



PUBLIC LEADERSHIP ROLES, PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY, AND QUALITY OF WORK LIFE: A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL ON SATISFACTION OF EMPLOYEES IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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ABSTRACT

This non-experimental quantitative study established the best-fit structural model for employee satisfaction (ES) with public leadership roles (PLR), professional identity (PI), and quality of work life (QWL) as the exogenous latent variables. The stratified random sampling method selected the four hundred local government employees in Region XI to participate in the survey. Data analysis yielded the following results: The mean statistic showed very high levels of professional identity and employee satisfaction compared to the high levels of public leadership roles and work-life quality. Pearson r revealed a significant and positive relationship between public leadership roles, professional identity, quality of work-life and employee satisfaction. The multiple regression analysis revealed that public leadership roles, professional identity, and quality of work-life significantly influence employee satisfaction by 58.6 percent. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) bared that two exogenous latent variables predict employee satisfaction: public leadership roles (indicated by network governance and political leadership) and professional identity (characterized by knowledge and philosophy of the profession, attitude, engagement behavior, and interaction are predictors of employee satisfaction). In addition, employee satisfaction has these indicators: leadership and planning, corporate culture and communication, role in the organization, work environment, training, development and resources, pay and benefits, and overall employment experience. These findings are relevant to Human Resource Management Offices in the public and private sectors, with implications for employment policies, especially for employees' career growth.

KEYWORDS: public administration, local government employees, public leadership roles, professional identity, quality of work-life, employee satisfaction, SEM, Philippines



INTRODUCTION

Employee satisfaction is a real issue in the public sector [1]. In Canada, a survey on the satisfaction of employees revealed the most discouraging results as 74% are dissatisfied with the working conditions, and 60% were dissatisfied with their salaries [2]. Therefore, organizations should give due attention to employee dissatisfaction; otherwise, employees will get demotivated and look for a better work environment.

Satisfaction is the root of all positive work outcomes, such as commitment, loyalty, and increased work productivity. Therefore, employee satisfaction is an essential topic that human resource management should address in all aspects of employment. It is crucial to retain and attract well-qualified workers. Workers who are satisfied at their workplaces are more innovative and help in the continuous quality improvement of their company. They also show positive attitudes in their homes, make a psychologically healthy society, and are happier than dissatisfied ones [3], [4], [5].

Conversely, dissatisfied employees are more likely to quit their jobs than those satisfied employees [6]. Also, sometimes workers quit from their public employment to get employment from the private sector and vice versa. At other times, the movement is from one profession to another, and people tend to migrate to better jobs [7], [8]. Researchers notice that when a productive employee quits, organizations lose productivity and social capital and suffer customer defection [9], [10], [11], [12].

Many researchers have already conducted employee satisfaction studies. However, no study used structural equation modeling using public leadership roles, professional identity, and quality of work life as the exogenous variables, especially concerning the satisfaction of employees in the local government units in Region XI. Therefore, there is a research gap on this topic. So, this study is timely and relevant. Furthermore, this study could provide research-based data for solving the issue of poor employee satisfaction in some organizations.

OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to determine the best-fit structural model for employee satisfaction. In addition, the researcher wanted to investigate whether or not public leadership roles, professional identity, and quality of work life are determinants of employee satisfaction. Moreover, specific objectives guided this study:

1. To describe the level of public leadership roles of local government employees in the local government units of Region XI in accountability, rule-following, political loyalty, and network governance.
2. To assess the level of professional identity of local government employees in terms of knowledge and philosophy of the profession, roles and expertise, attitude, engagement behavior, and interaction.
3. To ascertain the level of quality of work life of LGU employees in Region XI regarding adequate and fair compensation, use of capacities at work, occupied space by the work in life, working conditions, opportunities at work, constitutionalism at work, and social relevance and importance of work.
4. To ascertain the level of employee satisfaction among local government employees in selected cities in Region XI concerning leadership and planning, corporate culture and communication, role in the organization, work environment, relationship with immediate supervisor, training, development, and resources, pay and benefits, and overall employment experience.
5. To determine the relationship between public leadership roles, professional identity, employee satisfaction, quality of work life, and employee satisfaction.
6. To determine the significant influence of public leadership roles, professional identity, and quality of work life on employee satisfaction.
7. To determine which independent variables in this study can best predict employee satisfaction.

HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant relationship between public leadership roles and employee satisfaction, professional identity and employee satisfaction, and quality of work-life and employee satisfaction.
2. There is no significant influence of public leadership roles, professional identity, and quality of work life on employee satisfaction.
3. There is no best-fit structural model for employee satisfaction.

METHODS

This quantitative study examined the interrelationships of the variables. It used descriptive statistics, such as the mean and standard deviation, to describe the levels of the variables. Also, it used inferential statistics, like the Pearson r to determine the significance of the relationship between variables and multiple regression analysis to determine the strength and significance of the



predictor variables to the relationship [13], [14]. The study utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to generate the best-fit model for employee satisfaction. Studies that wanted to build structural models use structural equation modeling [15], [16]. SEM can attribute the relationships of variables between the observed and unobserved constructs and provide valid and meaningful results [17], [18], [19], [20]. Aside from attributing relationships of variables, SEM can also find out the factors that establish the causal relationship between and among dependent and independent variables in varying scale levels using mathematical models and theories [21], [22], [23], [24], [25]. SEM provides consistency in research where the goodness of fit is necessary [26], [27], [28], [29].

Through a stratified random sampling, the researcher recruited 400 regular government employees in the LGUs of Davao, Digos, Mati, Panabo, Samal, and Tagum to participate in the survey. The study included only the regular employees because they were the ones who could give accurate answers to the questionnaire considering their length of service. Moreover, included were only those employees under the office of the local chief executive.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1
Public Leadership Roles of Local Government Employees in Region XI

Indicator	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Accountability Leadership	4.40	0.52	Very High
Rule-Following Leadership	4.33	0.52	Very High
Political Loyalty Leadership	4.01	0.58	High
Network Governance Leadership	4.01	0.53	High
Overall	4.19	0.48	High

The data on the public leadership roles of LGU employees in Region XI are in Table 1. Accountability leadership and rule-following leadership got very high mean scores, ($M=4.40$; $SD=0.52$) and ($M=4.33$; $SD=0.52$), respectively. The result denotes that their supervisors knew of their accountability as leaders and followed the organization's rules. However, the high mean scores in political loyalty ($M=4.01$; $SD=0.58$) and network governance leadership ($M=4.01$; $SD=0.53$) indicate that their supervisor encouraged them to be loyal to the political leadership and policies they implement. In addition, although their supervisors gave them the freedom to decide on the issue of loyalty, their supervisor encouraged them to build a network of human connections inside and outside the organization.

Statements under accountability leadership have this gist: the supervisor explains employees' actions, behavior, and way of working with stakeholders. On the other hand, statements regarding rule-following leadership have centered on the importance of obeying laws, rules and regulations, and government policies and procedures. Likewise, statements under political leadership include support for political decisions, good relationships with political heads, implementing political decisions, and defending political choices despite downsides and shortcomings. Finally, supervisors encouraged employees to build contacts outside their organization under network governance.

Meanwhile, the high mean score in public leadership roles suggests that somehow employees shy away from accountability, rule-following leadership, political loyalty leadership, and network governance leadership. Research shows that accountability is essential in all societies and organizations in this world. However, corporate scandals happen because of accountability failures. Business leaders have to be accountable [30], [31].



