



MATRIARCH OF THE BARANGAY: LIVED EXPERIENCE OF FEMALE BARANGAY CAPTAINS

John Christian R. Galera, Magdalene P. de la Peña, Boy Braveheart D. Acompado,
Queen Juliet C. Rebuya, Jay Rochell E. Juhuilon, Steve S. Saycon

*College of Criminology, Foundation University, Dumaguete City,
Negros Oriental, Philippines*

ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of selected matriarchs of the barangay from two municipalities in Negros Oriental, focusing on their leadership roles, challenges, and contributions. Employing a descriptive phenomenological research design, this study sought to understand and interpret these leadership experiences. The methodology involved semi-structured, in-depth interviews with ten participants. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using Colaizzi's method of data analysis. After an in-depth analysis of the transcripts, two major emergent themes were identified: (1) Demands of Barangay Leadership, with the sub-themes Always-On Responsibility, The Invisible Load, and Juggling Competing Demands; and (2) Personal Growth Through Leadership, with the sub-themes From Hesitation to Authority, A Masterclass in Adaptability, and Forged by Experience. Findings revealed that despite emotional burdens, discrimination, and role conflicts, participants demonstrated resilience, empathy, and effective governance through constant availability, proactive problem-solving, and sincere service. Leadership proved demanding yet transformative, fostering personal growth while challenging gender stereotypes. This study recommends peer support groups for women leaders, and mental health resources from local governments to sustain the wellbeing and effectiveness of female barangay captains.

Keywords: *Colaizzi Method, Lived Experiences, Matriarch of the Barangay, Phenomenological Research, Resilience, Transformative*

INTRODUCTION

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5 namely Gender Equality, a worldwide effort for better governance aims to achieve equal rights for women and help them take part in making decisions at all levels. However, women continue to be notably underrepresented in elected and appointed political posts across the globe, illustrating how elusive true parity is everywhere (Atske et al., 2023). These enduring obstacles include negative political party dynamics, substantial budgetary limitations, and ingrained sociocultural norms. Additionally, social stigma and gendered disinformation operations frequently target women leaders, deliberately discouraging their involvement in public service.

In Philippine political settings, every barangay provides women with an essential and fundamental gateway to local leadership and administration (Pelayo, 2023; Villahermosa, 2025). As required by constitutional protections and regulations like the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), the nation has deliberately institutionalized the values of gender equality and political involvement. Despite these legislative initiatives, colonial-era patriarchal traditions continue to pose a problem for Filipino women leaders (Caballero, 2024). According to earlier research, women who hold the position of barangay captain do exceptionally well and primarily employ a democratic leadership style (Rodriguez & Nisperos, 2025). These women's leadership and visibility are essential for encouraging inclusive grassroots engagement and dispelling gender prejudices.

Several local studies use quantitative and qualitative approaches, mostly employing broad surveys or focus group methods. For instance, some studies note that there are social and physical obstacles that make it hard for women to take part. (Firmase & Prieto-Carolino, 2021) without delving into the personal experiences of female captains (Rodriguez, 2025). Similarly, research in Negros Oriental is more concerned with programs, history, and service responsibilities than with actual experiences. As a result, phenomenological research explaining how female barangay captains, particularly in Valencia and Bacong, perceive and comprehend their leadership is still lacking. This study will capture the deeper, personal, and embodied experiences that phenomenology aims to reveal.

This study was conducted to explore and document the authentic voices and governance experiences of female barangay captains, aiming to shed light on their contributions to community leadership and gender empowerment. By focusing on the lived realities, the research intended to reveal the factors that influence their leadership styles, resilience, and decision-making processes in a way that reduces crime. Such insights are crucial for promoting gender-sensitive governance policies and enhancing women's representation in political leadership. Moreover, understanding their experiences can guide training and development programs that strengthen local governance effectiveness. Ultimately, this study is important because it contributes to the broader goal of achieving gender equality and inclusive leadership.

Research Question

This qualitative inquiry, which utilized the descriptive phenomenological approach, sought to answer the universal question:

What are the lived experiences of the barangay captains in their governance?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed qualitative research design, specifically a transcendental phenomenological approach, to explore and understand the lived realities of barangay captains in sustaining crime free communities. Through this design, the study sought to capture the authentic experiences, perceptions, and day to day challenges faced by female barangay leaders as they carry out their peacekeeping responsibilities. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, key informant discussions, and document reviews of barangay peace and order reports to obtain rich, first-hand insights into how barangay captains implement strategies, handle constraints, and engage with their communities. This approach is appropriate because it allows the researchers to describe the essence of the participants' experiences, providing a deeper understanding of how barangay captains serve as frontline guardians of peace in their localities.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in Negros Oriental, Philippines. The research environment offers a comprehensive view of how female barangay captains navigate leadership across varying socio-economic and cultural contexts.

