



Phronetic Leadership and Public Values of Elected Local Government Officials: Its Implications for Ethical and Moral Standards

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ABSTRAK

In an era where effective governance demands more than administrative acumen, this study investigates the pivotal role of phronetic leadership in fostering ethical and moral standards among elected local government officials in Zambales, Philippines. Phronetic leadership emerged as a crucial paradigm, emphasizing the cultivation of practical wisdom in decision-making processes. This study explored the relationship between phronetic leadership and public values among elected local government officials in Zambales, Philippines, to enhance ethical and moral standards in governance. Employing a descriptive-correlational research design with 156 respondents, the researchers used a structured questionnaire to analyze phronetic leadership and public values among local government officials. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the collected data using SPSS 29. Findings revealed that elected local government officials consistently practice creating shared context, communicating the essence and equity and fairness, while grasping the essence, exercising political power, and fostering political wisdom; they also face challenges in maintaining moral clarity under pressure and in promoting structural equity. Although public values such as justice and service orientation were strongly upheld in practice, weak correlations were found between individual phronetic leadership traits and specific governance outcomes. The analysis showed that leadership traits alone did not strongly influence public values in governance. This means that a more complete approach to governance is needed. This approach should focus on ethical leadership but also include support from institutions, citizen involvement, and the ability to respond to complex social and political issues.



INTRODUCTION

In contemporary governance, the pursuit of effective leadership extended beyond mere administrative expertise. In this highly competitive society, where change was the only constant, the capacity for leadership and practical knowledge appeared to be on the brink of extinction, especially among elected local government officials. At this point, it is important to evaluate elected local government officials who have a strong understanding of how to apply phronetic leadership and public values. Phronetic leadership emerged as a crucial paradigm, emphasizing the cultivation of practical wisdom in decision-making processes. Aristotle's concept of phronetic leadership involved practical wisdom, integrated with practical knowledge and ethical considerations, to make wise decisions in complex situations. At its core, phronesis, rooted in Aristotelian philosophy, encapsulates the ability to discern and enact what is virtuous and beneficial for the community. Rocha and Pinheiro (2022) emphasized that practical wisdom, or phronesis, was a vital yet often overlooked component in responsible knowledge management. Founded on Aristotelian ethics, they argued that practical wisdom enabled leaders to make morally sound decisions grounded in experiences and values, especially during times of uncertainty. With the term (*techne*), technical knowledge or theoretical understanding (*episteme*), phronesis was context-sensitive and ethical. Through thoughtful, morally motivated action, leaders were able to reconcile conflicting organizational objectives across social, environmental, and economic fronts. According to Aristotle's study and a thorough bibliometric analysis, phronesis was increasingly acknowledged in the academic literature on knowledge management, corporate social responsibility, and ethical leadership. Similarly, Martín-de-Castro and Montoro-Sánchez (2018) stated that phronetic leadership refers to taking the best action in a specific situation to serve the common good, a concept originating in the contributions of Plato and Aristotle, who valued practical wisdom.

From a global perspective, studies claimed that phronetic leadership is helpful in many ways. It helps with ethics, new ideas, and good leadership. Bostanli (2023) studied leaders who used phronesis. These leaders were good at talking with others, staying humble, listening well, and understanding many views. This is like what Nonaka and Takeuchi said. They believed leaders must deeply understand each situation and help people work together. Vanharanta and others (2020) made a tool to study phronetic leadership. They used fuzzy logic and the Wisdom Cube. Their tool helps leaders understand what is good in each case. Rocha and Pinheiro (2022) also proposed that integrating organizational spirituality and organizational phronesis theories in management research to address the phronetic workplace. They put forth a research agenda to promote the incorporation of phronesis into organizational procedures through instruments such as reflective learning, mentoring, and ethical storytelling. This strategy encouraged sustainable, ethical decision-making at all organizational levels and helped develop wisdom among staff members. In complex governance and leadership environments, their work reaffirmed the notion that knowledge creation and use should be efficient, ethically sound, and socially responsible. It can contribute substantially to understanding phronesis in management, addressing group behavior and how individual phronesis spreads into the workplace towards the phronetic organization.

In Asia, Chouhan and Mehta (2022) demonstrated phronetic leadership through employee interactions and ethical decision-making in governance. Khan et al. (2020) reiterated that participation and transparency are two important factors for building trust in communities. Through these abilities, local leaders can respond to any situation and flexibly think of an appropriate solution to any situation or change in the environment.

