COMPETENCIES OF PUNONG BARANGAY FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE: AN ASSESSMENT

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Abstract: Governance is the establishment of policies, and continuous monitoring of their proper implementation by the members of the governing body of an organization. It includes the mechanisms required to balance the powers of the members with the associated accountability and their primary duty of enhancing the prosperity and viability of the organization. Good governance is about the processes for making and implementing decisions. It is not about making 'correct' decisions, but about the best possible process for making those decisions. Good decision-making processes and good governance therefore share several characteristics. Both have a positive effect on various aspects of local government including consultation on policies and practices, meeting procedures, service quality protocols, councillors and officers' conduct, role clarification and good working relationships. As the basic political unit, the barangay serves as the primary planning and implementing unit of government policies, plans, programs, projects, and activities in the community and as a forum wherein the collective views of the people may be expressed, crystallized and given due course and an avenue wherein contending claims maybe amicably settled. This study focuses in determining the competencies of Punong barangay for good governance as perceived by their constituents utilizing the descriptive research design. This method described the competencies of the Punong barangays for good governance. Respondents utilized in this undertaking were the community residents of the barangays being surveyed. There were 40 respondents per barangay for a total of 400 respondents. An interview schedule and structured questionnaire were used in gathering the data. The questionnaire was pre-tested at Afusing, Alcala, Cagayan and validated before it was finally

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administered to the respondents. Data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages.

Keywords: Competencies, Punong barangay, assessment, good governance, local government unit, decision-making, implementing, monitoring, transparency, participation

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study sought to assess the competencies of Punong barangay for good governance as perceived by their constituents.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

- 1. What is the profile of the respondents as to:
 - 1.1. Age
 - 1.2. Sex
 - 1.3. Educational Attainment
 - 1.4. Occupation
- 2. What is the perception of the barangay constituents on the competencies of the Punong barangay for good governance?
- 3. What problems and solutions do constituent-respondents propose to improve the governance of the Punong barangay in the community?

INTRODUCTION

The term 'barangay' is an original Malayan terminology brought to us by our Pre-Spanish ancestors, specifically the Malays who migrated to the Philippines using the boat they called balangay. This balangay was converted into the word barangay. At present, however, the term is not considered as a sea vessel anymore. Instead, it became a political structure wherein each barangay, according to our history was considered as a sphere of political and social influence by each Datu. Basically, a Datu or Rajah ruled each barangay and was independent from one another. The Datu, being the leader of the barangay, had vast powers comparable to an autocratic type of government because he served as the lawmaker, interpreter and executor. The Agurangs or Council of Elders only serves as advisers. Then again, this dynamics of political and social power of the Datu changed during the Spanish colonization.

The success of the colonization of the Philippines by Miguel Lopez de Legaspi paved the way for the establishment of the Spanish structure of government wherein the barangays

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became part of the *pueblos* or *municipios*. This means that the formerly decentralized barangays were made centralized under the control of the *gobernadorcillo* who headed the said *pueblo* or *municipio*. Thus, the structural political powers of the Datus diminished although as political concessions, they came to be as the *Cabeza de Barangay*. Nonetheless, they were still under the jurisdiction of the gobernadorcillo.

The continuous presence of the Spaniards resulted into the evolution of the term barangay into *barrio*, a Spanish word for a small unit of local government. Hence, it is not surprising to encounter the term Barrio Captain or Teniente Del Barrio. Consequently, the term barrio became more common than the barangay.

The devolution of power in 1991 to 1992 of the national government to local government under the Local Government Code of 1992 made the term 'barangay' conspicuous again. This is so for the aforementioned law made it specific that then considered barrio be called as 'barangay.' The term "barangay" under the Local Government Code of 1992 is not just a formality. The present barangays in the Philippines, as headed by the *Barangay Captain/Chairman*, have defined powers in order to enhance their existence as an autonomous part of the municipality. They have executive, legislative and ad judicatory powers within the purview of the Local Government Code of the Philippines. The expansion of powers of the barangays made its role as one of the most important sectors of the local government unlike the barrios before that were considered as just territorial or symbolic identification of a specific geographic location. It could be confirmed that the present barangays have active participation in political and economic activities of the country. Henceforth, we cannot just take for granted the significance and role of barangays in our society.