Research Participants

The participants of this study were incumbent female barangay captains in the province. The researchers employed purposive sampling to select participants who meet the following criteria: (1) must be a female elected as barangay captain; (2) must serve as barangay captain for at least one term, specifically within the period of 2019 to 2026, to ensure that participants possess sufficient experience and insight into the responsibilities, challenges, and nuances of grassroots governance; and (3) must be at least 18 years of age to provide legal consent and ensure independent decision-making throughout the research process.

Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview was utilized as the primary tool for data collection. The interview questions were designed to be open-ended, allowing participants to share their

experiences in depth and to generate rich, meaningful perspectives. These discussions were recorded using a digital voice recorder along with a supplementary mobile application to ensure accurate and complete capture of the conversation.

Additionally, the researchers utilized the use of journals in gathering information. All audio recordings were handled with strict confidentiality and were not disclosed to the public. This methodological approach was employed to gather phenomenological insights into the governance and conflict resolution strategies of female barangay captains.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before conducting the interviews, the researchers reached out to the participants through home visit or via Messenger app to schedule an interview. Upon receiving confirmation from the participants, the researchers arranged a time, date, and venue to interview the participants. Beforehand, the researchers also wrote a letter of consent to the participants, to prove that their participation is voluntary. Furthermore, the participants received detailed explanations regarding the objectives of the study and its confidential nature. They were also informed that the interview sessions would be recorded via voice recorder, and the purpose of the recording. Furthermore, the duration of the interviews ranged from twenty to thirty minutes. Additional questions were asked to clarify information during the interview. This approach enables the participants to share more of their experiences.

Data Analysis Procedure

Colaizzi's method, which is generally accepted as a suitable strategy for data analysis in phenomenological search, was used in this study. As noted by Northall et. al., (2020) Colaizzi's method provides an organized structure for studying phenomenological data, although some phases, such as member checking, might need to be modified to fit particular research situations.

First, the interview was recorded via recording application and subsequently transcribed by the researchers. The researchers read all interview transcripts repeatedly and listen to the recording multiple times thoroughly. This stage involves deep engagement with the participants' accounts to gain a holistic understanding of their narratives, feelings, and the overall context of their experience as female leaders. The aim is to achieve immersion in the data without initial interpretation.

Second, the researchers return to each transcript and extract all statements, phrases, and sentences that are deemed significant to the phenomenon of interest. Statements are deemed significant if they pertain directly to the participant's perception of their role and function. Each significant statement will be recorded verbatim.

Third, each significant statement or phrases relevant to the study were translated into a formulated meaning or meaning unit. This involves taking the participant's direct language and translating it into more academic, psychological, or research-relevant

terminology, while ensuring the original context and intent are accurately preserved. This step moves the data from descriptive language to interpretive concepts.

Fourth, the formulated meanings were then be grouped and clustered into emergent themes. These themes represent recurring patterns, shared ideas, or common obstacles across the participants' experiences. The themes were reviewed and refined until they capture the essence of the meaning units they represent.

Fifth, the researchers were integrating the derived themes back into a cohesive narrative to create a comprehensive and exhaustive description of the phenomenon. This description will detail the common lived experience of being a female Barangay Captain in Valencia, Negros Oriental, drawing directly from the thematic structure.

Sixth, after developing the exhaustive description, the researcher was reducing the narrative to a succinct statement or description of the essential structure of the phenomenon. This structure identifies the core, non-redundant elements necessary for an experience to be recognizable as the lived experience of governance by a female Barangay Captain in this specific context.

Lastly, to ensure the credibility and accuracy of the findings, validation of the findings was conducted through member checking. The participants will be asked to confirm whether the synthesized findings accurately reflect their individual experiences. Any necessary adjustments based on participant feedback will be incorporated into the final report.

RESULTS

After an in-depth analysis of the transcripts, two major emergent themes were identified: (1) Demands of Barangay Leadership, with the sub-themes Always-On Responsibility, The Invisible Load, and Juggling Competing Demands; and (2) Personal Growth Through Leadership, with the sub-themes From Hesitation to Authority, A Masterclass in Adaptability, and Forged by Experience.