In the Philippine context, phronetic leadership has been used across various settings, including indigenous, educational, and



government contexts. Gonzales (2024) applied the knowledge-creation theory's principle of phronetic leadership to explain the innovation process within a local government. They examine situations in which phronetic leadership abilities can facilitate knowledge synthesis within local government. They further revealed that the Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internationalization (SECI) processes manifest during the development and implementation of the 3S program, and the chief executive is the most important driver of the knowledge conversion. In the study by Mangaoang (2021), it was elaborated that one of the most important aspects of phronetic leadership is the ability to make rational decisions, particularly in ambiguous circumstances. When making these judgments, the long-term benefit takes precedence over the immediate. Brillantes and Perante-Calina (2018) argued that the common good is grounded in integrity, even in the absence of a leadership handbook or guidelines. Hence, phronetic leaders are renowned for their practical decision-making abilities, grounded not only in theoretical knowledge but also in a deep understanding of the practical consequences of their decisions. With this, adaptability and flexibility are innate characteristics of these leaders, as they continue to be open to modifying their plans in response to feedback and continuously changing.

Research in the Philippines follows the values in Republic Act No. 6713, the "Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees." This law focuses on integrity, accountability, and service. It requires the following values: fairness, justice, transparency, the common good, respectful service, and responsibility through ethical conduct. These principles turn public values into clear rules for practicing public service.

Studies worldwide highlight the importance of universal values such as ethical decision-making and innovation, often using advanced tools like fuzzy logic. Regional studies in the Philippines focus on sustainability, digital governance, and citizen involvement. Asian

studies focused on community trust and knowledge sharing, while Philippine studies showed localized application but were limited in scope. The predominance of literature from industrialized countries and limited local research presented a research gap. Therefore, this study aimed to fill that gap by assessing how elected local government officials in the Philippines, specifically in Zambales, practice phronetic leadership qualities and public values.

The significance of phronetic leadership and public values is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Ethical governance supported SDG 16, community leadership supported SDG 11, and phronesis in poverty and education supported SDGs 1, 4, and 13. Collaborative practices that promoted SDG 17. Phronetic leadership empowered local leaders to address ethical dilemmas while fostering trust.

Nonaka and Hirotaka (2011) also highlighted the essential talents necessary for effective leadership, notably the ability to navigate difficult situations with wisdom and moral values. To identify decisions that are helpful for the organization and society, leaders need to go beyond simply following the rules and instead prioritize the welfare of society over the personal interests of individual members. The ability to really understand the heart of issues and to perceive the situation from a larger perspective are both necessary elements of good leadership. Through open communication, the process of creating shared context involves promoting collective understanding and collaboration among diverse groups. Phronetic leaders are exceptional not only in their ability to comprehend difficult situations but also in their capacity to persuade others to act through narratives and easy-to-understand language. It has presented six abilities of a phronetic leader in which they are: 1) judging goodness, 2) grasping the essence, 3) creating shared context, 4) communicate the essence, 5) exercising political power in a way that it unites the people to take action on a specific situation,



and 6) foster political wisdom within the organization to let the members utilize it. Through these abilities, leaders can respond to any situation and flexibly create an appropriate solution or adapt to changes in the environment.

Phronesis is characterized by the ability to apply practical knowledge and wise decisions and interests, prioritize the common good, and act with moral integrity and practical effectiveness. Phronetic leadership qualities emerge as a crucial paradigm, emphasizing the cultivation of practical wisdom in decision-making processes. Most of the reviewed literature originated in European and American contexts, with limited Asian and Philippine contributions. These findings identify research gaps, especially the lack of comprehensive frameworks for assessing phronetic leadership among elected officials. Thus, this study aimed to explicitly explore phronetic leadership and public values within local governments, highlighting elected officials' experiences, challenges, and measures. It sought to assess the key phronetic leadership qualities such as judging goodness, grasping essence, creating shared context, exercising political power, and fostering practical wisdom. The aim was to develop an emergent framework to enhance moral and ethical standards for local leaders, grounded in real-world insights, offering a roadmap for cultivating ethical decision-making. This study aimed to contribute to local governance by empowering elected officials to practice phronetic leadership, uphold moral standards, enhance public trust, and advance community well-being.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To better understand the research variable, phronetic leadership was conceptualized within the context of the Theory of Organizational Knowledge Creation and Knowledge-based Management by Ikujiro Nonaka and colleagues (1994). He proposed a paradigm for managing the dynamic aspects of the organizational knowledge creation process. According to the theory, organizational

knowledge is created through a continuous dialogue between tacit and explicit knowledge. The theory presented four patterns of interaction involving tacit and explicit knowledge. It also argued that while new knowledge is developed by individuals, organizations play a critical role in articulating and amplifying that knowledge. This study also drew on behavioral leadership theory (Drew 2023), which posits that effective leaders engage in specific behaviors that improve team performance. The focus of behavioural theories is on identifying the specific actions that effective leaders display. The behavioural theory of leadership posits that effective leaders engage in specific behaviours that improve team performance and can be taught to others. The focus of behavioural theories is identifying the different specific actions that effective leaders display and modelling those traits to others. This often involves constructing a clear and explicit taxonomy of what effective leaders do.