The word governance derives, ultimately, from the Greek verb kubernao [kubernao] (meaning to steer, the metaphorical sense first being attested in Plato). In above –described sense, however, the term *governance* was re-minted as recently as the 1990's by economists and political scientists, and disseminated by institutions such as the UN, IMF and World Bank. Its use in English can be traced to Charles Plummer's The Governance of England (published in 1885 as a translation from the original 15th –century Latin of John Fortes cue's The Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy). This usage of governance to refer to the arrangements of governing became orthodox including in Sidney

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Low's seminal text of the same title in 1904 and among some later British constitutional historians.

In its most abstract sense, governance is a theoretical concept referring to the actions and processes by which stable practices and organizations arise and persist. These actions and processes may operate in formal and informal organizations of any size; and they may function for any purpose, good or evil, for profit or not. Conceiving of governance in this way, one can apply the concept to states, to corporations, to non- profits, to NGOs, to partnerships and other associations, to business relationships (especially complex outsourcing relationships), to project teams, and to any number of humans engaged in some purposeful activity.

According to Vitasek, et. al. (2011), good governance has accountability. Accountability is a fundamental requirement of good governance. Local government has an obligation to report, explain and be answerable for the consequences of decisions it has made on behalf of the community it represents. Good governance is transparent. People should be able to follow and understand the decision-making process. This means that they will be able to clearly see how and why a decision was made what information, advice and consultation council considered, and which legislative requirements (when relevant) council followed. Good governance follows the rule of law. This means that decisions are consistent with relevant legislation or common law and are within the powers of council. In the case of the Victorian local government, relevant legislation includes the Local Government Act 1989 and other legislation such as the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. Good governance is responsive. Local government should always try to serve the needs of the entire community while balancing competing interest in a timely, appropriate and responsive manner. Good governance is equitable and inclusive. A community's wellbeing results from all of list members feeling their interest have been considered by council in the decision-making process. This means that all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, should have opportunities to participate in the process. Good governance is effective and efficient. Local government should implement decisions and follow processes that make the best use of the available people, resources and time to ensure the best possible results for their community. Good governance is participatory. Anyone affected by or interested in a decision should have the opportunity to participate in

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the process for making that decision. This can happen in several ways community members may be provided with information, asked for their opinion, given the opportunity to make recommendations or, in some cases, be part of the actual decision-making process. It is important to remember that under the *Local Government Act 1989* the council is required to either make decisions or delegate the decision-making power to officers or Special Committees.

Moreover, a variety of entities (known generically as governing bodies) can govern. The most formal is a government, a body whose sole responsibility and authority is to make binding decisions in a given geopolitical system (such as a state) by establishing laws. Other types of governing include an organization (such as a corporation recognized as a legal entity by a government), a socio-political group (chiefdom, tribe, family, religious denomination, etc.), or another, informal group of people. In business and outsourcing relationships, governance frameworks are built into relational contracts that foster long-term collaboration and innovation. Poor governance can lead to contract failure (Vitasek, Kate, et. al., 2011). Governance is the way the rules, norms and actions are structured, sustained, regulated and held accountable. The degree of formality depends on the internal rules of a given organization and externally, with is business partners. As such, governance may take many forms, driven by many different motivations and with many different results. For instance, a government may operate as a democracy where citizens vote on who should govern and the public good is the goal, while a non-profit organization may be governed by a small board of directors and pursue more specific aims.

Leadership has been identified as an important subject in the field of organizational behaviour. Leadership is one with the most dynamic effects during individual and organizational interaction. In other words, ability of management to execute "collaborated effort" depends on leadership capability. Lee and Chuang (2009), explain that the excellent leader not only inspires subordinate's potential to enhance efficiency but also meets their requirements in the process of achieving organizational goals. Stodgily (1957), defined leadership as the individual's behaviour to guide a group to achieve the common target. Fry (2003), explains leadership as use of leading strategy to offer inspiring motive and to enhance the staff's potential for growth and development. Several reasons indicate that there should be a relationship between leadership style and organizational performance.