“The Demands of Barangay Leadership” explores the role of a barangay captain. As mandated by the Local Government Code of 1991, the Punong Barangay leads a team of officials responsible for managing community affairs, implementing local policies, and ensuring the welfare of constituents.

Leaders are expected to be constantly available, with their duties permeating every aspect of their lives. This demand for round-the-clock availability is not merely a professional expectation but a fundamental aspect of their identity as public servants who place community welfare above personal convenience.

This challenge is particularly pronounced in their quasi-judicial role under the Katarungang Pambarangay Law, where they serve as mandated chairpersons of the *Lupong Tagapamayapa*, tasked with mediating interpersonal disputes and restoring

community peace. Additionally, they must skillfully juggle their barangay duties with family responsibilities, a balancing act that demands effective time management and personal sacrifice, demonstrating that true public service is a 24/7 commitment.

Emergent Theme 1: The Demands of Barangay Leadership

This theme captures the all-encompassing, often exhausting nature of the barangay captain's role, which extends far beyond a standard workday. Participants described a life where leadership is not a nine-to-five job but a 24/7 responsibility that permeates every aspect of their existence. They spoke of constant availability, carrying heavy emotional and mental burdens, and the relentless challenge of balancing official duties with family life. Despite these pressures, they remain committed, demonstrating that grassroots governance demands not only administrative skill but also profound personal sacrifice and resilience.

Theme 1: Always-On Responsibility

The concept of this theme captures the reality that barangay leaders must be perpetually on call, ready to respond to the needs of their constituents at any moment, day or night.

Participant 1 described how leadership demands constant availability. She recalled:

“kuan gud ka kaayo sa, naay among, naay mga activity nya mahuman nag gabie, dayun tawgon pud ka, kabi nag naay buybust operation, tawgon mo anag, mo engon, flex, kanang mo tawag ang polis na 12 o'clock engon ana oh kay naay kuan, di man ka kareklamo kay mo engon kang ngano gud nang, mo engon man gud sila na, mao may kuan engon ana ka na engon man so.

(Trans: You really get very busy. We have activities that finish late at night, then you still get called. For example, if there's a buy-bust operation, the police will call you even at 12 o'clock at night. You can't complain because they say it's part of the responsibility.)

Participant 4 echoed this reality, *“naa man gud japoy kuan naa gani manawag og alas doses gabii kay ing ana naay mo tawag og ambulance magpa kuyogs hospital naa gyud gihapon na.”* (Trans: Of course, there are times when someone calls at midnight because they need an ambulance to go to the hospital, that really happens.)

Theme 2: The Invisible Load

This sub-theme captures the psychological weight that barangay leaders carry as they navigate the complex emotional landscape of community governance. This burden is intensified by their role in administering the Katarungang Pambarangay (KP) system, where they must maintain impartiality despite the inherently political nature of their position, a tension that raises concerns about fairness in the resolution process.

Participant 1 shared her experience of facing discrimination and underestimation:

“Kuan, ahh naa gud na maoy murag e discriminate, gi underestimate ka, so, kay bayi kay naka sulay ko ana, kuan pero dili taga diri. Ah gi serveban to namo sya og kanang brgy protection order nga, kuan man mo anang protection order kay ni reklamo man ang iyang partner nga kuan kaning ang iyang partner ni reklamo diri nga giiiiii unsa to sya, basta dili nato sila wala nagka sinabot, so among gi servan of brgy protection order, dayun mura og, pag adto namo idto gapa kuyog kog pulis dayung ahh mura to siyag gi report mi niyas, ah, gipa blotter ko niyas pulis.”

(Trans: There are times when you are discriminated against, underestimated. Because I am a woman, I experienced that. But the person was not from here. We served him a Barangay Protection Order because his partner filed a complaint. When we went there, I brought a police officer. Then it seemed he reported us, he even had me recorded in the police blotter.)

Participant 3 described the stress of handling multiple simultaneous responsibilities:

“Sus daghana nga problema, makaingon gyud ka nga usahay hanang mura nakag mastress naka kay sulabi kanang naay mopa husay nimo unya imong mschedule mapuno kaayu nya kanang uban biya naay biyay kuan hanang kinahanglan biya nimo nga dili hanang dili paaboton ug layu kaayu imong schedule so mao jud na imbis mo kuan ka moari jud ka kay para imohang e kuan imong maka serve jd ka nila nga kuan.”