Steyn and Sewchurran (2021) said leaders must learn phronesis. They said this will help leaders be more responsible. Ames et al. (2020) said that phronesis, along with moral virtues and the common good, helps improve understanding of ethics. In a previous study by Contu (2023), phronesis is a pragmatic, measured rationality that comprises prudence, a sensitivity to context, openness to dialogue, and openness to the other. It also calls for an open and flexible association with error and with changing one's mind. Also, the focus is not on the leader itself but on the relationship, differences, and opportunities, and on what everyone involved in the decision-making process can offer when listening and learning from one another. Santos and Serafim (2022) also discussed that some of the elements of phronesis are perceptible and contribute to the ethical decision-making process in view of the possibilities of limiting moral judgement, the affective dimension, the need for mediation, and the will to act with compassion, counselling as a reflective element, and the memory and learning from past experiences. They also



concluded that when conditions for moral judgement are not favorable, and there are limiting factors, a context of insecurity, and a purpose of protecting human life may help to develop an enlightened knowledge for the individual exposed to reviews, education, and clarification about the social, political, and organizational context to which she or he belongs.

In contrast, Hadjimichael and Tsoukas (2022) argued that improvisation is phronetic, as practitioners actively care for the valued ends of an individual's practice in the field. Specifically, practitioners seek to phronetically fulfil the internal goods of their practice while complying with institutional demands in the context of coping with situational exigencies. They also explained that phronetic improvisation involves paying attention to what is salient in the situation at hand, while being informed by an open-ended commitment to valued ends, constrained by scarce resources, and driven by a willingness to meet what is at stake by adapting general knowledge to situational demands.

Studies from Europe contextualized phronetic leadership within sustainability, social cohesion, and digital governance. As indicated by Vries and Nemeč (2019), leaders are balancing practical wisdom and public values to achieve effective governance, particularly in urban planning and sustainability. Vanharanta et al. (2021) presented phronesis as rational, dynamic, and value-driven. Mergel et al. (2019) identified the role of phronetic leadership in balancing innovation and public values. On the other hand, Shapcott (2018) from the University of Cambridge explained that phronesis is not a form of practical reasoning but rather an ethical reasoning derived from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. This mirrors the means and ends at stake in any situation involving a decision and an action. De Dreu et al. (2018) state that in the modern, complex environment, companies demand leadership that goes beyond mere competence. Before they can be considered, leaders must be able to manage

ethical challenges and make decisions that are not only effective but also morally sound. At this point, the idea of ethical phronesis becomes relevant and emerges.

In the paper by Mergel and colleagues (2019), the authors highlighted the essence of phronetic leadership, particularly in digital governance, emphasizing the need for leaders to balance technological innovation with public values (e.g., transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness). According to the study, local leaders must manage intricate power dynamics and ensure that major initiatives benefit the public. As cited by Moynihan and Pandey (2016), ethical leadership in local government entails preserving public values such as accountability, equity, and transparency. To ensure their choices reflect the interests and well-being of the community they serve, leaders must take these values seriously. Public values serve as a guiding compass, helping local leaders navigate difficult situations and make wise decisions consistent with the priorities and values of the society they represent. Public values are fundamental components that influence transparency and effective, good local governance structures for the common good, whether they are used in policymaking, public service delivery, or resource allocation. The same perspective was stated in the paper of Boin et al. (2019) wherein equity and fairness, justice, transparency and accountability, the common good, service oriented, sustainability, and responsiveness, all of which are necessary for the advancement of democratic governance and the promotion, public values play a crucial role in local government decision-making, significantly shaping policies and actions that have direct impacts on communities were highlighted substantially.

Thus, phronesis practice entails more than just adhering to rules or goals. It refers to the process of applying one's practical knowledge to arrive at ethical conclusions in a specific situation. It is not a luxury to engage in phronesis; rather, it is an absolute necessity for effective leadership in local governance. This provides leaders with the necessary abilities



and knowledge to manage complex ethical and moral dilemmas effectively.