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The first is that today's intensive and dynamic markets feature innovation-based competition, price/performance rivalry, decreasing returns, and the creative destruction of existing competencies (Santora et al., 1999; Venkataraman, 1997). Studies have suggested that effective leadership behaviours can facilitate the improvement of performance when organizations face these new challenges (McGrath and MacMillan, 2000; Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997).

Understanding the effects of leadership on performance is also important because leadership is viewed by some researchers as one of the key driving forces for improving a firm's performance. Effective leadership is seen as a potent source of management development and sustained competitive advantage for organizational performance improvement (Avolio, 1999; Lado, Boyd and Wright, 1992; Rowe, 2001). For instance, transactional leadership helps organizations achieve their current objectives more efficiently by linking job performance to valued rewards and by ensuring that employees have the resources needed to get the job done (Zhu, Chew and Spengler, 2005). Visionary leaders create a strategic vision of some future state, communicate that vision through framing and use of metaphor, model the vision by acting consistently, and build commitment towards the vision (Avolio, 1999; McShane and Von Glinow, 2000). Some scholars like Zhu et al. (2005), suggest that visionary leadership will result in high levels of cohesion, commitment, trust, motivation, and hence performance in the new organizational environments. Mehra, Smith, Dixon and Robertson (2006) argue that when some organizations seek efficient ways to enable them outperform others, a longstanding approach is to focus on the effects of leadership. Team leaders are believed to play a pivotal role in shaping collective norms, helping teams cope with their environments, and coordinating collective action. This leadercentred perspective has provided valuable insights into the relationship between leadership and team performance (Guzzo and Dickson, 1996). Some studies have explored the strategic role of leadership to investigate how to employ leadership paradigms and use leadership behaviour to improve organizational performance (Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt, 2002; Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Keller, 2006; McGrath and MacMillan, 2000; Meyer and Heppard, 2000; Purcell, Kinnie, Hutchinson and Dickson, 2004; Yukl, 2002). This is because intangible assets such as leadership styles, culture, skill and competence, and motivation are seen

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increasingly as key sources of strength in those firms that can combine people and processes and organizational performance (Purcell et al., 2004).

Previous studies led the expectation that leadership paradigms will have direct effects on customer satisfaction, staff satisfaction, and financial performance. In general, however, the effects of leadership on organizational performance have not been well studied, according to House and Adyta's review (1997), who criticised leadership studies for focusing excessively on superior-subordinate relationships to the exclusion of several other functions that leaders perform, and to the exclusion of organizational and environmental variables that are crucial to mediate the leadership-performance relationship. Another problem with existing studies on leadership is that the results depend on the level of analysis. House and Adyta (1997), distinguished between micro-level research that focuses on the leader in relation to the subordinates and immediate superiors, and macro-level research that focuses on the total organization and its environment. Other scholars have also suggested that leaders and their leadership style influence both their subordinates and organizational outcomes (Tarabishy, Solomon, Fernald, and Sashkin, 2005).

Fenwick and Gayle (2008), in their study of the missing links in understanding the relationship between leadership and organizational performance conclude that despite a hypothesised leadership-performance relationship suggested by some researchers, current findings are inconclusive and difficult to interpret.

Theories of Leadership Among the various theories of leadership and motivation relating to effective organizational change management, perhaps the most prominent is the transformational-transactional theory of leadership. As explained in Saowalux and Peng (2007), Burns (1978), conceptualizes two factors to differentiate "ordinary" from "extraordinary" leadership: transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership is based on conventional exchange relationship in which followers" compliance (effort, productivity, and loyalty) is exchanged for expected rewards. In contrast, transformational (extraordinary) leaders raise followers" consciousness levels about the importance and value of designated outcomes and ways of achieving them. They also motivate followers to transcend their own immediate self-interest for the sake of the mission and vision of the organization.