(Trans: There are so many problems. Sometimes you really feel stressed, especially when someone comes for mediation and your schedule becomes very full. There are also cases that need immediate attention, so even if you have other plans, you still come here to serve them.)

Theme 3: Juggling Competing Demands

The concept of this theme centers on the challenge barangay leaders faces in dividing their time and energy between their official duties and their family responsibilities.

Participant 1 described how she structures her day:

“Um, ang sa ako a sa akong part, ang ga duty gud ko, kada adlaw, oh engon aron mga 8:30 ko mo kuan mo sulod, 8, 12 ko mo gawas, dayun 1:30 ko sa hapon mo sulod, 4:30 ko mo out og wala lang koy mga meeting, walay mga ahh, mga buluhaton nga ah naa koy follow-upon, naa ragud ko dinhi so mao nay akong mga bulu ah buluhaton sa sa brgy og sa og kuan kos panimalay sa panimalay ko murag wala kay mama nako kay di man ko minyo so akong mama maoy magga kuan sa, choirs sa balay.”

(Trans: In my case, I go on duty every day. I usually come in around 8:30 AM and leave at 12 noon, then return at 1:30 PM and finish around 4:30 PM if there are no meetings or follow-ups. At home, I don't have much responsibility because I am not married; my mother takes care of the household chores.)

Participant 10 reflected on how her time allocation shifted:

“Sa akoang part, ginabalanse nako akong panahon. Kung wala na koy duty sa barangay ug naa na ko sa balay, mao na akong time para sa pamilya. Mag-istorya mi, mag-bonding, usahay manggawas mi. Pero sauna, katong nag-handle pa ko sa daycare, lahi ra pud. Gamay ra kaayo kog time nga mahatag sa pamilya. Karon nga naa na ko sa barangay, murag mas daghan akong oras sa barangay kaysa sa pamilya.”

(Trans: I balance my time. When I have no duty at the barangay and I'm home, that's my time for the family. We talk, bond, sometimes go out. But before, when I was handling the daycare, it was different. I had very little time for the family. Now that I'm in the barangay, it seems I spend more time on barangay matters than with the family.)

Emergent Theme 2: Personal Growth and Development Through Leadership

This theme captures the profound transformative power of the leadership role on the participants themselves. What begins as a position of service often becomes a catalyst for deep personal change. Many participants described entering their roles with hesitation, shyness, and self-doubt, only to emerge as confident, articulate, and assertive leaders. The journey is marked by continuous learning, skill acquisition, and the forging of a resilient character. Leadership, for these women, is not just about changing the community, it also changes the leader.

Theme 4: From Hesitation to Authority

This theme captures the transformative journey of barangay leaders from initial hesitation and lack of confidence to self-assured public servants. Many participants described themselves as naturally shy or introverted before taking on leadership roles, feeling inadequate for the responsibilities ahead. However, through the demands of their position and the encouragement of mentors and constituents, they gradually learned to speak up, express their ideas, and assert their authority.

Participant 1 described her initial shyness, *“Murag naa koy shell, so pag gawas nako gahimo nako og kuan pagka secret nako gawas nakos akong shell.”* (Trans: It was like I had a shell around me. But when I became secretary, I came out of my shell.)

Participant 5 reflected on her transformation, *“Nakuan ko... nga dili nako maulaw, mo sulti nagud ko. Maningkamot nako mo sulti ba para sa among barangay.”* (Trans: I became... I'm no longer shy; I can speak now. I strive to speak for our barangay. A big

change.)

Theme 5: A Masterclass in Adaptability

This theme emphasizes that leadership is a perpetual educational journey. Barangay captains must constantly learn about new laws, policies, and procedures to effectively serve their communities.

Participant 3 shared how she sought guidance when faced with unfamiliar challenges:

“daghan kaayung experience sus dili na kuan, sige kang ga learn kay kuan kanang naa pa biyay mas magulang nimo nga, 42 years old pa biya ko nya naa pa mas magulang namo mangayog advices nya pero usahay magresearch gyud ko anang naay magpatawag kay mostly kita man gud dili man gyud ta kanang sweto sa mga yuta kung first timer ka, mura ra biya kag dili wala gyud kay munang kinahanglan gud ka ug naa gyuy mga mo advice, mangutana sa ka kung unsaon ang kuan, kato gyung bag-o pako nga, sus kaso dayun nga 4 million dayun, ana ko nga jesus ginoo ko unsaon mani nako ni pagkuan, munang mangayo pd kog mga advices sa akong mga exkapitan namo, unsaon ng mga ing-ana ako sa siyang ipa kuyog then pagkahuman aw wala na bahala naka diha kay lisod biya kay hilabig first timer ka, dili man ka kuan dayun kung unsaon ng paghusay ing-ana.”