METHODS

Research Design

This study on phronetic leadership and public values of elected local government officials in Zambales employed a descriptive-correlation research design. Quantitative data collection and analysis provide a broad description of trends, associations, or patterns within a large population. This process is usually used to test hypotheses or to measure variables using questionnaires or structured surveys.

Participants

The study was conducted in the Province of Zambales, located in Region 3 and occupying the central portion of the island of Luzon, Philippines. It has 13 municipalities: Subic, Castillejos, San Marcelino, San Antonio, San Narciso, San Felipe, Cabangan, Botolan, Iba, Candelaria, Palauig, Masinloc, Sta. Cruz. The municipality of Iba serves as the provincial capital.

Using the purposive sampling technique, the researchers carefully selected a group of elected local government officials to gather useful information. The group included thirteen municipal mayors, thirteen municipal vice mayors, and one hundred thirty municipal councilors, along with the elected presidents of the Sangguniang Kabataan Federation and Barangay Captain Federation. In total, 156 people were chosen.

The study included representatives from various types of local government officials to obtain diverse perspectives from across Zambales. Municipal Mayors and vice mayors, who handled executive roles, shared important information about policies and leadership experiences, challenges, and measures. Municipal councilors, who help create local laws, offered a deeper understanding of governance. This helped the researcher learn more about the experiences of local officials in the province.

Instrument

For an extensive study on Phronetic Leadership and the Public Values of Elected Local Government Officials, a researcher-designed research tool was developed to provide a well-rounded picture of the situation. Basically, it had closed-ended questions, Likert scales, and questions about personal details. These helped the researchers collect and study the data more easily. The survey focused on two main topics: phronetic leadership qualities and public values. The questions were made to assess how well officials make decisions (phronetic leadership) and how well they understand their community's needs. The survey also examined their commitment to core public values such as fairness, justice, transparency, accountability, and good governance.

To ensure the survey tool was valid and reliable, the researchers sought input from experts in public administration and leadership. These experts helped create the Content Validity Index (CVI) for the survey. The experts were from the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Gordon College, and the City College of Angeles. After incorporating expert feedback, the researcher tested the survey with 25 people not part of the main study. This helped assess the survey's reliability. A Cronbach's Alpha test was used to assess the survey's reliability, with a score of 0.70 or higher considered good. Outside reliability was also tested using convergent validity.

Data Collection

To start data collection, an approved letter was obtained from the Graduate School Dean to conduct the study across the thirteen municipalities, specifically targeting elected local government officials. The researcher also sought the assistance of the Regional Director, Provincial Director, and City of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Region III to facilitate the conduct of the study.

The survey instrument consisted of a questionnaire designed for data collection. The researcher personally presented the approved



letter to the elected local government officials in the municipalities of Zambales. The letter included a formal request for permission to conduct the study and instructions for completing the questionnaire. For convenience, the researcher provided a Google Form link that allowed respondents to complete the questionnaire online. The respondents were given ample time to complete the questionnaire to ensure the validity and accuracy of their responses. The completed questionnaires were automatically retrieved from Google Forms. After receiving a 100% response rate from respondents within the given period, the researcher proceeded to compute scores and conduct the necessary statistical analyses. Subsequently, the researcher scheduled interviews with selected local government officials to gather qualitative data for the study.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data collected from hard-copy surveys and Google Forms were refined in Microsoft Excel 2019. Subsequently, further statistical analyses were performed using the PS Imago Pro-Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM-SPSS v.29). The process followed a series of systematic procedures.

Firstly, the Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to assess the normality of the data distribution. If the data approximated a normal distribution, parametric procedures were applied; otherwise, non-parametric methods were used.

Secondly, the profile of the respondents was described using Frequency and Percentage Distribution, focusing on variables such as age, sex at birth, civil status, educational attainment, years or terms of office, and the number of leadership trainings and seminars attended during their term of office.

Thirdly, the Weighted Mean was computed to evaluate the assessment of phronetic leadership qualities, particularly in terms of Judging Goodness, Grasping the Essence, Creating Shared Context, Communicating the Essence, Exercising Political Power, and Fostering Political Wisdom. This

method was also used to describe the public values of the respondents, including equity and fairness, justice, transparency, accountability, the common good, service orientation, and responsibility.

