findings. Although the selected participants were considered capable of providing relevant, context-rich data, the results should be interpreted as context-specific rather than as representative of all barangay secretaries within or beyond the municipality.

Second, the study relied primarily on self-reported data, which may be subject to response bias, including over- or underestimation of competencies due to personal perceptions or social desirability bias. Third, the research design focused on descriptive analysis, which, while effective in identifying patterns and needs, does not permit examination of causal relationships between variables, such as training exposure and competency development. Lastly, logistical constraints limited the inclusion of all barangays in the municipality, potentially affecting the range of perspectives captured.

Given these limitations, several directions for further research are recommended. Future

studies may increase the sample size and broaden the geographical scope to enhance the generalizability and comparative value of the findings across municipalities or provinces. Longitudinal studies may be conducted to examine how training interventions influence competencies over time. Additionally, experimental or quasi-experimental designs could be employed to assess the effectiveness of specific capacity-building programs, particularly in areas such as digital literacy, project management, and strategic planning.

Further research may also examine how institutional factors—such as resource availability and organizational support—influence the performance of barangay officials. Finally, qualitative inquiries focusing on lived experiences and organizational contexts may provide deeper insights into the conditions shaping local governance practices. These directions may help build on the present study and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of capacity development at the grassroots level.

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