(Trans: I have so many experiences. You keep learning because there are people older than you who still ask for advice, yet sometimes I also research when there's a mediation because we are not experts, especially in land disputes if it's your first time. When I was new, I even had a case worth 4 million pesos and I thought, 'Oh my God, how will I handle this? So, I asked advice from our former captains on how to deal with such cases.)

Participant 8 described applying past learning to new contexts, *“So, ako nakat-onan ddto ako pd gidala diri. Kabahin ana mga pro-problemas sa familia kana sy problematic na sya ug unsaon nako pagsulbad. Kanang magtiayon nga almost na magbulag.”* (Trans: So, what I learned there, I also brought here. Regarding family problems those can be very difficult, and I must think about how to resolve them, like couples who are already close to separating.)

Theme 6: Forged by Experience

This theme emphasizes that leadership is a transformative journey that shapes the character of barangay captains through lived experience. As they carry out their responsibilities, they are constantly required to practice discipline in managing their time, decisions, and interactions with others, which gradually becomes a natural part of their behavior. At the same time, the weight of serving the community instills a strong sense of accountability, as their actions directly impact the lives of their constituents.

Participant 1 reflected on how becoming a captain contributed to her personal development:

“Sa akong personality sa akong kuan dako kaayo dako kaayog kuan katabang pag ah pag tabang sa akong kinabuhi ang na himo kog kapitan na nahimo kong ah brgy officials diri sa brgy, dako kaayog pagka kuan sa akong pagka tawo.”

(Trans: In my personality, becoming a captain and a barangay official has greatly helped me. It has had a big impact on my life as a person.)

Participant 7 described how the role taught her to control her behavior:

“... ang na himong epekto murag mahimo kang kana bang dili ka ma sigarbo kanang dili ba ka mo gara-garaon unsa na. Di ka mo gara ky ang emoha morag ma control nimo ang emohang pag ka dili maayo nga batasan ba ma control jud ky kinahanglan ky mag lantaw ang mga tawo nimo morag maayo gud ka so kinahanglan mag kuan jud ka unsay maayo. huna-huanon gud nimo nga kani maayo bani buhaton dili ka mag pa kuan ky para ang kana pung mga tawo murag mo respeto pud nimo nya ang ang kuan nimo bisag dili ka garaon pero murag tanaw ni ang paminaw nimo nga kuan ba naa kas taas nya kinahanglan ka respetaron respetaran ba pero. kinahanglan ka respetaran pero kinahanglan pud ka mo respect pud sa mga tawo emo pung paminawon unsa elaha pud nga unsay elang paninahanglan kinahanglan dili pud ka kanang calma ra ba.”

(Trans: The effect is that you learn not to be arrogant. You control your bad habits because people are watching you. You must think about what is right, so that people will respect you. Even though you are in a higher position and need to be respected, you also must respect others and listen to their needs. You need to remain calm.)

DISCUSSION

Within the first emergent theme, its primary sub-theme reflects the reality that barangay leaders must be perpetually on call, ready to respond to the needs of their constituents at any hour. The experiences of these participants are aligned with the findings of Porio and Roque Sarmiento (2019) regarding the structural demands placed on barangay captains as the chief executives of their communities. The expectation of 24/7 availability was not merely an individual commitment, but a systemic requirement embedded in the Local Government Code. Furthermore, Laguda (2024) emphasized that the KP system, which positioned the captain as chairperson of the Lupong Tagapamayapa, inherently demanded that leaders be accessible at all hours to mediate conflicts and prevent escalation. The participants' testimonies about responding to midnight calls for buy bust operations, ambulance requests, and other emergencies illustrated that barangay leadership operated without fixed boundaries between work and personal life, a reality that distinguished grassroots governance from other forms of public service.

The second sub-theme elucidates that the emotional and mental load described by participants reflected the dual nature of the barangay captain's role as both an

administrator and a peacekeeper. The study of Damayon et al. (2022) noted that the inherently political nature of the captaincy raised concerns about impartiality, yet participants demonstrated that they had to maintain composure and fairness regardless of personal feelings.