Lastly, regression analysis was utilized as the primary statistical method to investigate the influence of specific phronetic leadership qualities on the public values of elected local government officials. Multiple linear regression was applied to determine the extent to which each leadership trait—Judging Goodness, Grasping the Essence, Communicating the Essence, Creating Shared Context, Exercising Political Power, and Fostering Political Wisdom—predicted justice-related public values. This approach allowed for the identification of significant predictors while controlling for the overlapping influence of other variables, thereby providing a clearer picture of the relative impact of each leadership quality.

To strengthen the reliability of the results and account for potential deviations from normality, bootstrapping with 5,000 samples was employed. This ensured robust confidence intervals and standard error estimates. The regression model's fit was assessed using indicators such as R^2 , adjusted R^2 , and significance levels, which together evaluated how well the leadership traits explained the variance in public values.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the overall mean and standard deviation distribution for the assessment of phronetic leadership qualities among elected local government officials. Creating Shared Context and Communicating the Essence stand out with the highest mean scores ($M=3.29$, $SD=0.60$; $M=3.35$, $SD=0.61$ respectively), categorized as "Always practiced," reflecting consistent demonstration of these qualities. Judging Goodness ($M=3.19$, $SD=0.60$), Grasping the Essence ($M=3.20$, $SD=0.62$), Exercising Political Power ($M=3.20$, $SD=0.66$), and Fostering Political Wisdom ($M=3.24$, $SD=0.6$) show slightly lower mean scores but



are still marked as "Often practiced." The aggregated mean of 3.25 suggests that officials frequently demonstrate the Phronetic Leadership Qualities. These findings imply widespread adherence to essential leadership traits, underscoring the importance of creating shared context, effective communication, and political wisdom in local governance, with room for further improvement in certain areas to ensure comprehensive, effective leadership practices among elected officials.

Table 1
Phronetic Leadership Qualities of Elected Local Government Officials

Leadership Qualities	Overall Mean	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
1. Judging Goodness	3.19	0.6	Often practiced
2. Grasping the Essence	3.20	0.6	Often practiced
3. Creating Shared Context	3.29	0.6	Always practiced
4. Communicating the Essence	3.35	0.6	Always practiced
5. Exercising Political Power	3.20	0.6	Often practiced
6. Fostering Political Wisdom	3.24	0.6	Often practiced
Aggregated Mean	3.25	0.6	Often practiced

Table 2 presents the overall mean and standard deviation distribution of the Public Values of Elected Local Government Officials. The most significant values are observed in Responsibility (Mean = 3.63, SD = 0.46), Justice (Mean = 3.46, SD = 0.57), and Common Good (Mean = 3.41, SD = 0.49), all of which are categorized as "Always practiced." These values reflect a strong commitment to fairness, justice, community welfare, and personal accountability among the officials. Additionally, Equity and Fairness and Service-Oriented values, with means of 3.40 (SD = 0.57) and 3.56 (SD = 0.44), respectively, both labelled as "Always practiced," demonstrate a dedication to

equality, fairness, and service-oriented leadership. However, Transparency and Accountability, with a mean of 3.14 (SD = 0.53), is categorized as "Often practiced," suggesting room for improvement in ensuring transparency and accountability within the local government's operations. The aggregated mean of 3.43 (SD = 0.51) indicates an overall tendency to often practice these public values, emphasizing the importance of continuous efforts to uphold accountability and transparency while maintaining a strong focus on responsibility, justice, and the common good.

Table 2
Public Values of Elected Local Government Officials

Public Values	Overall Mean	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
1. Equity and Fairness	3.40	0.57	Always practiced
2. Justice	3.46	0.57	Always practiced
3. Transparency and Accountability	3.14	0.53	Often practiced
4. Common Good	3.41	0.49	Always practiced
5. Service Oriented	3.56	0.44	Always practiced
6. Responsibility	3.63	0.46	Always practiced
Aggregated Mean	3.43	0.51	Often practiced

As shown in Table 3, the relationship between phronetic leadership qualities and public values among elected government officials was analyzed using Spearman's rho. Overall, the findings indicate that most relationships are weak and statistically non-significant, suggesting that individual leadership qualities alone may not strongly influence public values. Judging Goodness (JG) exhibited weak, primarily non-significant correlations with all public values, except for a significant, weak negative correlation with Responsibility (Res) [$r_s = -.190, p < .05$],



suggesting that excessive moral scrutiny might diminish officials' sense of accountability. Other associations between JG and values such as Equity and Fairness, Justice, Transparency, Common Good, and Service Orientation were weak and non-significant, implying limited direct influence of moral judgment.