Table 2
Professional Identity of Local Government Employees in Region XI

Indicator	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Knowledge of the Profession	4.64	0.39	Very High
Philosophy of the Profession	4.49	0.43	Very High
Professional Roles & Expertise	4.33	0.49	Very High
Attitude	4.34	0.45	Very High
Engagement Behavior	4.47	0.41	Very High
Interaction	4.64	0.38	Very High
Overall	4.48	0.37	Very High

Table 2 exhibits the very high mean scores of professional identity data of local government employees in Region XI. The overall mean score is 4.48, with a standard deviation of 0.37. The result suggests that the respondents always believed and demonstrated the behavior stipulated in the survey statements. Moreover, the standard deviation scores depict that responses were almost the same in all the statements because the standard scores are small, suggesting that they are not far from the mean.

Professional identity has these statements. Under knowledge of the profession (M=4.64; SD=0.39), it talks about the profession's origins, milestones, ethics, similarities and differences from other professions, and familiarities with the laws and regulations of the profession. The philosophy of the profession (M=4.49; SD=0.43) says that the respondents always believe that public service is a noble profession, fair treatment of clients, giving the public quality service, positive interaction with clients to produce positive results, and respect for clients.

Additionally, the manifest variable, professional roles, and expertise got a very high mean score of 4.33, with a standard deviation of 0.49. The result denotes that respondents strongly value professional roles and that regardless of their role, their goal is always the welfare of their clients. Moreover, under attitude (M=4.34; SD=0.45), the respondents strongly agreed that their profession provides unique and valuable services to society and are optimistic about their profession's advancement and future. They strongly feel that their life revolves around their profession and that their personality and beliefs match their characteristics and values. As for engagement behavior, it got a very high mean score of 4.47 and a standard deviation of 0.41. Interaction also got a very high mean score of 4.64, with a standard deviation of 0.38. The results indicate that respondents have always interacted with others in the workplace.

Moreover, the exceptionally high premium that employees put on professional identity affirmed the findings of other studies. Research shows that professional identity is essential because it can affect the ethics of decision-making [32]. Without knowledge of the profession, philosophy, professional roles, expertise, attitude, engagement behavior, and interaction, employees can go wrong in performing their job or decisions. Professional identity does not mean confinement within the boundaries of the profession without sharing knowledge from the outside. Empirical evidence proves that dismantling professional boundaries and collaborating with other professionals can lead to more innovative ideas and higher success rates [33]. A high-level professional identity can hinder turnover mediated by job satisfaction [34].

Table 3
Quality of Work Life of Local Government Employees

Indicator	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Adequate and Fair Compensation	4.54	0.49	Very High
Use of Capacities at Work	4.33	0.54	Very High
Occupied Space by the Work in Life	3.89	0.60	High
Working Conditions	3.89	0.66	High
Opportunities at Work	4.15	0.63	High



Constitutionalism at Work	4.16	0.58	High
Social Relevance and Importance of Work	3.89	0.66	High
Overall	4.12	0.47	High

Table 3 shows the data on the quality of work life of the local government employees. Unlike the first two indicators that got very high mean scores, the quality of work life's overall mean score was high only (M=4.12; SD=0.47). This mean score signifies that the respondents have often been satisfied with the quality of their work life.

However, looking at the individual results, two got very high mean scores of the seven manifest variables for quality of work life. Adequate and fair compensation (M=4.54; SD=0.49) and use of capacities at work (M=4.33; SD=0.54). The results indicate that the respondents have always been satisfied with their salaries, the rewards they received from the company, and the extra benefits the company offers. Moreover, they were delighted with their autonomy at work, tasks, performance feedback, and responsibilities.

On the other hand, five of the seven indicators of quality of work life got high mean scores: occupied space by the work in life (M=3.89; SD=0.60), working conditions (M=3.89; SD=0.66), opportunities at work (M=4.15; SD=0.63), constitutionalism at work (M=4.16; SD=0.58), and social relevance and importance of work (M=3.89; SD=0.66).

As for the quality of work-life, the result was high only. The result signifies that the employees long for adequate and fair compensation, use of capacities at work, occupied space by the work in life, working conditions, opportunities at work, constitutionalism at work, and social relevance and importance of work. Research shows that the work environment impacts the quality of work-life and job satisfaction [35], [36].