Moreover, the third sub-theme highlights the challenge of dividing time and energy between official duties and family responsibilities. The balancing act described by participants resonated with the findings of Deleña et al. (2025) that barangay officials demonstrated high competence in ethical leadership and community participation, but this competence had to be exercised alongside family responsibilities. Alfeche and Apas (2023) further noted that effective barangay leadership required continuous, direct community interaction, which inevitably competed with family time. Participants' strategies relying on extended family, waiting until children were grown before running, and deliberately scheduling family time reflected adaptive approaches to managing these competing demands.

Furthermore, the fourth sub-theme under the second emergent theme expounds the idea that transformation from shyness to confidence described by participants are aligned with Deleña et al. (2025) findings that barangay officials' capabilities were cultivated through lived experience rather than formal education. The metaphor of coming out of a "shell" vividly captured this process of emergence into public leadership. Recent research supported this idea; Alfeche and Apas (2023) similarly observed that barangay leadership was most effective when it was deeply rooted in local realities and involved continuous, direct community interaction, which naturally built confidence over time. The participants' growth demonstrated that leadership itself became a powerful learning environment, where initial hesitation gave way to competence and self-assurance through sustained engagement with community needs.

Additionally, the fifth sub-theme emphasizes that leadership is a perpetual educational journey. Barangay captains must constantly learn about new laws, policies, and procedures from the Anti-Bastos Law to land dispute resolution. This underscores that the participants' commitment to continuous learning are aligned with the findings of Araña et al. (2023) and Pajimola and Salom (2023) that barangay officials often possessed only superficial knowledge of legal doctrines and required regular, structured training. The participants' practice of seeking advice from former captains, researching unfamiliar cases, and attending seminars reflected the necessity of ongoing education in a role where legal and procedural knowledge directly affected outcomes. Valdez (2024) further noted that the resource limitations and lack of formal training in barangay governance created a need for leaders to be constantly learning and adapting, often relying on creativity and personal networks to bridge knowledge gaps. The participants' testimonies confirmed that continuous learning was not optional but essential for effective service.

Finally, the last sub-theme highlights how the responsibilities of leadership shape character over time. The character development shared by the participants supported the findings of Deleña et al. (2025). The study stated that ethical leadership was an important

skill for barangay officials. Based on their experiences, they learned how to control their temper, avoid being arrogant, and stay calm during stressful situations, showing how they gradually developed ethical behavior needed to gain public trust. In the same way, the research of Jacinto et al. (2023) explained that effective communication and active listening both important in shaping one's character helped turn the barangay hall into more than just an office, but a place for teamwork and problem-solving. The participants' improvement in self-discipline and accountability showed that leadership not only required ethical behavior but also helped develop it over time.

Conclusions

The study emphasizes the transformative impact of barangay leadership on the personal and professional growth of female barangay captains. The unwavering demands of governance constant 24/7 availability, emotional resilience, and the need for impartiality not only tested the participants' endurance but also fostered a deeper sense of discipline, accountability, and commitment to public service. This highlights the pivotal role of lived experience in shaping effective and empathetic grassroots leaders.

The findings also reveal the power of intrinsic motivation in driving sustained engagement and excellence in community leadership. When female barangay captains lead out of genuine concern for their constituents and personal satisfaction in serving others, they are more likely to achieve effective governance and earn public trust. This intrinsic motivation propels them to actively seek solutions, continuously learn new laws and procedures, and engage more deeply with community concerns.

Moreover, the study stresses the necessity of continuous learning and adaptability in enhancing leadership effectiveness. The integration of advice from former captains, personal research, seminars, and hands-on mediation provides a comprehensive approach to governance, catering to the evolving challenges of the barangay. The effective use of these learning strategies not only improves conflict resolution and policy implementation but also transforms hesitant individuals into confident and assertive leaders.

The significance of real-life practice, particularly through direct community interaction and crisis management, cannot be overstated. Such experiences offer invaluable opportunities for female leaders to refine their decision-making abilities and gain practical experience in governance. This practical exposure is essential for achieving confidence, authority, and respect in real-world political settings. Overall, the study highlights that a holistic approach combining constant availability, emotional resilience, continuous learning, and hands-on community engagement is crucial for effective grassroots leadership. These elements work synergistically to create a rich and transformative leadership experience, ultimately leading to greater personal growth and community success for female barangay captains.

Recommendations

Considering the findings and conclusions presented, the following recommendations are proposed:

Barangay Officials

1. Barangay captains and counselors may create informal peer support groups within or near the municipality for sharing coping strategies.