Table 3
Relationship Between Phronetic Leadership Qualities and Public Values

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. JG	-											
2. GE	.217*	-										
3. CSC	-.018	.418*	-									
4. CE	.073	.193*	.252*	-								
5. EPP	.085	.459*	.101	.262*	-							
6. FPWO	-.059	.344*	.635*	.501*	-	-						
7. EF	.072	-.051	-.048	.028	-	-	-					
8. Jus	-.042	-.026	-.017	.199*	.010	.082	.453*	-				
9. TA	-.131	-.012	-.042	.105	-	-	.191*	.350*	-			
10. CG	-.044	-.071	-.055	.211*	.121	.022	.238*	.586*	.198*	-		
11. SO	-.012	.086	.014	.008	-	.045	.184*	.250*	.111	.123	-	
12. Res	-	-.054	-.058	.012	.038	-	.153	.261*	.165*	.185*	.038	-
	.190*				.031	.011						

Note: * $p < .05$; JG- Judging Goodness; GE- Grasping the Essence; CSC- Creating Shared Context; CE- Communicating the Essence; EPP- Exercising Political Power; FPWO- Fostering Political Wisdom to Others; EF- Equity and Fairness; Jus- Justice; TA- Transparency and Accountability; CG- Common Good; SO- Service Oriented; Res- Responsibility.

Similarly, Grasping the Essence (GE) showed consistently weak and non-significant correlations with all public values. While there were slight negative correlations with Equity, Justice, Common Good, and Responsibility, and weak positive correlations with Transparency and Service Orientation, the overall implication is that cognitive understanding of societal issues does not directly translate into fair, just, or service-oriented governance. Creating Shared Context (CSC) also demonstrated uniformly weak and non-significant

relationships with all public values. This suggests that while CSC may facilitate collaboration, it is insufficient on its own to enhance fairness, justice, transparency, or accountability in public service.

In contrast, Communicating the Essence (CE) revealed two significant findings. CE had a weak but statistically significant positive correlation with Justice [$r_s = .199, p < .05$] and with Common Good [$r_s = .211, p < .01$], suggesting that clear communication can slightly enhance perceptions of justice and alignment with collective goals. However, CE's correlations with Equity, Transparency, Service Orientation, and Responsibility remained weak and non-significant, indicating that communication alone is not a strong determinant of these values.

Exercising Political Power (EPP) and Fostering Political Wisdom to Others (FPWO) both showed weak, unimportant links to public values. This means that power and wisdom, when considered alone, do not strongly affect values such as fairness, justice, or honesty. These results show that effective leadership requires more than power or wisdom. Leaders must also be ethical, improve systems, and work with the people to support public values. To build strong, honest leadership, training should include moral reasoning, effective communication, clear thinking, and strong support from the system.

Table 4
Phronetic Leadership Qualities Predicting and Influencing Public Values of Elected Local Government Officials in Terms of Responsibilities with Significant Correlations

Variable	β	SE	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
(Constant)	3.854	.163	<.001	3.527	4.166
Judging Goodness	-0.074	.042	.080	-	0.009
Grasping The Essence	-0.024	.049	.619	-	0.068



Creating Shared Context	-0.021	.040	.59	-	0.055
Communicating The Essence	0.006	.038	.87	-	0.078
Exercising Political Power	0.039	.043	.36	-	0.130
Fostering Political Wisdom to Others	0.003	.050	.95	-	0.103

Note: Adjusted R² = .031 (n = 149, df = 6, F = .746, p = .613); 5000 sample bootstrapped

Table 4 presents the regression analysis results from 5000 bootstrapped samples, examining the influence of various phronetic leadership qualities on public values regarding responsibilities. The model demonstrates a weak fit (Adjusted R² = .031, F = .746, p = .613), explaining only 3.1% of the variance in responsibilities. This indicates that the predictors do not significantly influence the outcome (Cohen, 1988, 1992). The constant term is significant (β = 3.854, SE = .163, p < .001, 95% CI [3.527, 4.166]), suggesting that there is a substantial baseline value in predicting responsibilities that do not depend on the included phronetic leadership qualities. On the other hand, Judging Goodness (β = -0.074, SE = 0.042, p = .080, 95% CI [-0.158, 0.009]), Grasping the Essence (β = -0.024, SE = 0.049, p = .619, 95% CI [-0.124, 0.068]), Creating Shared Context (β = -0.021, SE = 0.040, p = .596, 95% CI [-0.102, 0.055]), Communicating the Essence (β = 0.006, SE = 0.038, p = .879, 95% CI [-0.070, 0.078]), Exercising Political Power (β = 0.039, SE = 0.043, p = .360, 95% CI [-0.038, 0.130]), and Fostering Political Wisdom to Others (β = 0.003, SE = 0.050, p = .957, 95% CI [-0.093, 0.103]) do not significantly predict or influence public values in terms of responsibilities. While these leadership qualities are theoretically important in shaping responsibility and leadership practices, their impact on elected officials' responsibility values appears minimal in this model. However, it is important to note that while these leadership qualities do not show significant effects, they are still widely