Table 4
Satisfaction of Local Government Employees

Indicator	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Leadership and Planning	4.55	0.49	Very High
Corporate Culture and Communication	4.65	0.46	Very High
Role in the Organization	4.47	0.48	Very High
Work Environment	4.48	0.51	Very High
Relationship with Immediate Supervisor	3.92	0.65	High
Training, Development, and Resources	4.50	0.50	Very High
Pay and Benefits	4.45	0.50	Very High
Overall Employment Experience	4.52	0.46	Very High
Overall	4.44	0.40	Very High

Table 4 presents the data on the satisfaction of local government employees. Again, the overall result was very high at M=4.44, with a standard deviation of 0.40. The standard score indicates that the responses were almost identical, so the data is around the mean. Only one of the eight satisfaction indicators got a high mean score of 3.92, with a standard deviation of 0.65. This result denotes that the respondents were not very satisfied with their relationship with their immediate supervisor.

However, for the rest of the indicators, they rated them very highly, which means that they are delighted with the leadership and planning (M=4.55; SD=0.49), corporate culture and communication (M=4.65; SD=0.46), role in the organization (M=4.47; SD=0.48), work environment (M=4.48; SD=0.51), training, development, and resources (M=4.50; SD=0.50), pay and benefits (M=4.45; SD=0.50), and overall employment experience (M=4.52; SD=0.46).

Employee satisfaction is crucial because it increases productivity, responsiveness, and service quality [37]. For decades researchers have investigated the factors that could predict employee satisfaction, suggesting the importance of the subject matter in the organization's sustainability. Moreover, employee satisfaction comes with job involvement as it increases the quality and quantity of work results [38]. Thus, employees must get the chance to participate in decision-making, task interdependence, and get workgroup support to result in satisfaction. Satisfied employees become loyal to the organization and abandon their plans to leave it [39], [40].



Table 5
Relationship between the Exogenous Latent and Endogenous Latent Variables

Exogenous Variables	Endogenous Variable (Employee Satisfaction)								Overall
	LAP	CCC	RIO	WET	RIS	TRD	PAB	OEE	
Leadership	.505**	.477**	.514**	.484**	.452**	.485**	.492**	.409**	.605**
Roles	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Professional Identity	.618**	.583**	.561**	.534**	.447**	.632**	.603**	.572**	.716**
Quality of Work Life	.468**	.436**	.474**	.476**	.433**	.395**	.454**	.426**	.565**
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Legend: LAP – Leadership and planning

RIS – Relationship with immediate supervisor

CCC – Corporate culture and communication

TRD – Training, development, and resources

RIO – Role in the organization

PAB – Pay and benefits

WET – Work environment

OEE – Overall employment experience

Table 5 displays the result of the correlation test between the exogenous and endogenous latent variables. The data in Table 5 show the significant correlation between all three exogenous variables with employee satisfaction. The data show that all exogenous variables, namely, leadership roles, professional identity, and quality of work life, correlate significantly with employee satisfaction. Professional identity and employee satisfaction have a correlation coefficient of .716 at p-value .000. This means that the increase in professional identity through its manifest variables, namely, knowledge of the profession, philosophy of the profession, professional roles of expertise, attitude, engagement behavior, and interaction would also increase employee satisfaction. Similarly, the increase in leadership roles would also increase employee satisfaction, as indicated by its correlation coefficient of .605, with a p-value of .000. The same is true for the quality of work life. The correlation coefficient between the quality of work life and employee satisfaction ($r=.565$; $p\text{-value}=.000$) suggests that employee satisfaction also tends to increase as the quality of work life increases.

Public leadership roles and employee satisfaction are significantly correlated, just as professional identity and employee satisfaction. Similarly, the quality of work-life and employee satisfaction are correlated. For example, Tummers and Knies (2016)[41] found accountability leadership, rule-following leadership, political loyalty leadership, and network governance leadership as the four scales of public leadership roles. In addition, leadership styles contribute to employees' satisfaction, which is congruent with leadership roles [42].