Government Agencies

1. The DILG may establish a recognition or awards program for innovative problem-solving strategies by barangay officials.
2. Provincial LGUs may allocate funds for regular mental health and stress debriefing services specifically for barangay officials.

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)

1. NGOs focused on women's empowerment may design advocacy campaigns and community programs that promote inclusive leadership and dismantle gender stereotypes at the barangay level.
2. NGOs may establish mentorship programs connecting experienced female barangay captains with first-term or aspiring leaders.

Counseling Centers

1. Municipal or city counseling centers may offer free or subsidized mental health and stress debriefing sessions.
2. Counseling centers may develop resilience-building workshops teaching coping strategies for handling criticism, gender-based discrimination, and psychological stress.

Research Institutions

1. Research institutions may conduct comparative studies between female and male barangay captains on leadership styles, conflict management, and governance outcomes.
2. Institutions may fund longitudinal research tracking the personal and professional development of female barangay captains over multiple terms.
3. Researchers may replicate this phenomenological study in other municipalities and provinces to build a broader understanding of women's leadership in local governance.
4. Researchers may explore the impact of female leadership on barangay-level indicators such as crime rates, dispute resolution success, and community satisfaction.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

In this study, the researchers ensured the protection, respect, and wellbeing of all participants throughout the research process. A safe and respectful environment was created to allow women barangay leaders to openly share their experiences and perspectives. The researchers carefully avoided questions that could cause emotional distress, discomfort, or political risk, especially when discussing sensitive topics such as gender bias and leadership challenges. Participants were also informed that their involvement in the study was voluntary, and they were given the freedom to refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the research at any time without any consequences. These measures helped establish trust and encourage honest participation during the interviews. The researchers also ensured fairness and equality in selecting participants for the study. Women leaders from different barangays and leadership backgrounds were given equal opportunities to participate, preventing any form of discrimination or bias. No participant or group was unfairly burdened or exploited during the conduct of the research, particularly those who may already experience marginalization in political spaces. By maintaining fairness and respect for the participants' rights, the researchers were able to gather meaningful information while preserving the dignity and welfare of everyone involved in the study.

To strengthen the integrity and reliability of the research, the researchers applied several measures to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. In-depth and open-ended interviews were used to accurately capture the participants' lived experiences and encourage honest communication. The research process, including data collection, transcription, coding, and thematic analysis, was systematically documented to maintain consistency and transparency. In addition, the findings were based on the participants' actual statements and experiences rather than the researchers' personal opinions or assumptions. Direct quotations and member checking were also utilized to validate the interpretations and confirm that the results genuinely reflected the participants' perspectives and experiences.

Acknowledgments

The researchers wish to extend their sincere gratitude to Ms. Angela Gabrielle B. Bacang, our adviser, for her expert guidance and support, as well as to panel members Mr. Bimbo C. Cueno and Mr. John Kevin Bangaysiso for their valuable feedback and suggestions. The researchers are also thankful to the participants from the Municipalities of Valencia and Bacong for generously sharing their experiences, which served as the foundation of this study. Appreciation is likewise given to our families and friends for their constant encouragement and understanding. Above all, the researchers offer our deepest thanks to Almighty God for granting us the strength, wisdom, and guidance to complete this research successfully.

REFERENCES

Alfeche, R. J. L., & Apas, R. D. Jr. (2023). Assessment on leadership competence of barangay