recognized as essential aspects of ethical leadership. Qualities such as good judgment and political wisdom are crucial for fostering responsible leadership, even if they do not appear to have a direct statistical influence in this model. Finally, the phronetic virtues of leadership are not significant predictors of public values about responsibilities in the tested model; however, their theoretical contribution to the ethical leadership literature is sustained. This underscores the need for deeper theoretical and empirical inquiry into leader characteristics, underscoring the salience of traits across different and subtler domains.

Table 5

Phronetic Leadership Qualities Predicting and Influencing Public Values of Elected Local Government Officials in Terms of Justice with Significant Correlations

Variable	β	SE	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
(Constant)	3.441	.455	.000	2.504	4.320
Judging Goodness	-0.064	.106	.538	-0.275	0.141
Grasping The Essence	-0.025	.117	.829	-0.259	0.203
Creating Shared Context	-0.106	.099	.292	-0.295	0.100
Communicating the Essence	0.196*	.089	.028	0.017	0.364
Exercising Political Power	-0.024	.104	.810	-0.229	0.181
Fostering Political Wisdom to Others	0.021	.105	.848	-0.178	0.234

Note: * p < .05 Adjusted R² = .059 (n = 149, df = 6, F = 1.477, p = .190); 5000 sample bootstrapped.

The regression analysis in Table 5, based on 5,000 bootstrapped samples, explored how phronetic leadership qualities influence the public values of justice among elected local government officials. The overall model demonstrated a weak fit (Adjusted R² = .059, F = 1.477, p = .190), accounting for only 5.9% of the



variance in justice-related public values. This indicates that the leadership qualities examined do not significantly predict perceptions of justice. However, the constant term was significant ($\beta = 3.441, p < .001$), suggesting that elected officials are generally perceived to uphold justice regardless of the specific leadership traits included, likely due to other factors like institutional norms or societal expectations. Among the leadership qualities, only Communicating the Essence emerged as a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.196, p = .028$), highlighting the importance of clear, ethical communication in shaping public perceptions of justice. Other qualities, such as Judging Goodness, Grasping the Essence, Creating Shared Context, Exercising Political Power, and Fostering Political Wisdom, did not show significant effects. This means that even if many leadership traits are important, clear and honest communication is very important for supporting justice in public service.

Table 6
Phronetic Leadership Qualities Predicting and Influencing Public Values of Elected Local Government Officials in Terms of Common Good with Significant Correlations

Variable	β	SE	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
(Constant)	3.341	.255	.000	2.855	3.850
Judging Goodness	-0.029	.061	.633	-0.150	0.091
Grasping The Essence	-0.082	.064	.195	-0.209	0.040
Creating Shared Context	-0.057	.065	.375	-0.178	0.077
Communicating the Essence	0.094	.054	.089	-0.017	0.198
Exercising Political Power	0.077	.059	.195	-0.037	0.194
Fostering Political Wisdom	0.017	.068	.803	-0.112	0.151

Others

Note: Adjusted $R^2 = .067$ ($n = 149, df = 6, F = 1.713, p = .122$); 5000 sample bootstrapped.

Table 6 presents the regression analysis results from 5000 bootstrapped samples, examining the influence of various phronetic leadership qualities on elected local government officials' public values regarding the common good. The model demonstrates a weak fit (Adjusted $R^2 = .067, F = 1.713, p = .122$), explaining only 6.7% of the variance in common good-related public values, suggesting that the included predictors do not significantly influence the outcome (Cohen, 1988, 1992). The significant result in the model is the constant ($\beta = 3.341, SE = .255, p < .001, 95\% CI [2.855, 3.850]$), indicating a strong baseline for predicting common good-related public values. This suggests that, irrespective of the included leadership qualities, there is a substantial inherent level of responsibility or commitment to the common good, influenced by factors beyond the specific leadership qualities tested in the model. This baseline value highlights the role of broader societal expectations and values in shaping perceptions of the common good.