Such total engagement (emotional, intellectual and moral) encourages followers to develop and perform beyond expectations (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). Burns (1978), observes that

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transformational leadership involves the process of influencing major changes in organizational attitudes in order to achieve the organization's objectives and strategies. Bass (1985), observed that transactional leaders work their organizational cultures following existing rules and procedures, while transformational leaders change their cultures based on a new vision and a revision of shared assumptions, values and norms. When an organization must adapt to changes in technology, its leadership is a critical factor in its successful change.

In a highly competitive and fast-changing environment, local government in the Philippines is challenged to search for alternatives or ways to effectively respond to the demands and needs of the community which it serves. To be able to meet such challenges, it becomes imperative for it to re-examine and redone its role in light of community interests, needs and demands. In this context, the enabling model of local government is highly relevant. Clark and Stewart (1994: 235; see also Osborne and Gaebler 1992) this enabling model in terms of 'strengthening the capacity for self-governance within a local community, using whatever resources and channels (internal or external) seem most appropriate'. This definition implies that local government has to start from identifying the needs of the community and to use its powers to meet the indentified needs. This further implies that given a range of powers and authority, local government is able to seek ways of delivering services, to organize interventions to the local economy thereby stimulating more economic activities in the local area and to provide the necessary framework for more private sector participation in local developmental activities. Leach et al. (1994) have suggested four models of such enabling authorities. These are the traditional bureaucratic authority, the residual enabling authority, the market-oriented enabling authority and the communityoriented enabling authority. The traditional bureaucratic authority emphasizes strongly the role of local government as service provider rather than as a mechanism for community governance. This role is limited by a low level of Žfinancial and policy autonomy. The residual enabling authority is responsible for providing a limited set of services that cannot be delivered through the private market or through some other mechanisms such as public corporations or agencies. In other words, the local authority only provides those services that cannot be provided by the market. The primacy of the external market is also seen in the market-oriented enabler. However, this type of enabling authority plays a more active and much stronger role in relation to the economic development of the community. The

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local authority provides the lead role in planning and co-ordinating local economic development. It provides mechanisms and incentives to pave the way for more economic activities in the community. In this regard, the local authority places emphasis on a longterm planning approach to infrastructure development, which provides the necessary framework for the effective operation of the local economy. Finally, the communityoriented enabler views the role of local authority as that of responding and meeting the needs of the populace through various means. What is emphasized here is the existence of participative mechanisms whereby the citizens can play an active role in local decisionmaking processes. The above models of enabling authority suggest that local government can have a significant degree of choice as to which direction it has to take. However, the adoption of the market-oriented and community-oriented models presupposes a strong role for local government. This implies that there is difficulty in moving towards the direction of a market-oriented enabler or a community-oriented enabler if the local government is weak, if it has either a limited range of functions/responsibilities or a low level of autonomy in terms of Žgovernance and decision making and if a high degree of external control is exercised by central government or authority. Based on these models, the pre-existing role of Philippine local government is that of the traditional bureaucratic enabling authority. It has a strong public sector orientation and places emphasis on the delivery of goods and services. But this delivery role is hampered by its limited range of functions and responsibilities as well as by its limited powers and authority in terms of Žgovernance and local decision-making processes. However, the new Local Government Code has provided for a stronger role of local government. The devolved powers and authority have provided local government, in theory, with a significant degree of choice in moving towards the direction of market.

The legal framework for the changing role of local government to become more self-reliant, four areas of authority have been devolved to them. The Code has provided for the transfer from central government to the Local Government Units (LGUs) of local services and functions such as agriculture, health, social services, maintenance of public works and highways and environmental management and protection. It has also provided for the transfer of personnel to the LGUs who, prior to the passage of the Code, were national government employees. The chief executives of local government are now empowered to appoint local officials paid wholly or mainly from local funds. Before the implementation of