Furthermore, professional identity can enhance job satisfaction and work engagement. With job satisfaction, employees forget about turnover [43], [44], [45]. Even in the medical field, professional identity strongly correlates with job satisfaction, even with a commitment to the organization [46], [47].

Moreover, the quality of work-life is one crucial factor of job satisfaction [48]. Asharini, Hardyastuti, and Irham (2018)[49] also affirmed the role of work-life quality in attaining job satisfaction. These two would also result in better job performance. That is because employees experiencing the quality of work-life become motivated to work and perform better [50]. In any field of employment, quality of work-life is a function of job satisfaction and job performance, even for organizational commitment [51], [52], [53], [54].

Table 6
Influence of Leadership Roles, Professional Identity, and Quality of Work Life on the Employee Satisfaction among Local Government Employees

Exogenous Variables	Endogenous Variable (Professionalism)			
	B	β	t	Sig.
Constant	.686		4.272	.000
Leadership Roles	.150	.180	4.007	.000
Professional Identity	.543	.508	12.296	.000
Quality of Work Life	.169	.202	4.851	.000
	R	.766		
	R ²	.586		
	ΔR	.583		
	F	187.217		
	ρ	.000		



Table 6 presents the influence of leadership roles, professional identity, and quality of work life on employee satisfaction. The data in the table suggests that the combined influence of the exogenous latent variables is 58.3 percent ($\Delta R=.583$). The adjusted R-square becomes necessary because the model has three independent variables for a more detailed correlation view. The presence of more variables in the model adjusts the value of the r-squared. Notably, the adjusted R2 (ΔR) is always lesser or equal to the value of the R2.

Moreover, the coefficient of determination (R^2) suggests that each independent variable can explain the variation in employee satisfaction by 58.6 percent ($R^2=.586$). R-squared helps analyze data with slight or no bias, usually with a single independent and dependent variable. The coefficient of correlation ($R=.766$) affirms the solid linear relationship of the independent variables with employee satisfaction.

Essentially, the F-value of 187.217, with a p-value of .000, ensures the predictive capability of the exogenous latent variables (leadership roles, professional identity, and quality of work life) in influencing the satisfaction of the local government employees. Furthermore, the F and p-values also reject the null hypothesis of no significant influence of leadership roles, professional identity, and quality of work life on employee satisfaction. Simply put, the value of F (187.217), which is significant at $p<0.5$, reveals the capacity of leadership roles, professional identity, and quality of work life to influence employee satisfaction.

Public leadership roles, like accountability, influence employee satisfaction [55]. Although, accountability pressures can diminish employee morale because it undermines the goals of improving performance and equity in the workplace [56]. Schwarz, Eva, & Newman (2020)[57] declared that accountability, rule-following, political loyalty, and network governance leadership could significantly influence public service motivation, job satisfaction, and job performance, suggesting that managers encourage public employees to initiate access to relevant information technical expertise, and resources not available within the organization.

Congruently, professional identity influences employee satisfaction and enhances job performance [43],[13], [45]. Also, the quality of work-life influences job satisfaction [49], [35]. Sari et al. (2019)[50] claimed that employees experiencing a quality work-life become motivated to do their tasks. Expectedly, adequate, and fair compensation can influence employee satisfaction [58], [59]. Jabeen, Friesen, and Ghoudi (2018)[60] found that the quality of work-life such as adequate and fair compensation, use of capacities at work, occupied space by the work in life, working conditions, opportunities at work, constitutionalism at work, and social relevance and importance of work have a positive influence on employee job satisfaction and a negative effect on turnover. In other words, having a quality work-life will abandon the plans of leaving the job for another because employees find security, growth, and development in their work.