- council during Covid-19 pandemic in barangay Upper Bala, Magsaysay Davao Del Sur. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, 7(45), 674-688. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.7455>
- Araña, H. M., Pala, E., Claire C. Talip, K., Culanag Jr, T. Y., & Cuevas Jr., J. F. (2023). Enhancing community conflict resolution skills: A training needs assessment for lupon tagapamayapa. *Mediterranean Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, 07(02), 126–135. <https://doi.org/10.46382/MJBAS.2023.7215>
- Atske, S., Geiger, A. W., & Scheller, A. (2023). The share of women in legislatures around the world is growing, but they are still underrepresented. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org>
- Caballero, M. G. B. (2023). Misogyny and sexism in PH politics. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. <https://opinion.inquirer.net/>
- Damayon, S. B., Mendoza, L. A. G. Afan, E. A., Fernando, J. A. B., Gagate, A. T., & Santua, A. B. (2022). Dispute resolutions in the lowest political unit in the Philippines: Assessment of the difficulties and innovations in the katarungang pambarangay system in Northern Philippines. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* |Volume VI, Issue IX, September 2022|ISSN 2454-6186. <https://www.researchgate.net/profile>
- Deleña, K. D. M., Niasas, E. Q., & Saguban, L. E. (2025). Practical leadership in governance: Examining the effectiveness of barangay officials with practical experience. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(7), 843–856. <https://www.jippublication.com/index.php/jip/article/view/94>
- Firmase, J. T., & Prieto-Carolino, A. (2021). Women's participation in barangay politics: A view from the ground. *Philippine Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 26, 1-15. https://pjssh.upv.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/PJSSH-20-20-07-Women-in-Barangay-Politics_-1-15.pdf
- Jacinto, A., Diamante, L. A., Tamano, A. M., & Abrahan, R. (2023). Barangay chairpersons' competence in oral communication for conflict resolution in the Philippines. *ResearchGate. Journal of Language and Pragmatics Studies* 2(3):198-209. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376228144_Barangay_chairpersons'_competence_of_oral_communication_skills_in_resolving_conflicts_in_the_Philippines
- Laguda, J.M. (2024). Managing disputes at the grassroots: Experiences of lupon tagapamayapa chiefs. *International Journal of Law and Politics Studies* ISSN: 2709-0914. DOI: 10.32996/ijlps.www.al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/ijlp
- Northall, T., Chang, E., Hatcher, D., & Nicholls, D. (2020). The application and tailoring of Colaizzi's phenomenological approach to a hospital setting. *Nurse Researcher*, 28(2), 20–25. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.2020.e1700>
- Pajimola, A. H. B., and Salom, M. D. Alternative dispute resolution in the context of barangay justice system: compliance and competencies of arbitrators, conciliators and mediators. Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University, La Union Philippines. Volume II (2023), Issue 2, P-ISSN – 2984-7567; E-ISSN - 2945-3577... [https://etcor.org/storage/iJOINED/Vol.%20II\(2\)](https://etcor.org/storage/iJOINED/Vol.%20II(2))
- Pelayo, J. (2023). Barangay leadership in the Philippines: A community-centered approach. *Philippine Journal of Local Governance*, 15(2), 45–60. Pelayo IV, J. (2023) The barangay chairman: A role of service, not of power. <https://ijsred.com/volume8/issue5/IJSRED-V8I5P80.pdf>
- Porio, E., and Roque-Sarmiento, E. (2019). "Barangay." In Orum, A. (ed) *The Wiley blackwell encyclopedia of urban and regional studies*. John Wiley & Sons Ltd., New Jersey... <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118568446.eurs0016>
- Republic of the Philippines, (2009). Republic Act No. 9710: Magna Carta of Women. Lawphil Project. https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2009/ra_9710_2009.html

- Republic of the Philippines. (1991). Republic Act No. 7160: Local Government Code of 1991. Lawphil Project. https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1991/ra_7160_1991.html
- Rodriguez, D., & Nisperos, P. (2025). Mainstream governance in local politics: experiences of women leaders in the Philippines. *International Journal on Culture, History, and Religion*, 7(SI2), 530–551. <https://doi.org/10.63931/ijchr.v7iSI2.225>
- Valdez, C. B. (2024). A systematic review of leadership and governance: Evaluating barangay officials' performance in Sablan Municipality. *Multidisciplinary International Journal of Research and Development (MIJRD)*, 4(1), 116-125. <https://www.mijrd.com/papers/v4/i1/MIJRDV4I10010.pdf>
- Villahermosa, M. (2025). The role of the barangay in Philippine law: Local governance and legal functions. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Engineering Development-Volume 8 Issue 5, Sep-Oct 2025*. <https://www.diskurso.ph/en/batas-publiko/2025/02/26/the-role-of-the-barangay-in-philippine-law-local-governance-and-legal-functions>.

APA Citation:

Galera, J. C. R., de la Peña, M. P., Acompado, B. B. D., Rebuya, Q. J. C., Juhuilon, J. R. E., & Saycon, S. S. (2026). MATRIARCH OF THE BARANGAY: LIVED EXPERIENCE OF FEMALE BARANGAY CAPTAINS. *Ignatian International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 4(6), 1865–1880. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20838946>

johnchristian.galera@foundationu.com
magdalene.delapena@foundationu.com
boybraveheart.acompado@foundationu.com
queenjuliet.rebuya@foundationu.com
jayrochell.juguilon@foundationu.com
steve.saycon@foundationu.com