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the Code, the local treasurer, assessor and budget officers, responsible for the Žfinancial planning and management of the LGU operations, were national government appointees. The assessor and the budget officers are now LGU appointees. A significant provision pertains to the increased share for local governments of the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA). This has increased to 40 per cent from 20 per cent. The rationale for this is to enable the LGUs to maintain and sustain the devolved functions and services. LGUs are also empowered by the Code to contract loans with Žfinancial institutions and to issue bonds to finance the construction and the implementation of projects. The Code has mandated the representation of non-governmental organizations accredited by the LGU in local special bodies such as the local development council and the local school and health boards. It has also provided for joint ventures and other co-operative mechanisms between the LGU and the private sector in programmes or projects concerned with the delivery of basic services, capability building, livelihood projects and the development of local enterprises designed to improve productivity and income. This is a significant structural change in the governance of communities.

The Code has expanded the local government sphere of functions and responsibilities and its ability to generate more Žfinancial resources. It has also allowed for more effective community governance through the institutionalization of people participation via NGOs. In other words, the Code has provided potential avenues for the exercise of an enabling role by local government, particularly the market-oriented and/or community-oriented role. However, some issues and concerns still beset the implementation of this enabling role. The first issue concerns the Žfinancial capacities of local government. Many local governments are rural based and therefore do not have large and broad tax bases. As such, despite the taxing powers given them, they are not able to generate enough resources because there are only a few business establishments to tax in the area. While their income has increased due to their increased share in the IRA, the added income has not offset their level of expenditures, as outlined above. Moreover, many LGUs have remained conservative in their resource-generation approaches. They still depend largely on their local taxes and national government allotments. Despite the mechanisms for LGU-private sector partnership, they have not developed much. A second concern is the LGUs' difficulty in recruiting technically trained and competent personnel at the local level. As noted earlier, some of the mandatory positions are not Žfilled up by the LGUs because of this. This situation does not enhance

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effective implementation of local developmental programmes. Finally, the existence of political 'partisanship' at the local level appears to have affected the participation of NGOs in local governance. Despite these mitigating factors, however, a number of LGUs have attempted to make use of their devolved powers and authority. Some have shown that they have moved towards the direction of a market-oriented enabling role by playing a more active role in local economic planning and by providing more incentives and mechanisms for the growth and development of enterprising activities. Their role has also shifted towards the direction of a community-oriented enabling role by attempting to address the various community needs through networking and linkages with the NGOs.

STATISTICAL TOOLS

The information and data that were gathered through the different techniques were organized, tabulated and collated for better analysis and interpretation.

1. To interpret the data, the personal profile, the frequency and percentage distribution was used. The formula for computing percentage is given below:

- 2. The scale below was used in analyzing the responses of the respondents on competencies of the Punong barangay.
 - 3 very competent
 - 2 competent
 - 1 not competent

Table 1.1

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents Profile Relative to Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage	
31 – 35 years old	40	10.00	
36 – 40 years old	80	20.00	
41 – 45 years old	184	46.00	
46 – 50 years old	48	12.00	
51 – 55 years old	24	6.00	
56 – 60 years old	24	6.00	
Total	400	100.00	
Mean Age=43.56		 	
SD= 6.79	 		

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Table 1.1 presents the profile of respondents relative to age. As gleaned from the data, most of the respondents fall within the age bracket 41-45 with a frequency of 184 or 46 percent while the youngest among the respondents fall within the age bracket 31-35 with a frequency of 40 or 10 percent and the oldest from the age range of 50-60 with a frequency of 24 or 6 percent. The mean age of 43.56 indicates that community residents are already politically matured and responsible citizens of the community.

Table 1.2

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents Profile Relative to Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage	
Female	128	32.00	
Male	272	68.00	
Total	400	100.00	

Data in table 1.2 reflects the profile of respondents relative to sex. As revealed in the table, there are more males with a frequency of 272 or 68 percent than females who represent a frequency of 128 or 32 percent. The data imply that politics as viewed is still a male dominated enterprise.