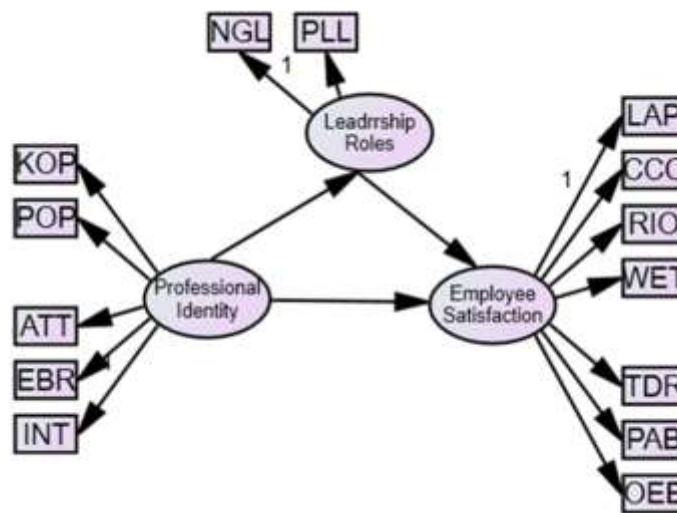


Figure 1. The Best-Fit Structural Model for Employee Satisfaction

**Legend:***ALP – accountability leadership**RFL – rule-following leadership**PLL – political loyalty leadership**NGL – network governance leadership**KOP – knowledge of the profession**POP – philosophy of the profession**PRE – professional roles and expertise**AAT - attitude**EBR – engagement behavior**INT – interaction**LAP – leadership and planning**CCC – corporate culture and communication**RIO – role in the organization**WET – work environment**TDR – training, development and resources**PAB – pay and benefits**OEE – overall employment experience***Table 7**
Values obtained for the Best-Fit Model

INDEX	CRITERION	MODEL FIT VALUE
Probability Value (P-value)	> 0.05	.115
Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom (CMIN/DF)	0 < value < 2	1,245
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	> 0.95	.978
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	> 0.95	.998
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	> 0.95	.988
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	> 0.95	.995
Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA)	< 0.05	.025
P of Close Fit (P-Close)	> 0.05	.992

Figure 1 displays the best-fit model for employee satisfaction, having met all the goodness of fit criteria presented in Table 8. The model displayed in Figure 3 shows only public leadership roles and professional identity as predictors of employee satisfaction. SEM analysis discarded the quality-of-life variable from the equation. The model's manifest variables of public leadership roles are political loyalty leadership (PLL) and network governance leadership (NGL). In contrast, the manifest variables for professional identity are knowledge of the profession (KOP), philosophy of the profession (POP), attitude (ATT), engagement behavior (EBR), and interaction (INT). These two exogenous variables with their manifest variables could only predict employee satisfaction with these indicators: leadership and planning (LAP), corporate culture and communication (CCC), role in the organization ((RIO), work environment (WET), training, development, and resources (TDR), pay and benefits (PAB), and overall employment experience (OEE).

CONCLUSION

LGU employees have very high levels of professional identity and employee satisfaction, while their public leadership roles and quality of work-life levels are high. Public leadership roles, professional identity, and quality of work life have positive, strong, and significant relationships with employee satisfaction. Also, the combined rate of influence of public leadership roles, professional identity, and quality of work-life on employee satisfaction is 58.3%. Public leadership roles (indicated by NGL & PLL) and professional identity (indicated by KOP, POP, ATT, EBR, & INT) are predictors of employee satisfaction.

The findings suggest that there should be regular monitoring of employees to check whether they are functioning according to their roles. In addition, the HRMO may need to revisit employees' job descriptions for proper alignment. Moreover, regular updating of employees' dossiers is vital so that even if employees do not apply for ranking and reclassification, the HRMO can determine whether an employee needs reranking and reclassification to enjoy the benefits. This process can motivate employees to work harder and happier. Additionally, organizations must give all employees equal opportunities to grow and become motivated to serve the public. They can do this through seminars and training, benchmarking, and scholarship grants for advanced studies. Moreover, other researchers can replicate this study in other regions to test the consistency of this study's employee satisfaction model.

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