Table 1.3

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents Profile Relative to Educational

Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary Level	100	25.00
Elementary Graduate	128	32.00
Secondary Level	92	23.00
Secondary Graduate	60	15.00
College Level	20	5.00
Total	400	100.00

Table 1.3 reveals the frequency distribution of respondents relative to educational attainment. Among the 100 respondents128 or 32 percent are elementary graduates, 100 or 25 percent reached the elementary level, 23 percent have undergone schooling in the secondary level, 15 percent have finished schooling in the secondary level and only 5 percent reached college level. These findings would show that the respondents are literate and are capable of understanding and assessing the extent of competencies of their Punong barangay as to his capacity of governing the entire community.

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Table 1.4

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents Profile Relative to Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage		
Farming	256	64.00		
Housekeeping	112	28.00		
Vegetable Vendor	32	8.00		
Total	400	100.00		

Table 1.4 reveals the frequency and the percentage distribution of respondents relative to their occupation. As reflected in the table, most of them are engaged in farming with a frequency of 256 or 64 percent, 112 or 28 percent are engaged in housekeeping, and 32 or 8 percent are vegetable vendors. The data suggest that respondents are economically sufficient and are capable of supporting their families.

Table 2.1
Weighted Mean Descriptive Scale on the Respondents' Perception on the Competencies of Punong Barangay

Item	Weighted	Descriptive Scale
	Mean	
Encourages the community residents to participate in	1.43	Not Competent
planning activities of the barangay		
Implements ordinances in the barangay	3.00	Very Competent
Spearheads programs and activities for the	2.78	Very Competent
developments of the community	 	
Settles conflicts among community residents	3.00	Very Competent
Shows good leaderships in terms of directing socio-	2.65	Very Competent
cultural activities in the barangay	 	
Monitors and evaluate the implementations of	2.76	Very Competent
programs and activities in the barangay		
Allocates efficiently the budget of the barangay	2.56	Very Competent
Represents the community on cases of the involvement	3.00	Very Competent
of the community in the municipal level		<u> </u>
Establishes policies for better community development	2.54	Very Competent
Encourages the participation of the community	1.58	Not Competent
residents in decision making	 	<u> </u>
Sets standard norms and practices the community	2.66	Very Competent
should follow		<u> </u>
Enforces the implementation of ordinances with no bias	2.80	Very Competent
Keeps himself available when needed	3.00	Very Competent
Attends to the needs of the community	2.68	Very Competent
Practices transparency	2.37	Very Competent
Overall weighted means	2.58	Very Competent

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Table 2.1 shows the perceptions of the community residents on the competencies of their Punong barangay for good governance. As revealed in the findings, all of the respondents perceived that their Punong barangay are "very competent" in terms of implementing ordinances in the barangay, settling conflicts among community residents, representing the community on cases involving the community in the municipal level and keeping himself available when needed with the same weighted mean of 3.0. On the other hand, Punong barangay are perceived "not competent" in encouraging the community residents to participate in planning activities of the barangay and do not encourage the participation of the community residents in decision-making. An overall weighted mean of 2.58 indicates that the Punong barangay are very competent in terms of their managerial skills to direct and lead the community. It can be inferred that the Punong barangay are capable in governing community affairs.

PROBLEMS CONFRONTED BY COMMUNITY RESIDENTS

In the course of the interview among community residents, some of the problems mentioned were the inability of the community residents in planning and decision-making concerning the affairs of the community

CONLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local government units are government agencies which are expected to deliver quality services to their clientele. To realize this, healthy or pleasant or even excellent governance must be ensured to attain the optimum services that the barangay residents deserve. As the findings of the study reveal that community residents are matured, male dominated, literate and majority are engaged in farming as a means of livelihood, the community residents perceived their Punong barangay "very competent" with an over-all mean of 2.58. Problems related to lack of participation of community residents in planning and decision-making were identified by the respondents.

In the light of the findings arrived at, it is strongly recommended:

- That regular meetings or assemblies with the constituents should be conducted to thresh out issues concerning policies that affect the entire community.
- 2. That the Punong barangay should encourage the participation of every member in the community to be part of planning and decision-making which may pave the way for the pulse of the constituents be heard and given attention to.

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3. Constant/regular monitoring of the community situations should be conducted to ensure proper implementation of the different activities and policies are in place.

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