However, the leadership qualities of Judging Goodness ($\beta = -0.029, SE = 0.061, p = .633, 95\% CI [-0.150, 0.091]$), Grasping the Essence ($\beta = -0.082, SE = 0.064, p = .195, 95\% CI [-0.209, 0.040]$), Creating Shared Context ($\beta = -0.057, SE = 0.065, p = .375, 95\% CI [-0.178, 0.077]$), Communicating the Essence ($\beta = 0.094, SE = 0.054, p = .089, 95\% CI [-0.017, 0.198]$), Exercising Political Power ($\beta = 0.077, SE = 0.059, p = .195, 95\% CI [-0.037, 0.194]$), and Fostering Political Wisdom to Others ($\beta = 0.017, SE = 0.068, p = .803, 95\% CI [-0.112, 0.151]$) do not significantly predict or influence public values related to the common good. These leadership qualities, while theoretically important, do not show a direct statistical influence on public values of the common good in this model. This suggests that while leadership qualities such as good judgment, the ability to understand complex issues, and political wisdom are essential for ethical



governance, their direct impact on shaping perceptions of the common good may be more nuanced and influenced by external or contextual factors. It is possible that other factors, such as the political environment, personal characteristics, or broader institutional frameworks, might play a more significant role in influencing public values in this area.

DISCUSSIONS

The study delves into phronetic leadership and public values among elected government officials, uncovering essential traits and practices. Officials stand out for actively seeking diverse viewpoints in decision-making, reflecting inclusive leadership qualities crucial for sound judgment and effective governance (Geschke et al., 2022; Dani & Gandhi, 2021). Prioritizing inclusivity boosts community engagement, trust-building, and ethical navigation, key to responsive and reliable government (Gonzales, 2024). While some uncertainty in challenging situations is evident, the overall prevalence of ethical judgment underscores its role in garnering public support and harmony (Jakobsen et al., 2023). Understanding community concerns enables officials to anticipate future challenges and opportunities, guiding proactive strategies that benefit constituents. Foresight, effective communication, and adaptability are crucial in contemporary leadership, emphasizing the need for early problem identification and community involvement (Dula et al., 2021; Touchant, 2022; Zekan et al., 2023). However, there is room for improvement in comprehensively grasping community values and needs. Enhanced engagement with diverse perspectives and technology can bolster leadership openness, strength, and responsiveness, fostering trust and effective problem-solving.

The study reveals trends in phronetic leadership qualities among local government officials. Emphasizing diverse communication channels showcases a commitment to inclusivity and transparency. However, a gap in prioritizing civic education is noted. The

findings indicate officials' adherence to ethical decision-making and responsible governance, reflecting a dedication to principled leadership and participatory democracy.

The study findings also highlighted a strong inclination among elected local government officials to use diverse communication channels, with a notable focus on engaging various audiences through platforms such as social media and town halls. Research stresses the significance of civic education in fostering informed participation and civic competence. The study generally observed widespread adherence to phronetic leadership qualities among officials, reflecting a collective commitment to ethical decision-making, effective communication, and responsible governance practices essential to inclusive and participatory governance.

Moreover, phronetic leadership in communicating the essence involves framing complex issues to align with community values and priorities, which is consistently practiced by elected officials. Conversely, adapting communication strategies based on feedback and evolving community needs was the least practiced. Hence, the study observed a prevalent adherence to strong communication practices among officials. Effective communication aligned with community values is crucial for enhancing leadership effectiveness, a sentiment echoed by Gonzales (2024). Adapting communication strategies based on feedback, as highlighted by Lamm (2023), presents challenges that leaders must navigate to sustain relevance and impact. The findings underscore the vital role of adaptable, value-aligned communication in fostering community trust and engagement, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of phronetic leadership (Banu et al., 2023).

Elected local government officials excel in building coalitions across political divides to advance solutions for the common good. Forming alliances across political lines is crucial for effective policymaking, particularly in politically divided contexts where cooperation is challenging yet essential for governance



(Swette et al., 2023). Conversely, advocating for potentially unpopular policies that prioritize long-term community well-being was the least practiced. This suggests leaders' hesitance to support unpopular yet beneficial policies, underscoring the dilemma between immediate satisfaction and long-term community welfare (Fossati et al., 2021). Despite the challenges, prioritizing long-term benefits aligns with sustainable leadership principles. The findings hereby underscore officials' consistent practice of exercising political power responsibly, balancing political pressures with ethical considerations to promote community welfare and ethical values, ultimately fostering public trust and civic engagement.

Furthermore, the results also emphasized the leadership traits of elected local officials in nurturing political wisdom among their teams. In particular, the provision of professional development focused on ethical decision-making demonstrated a strong commitment to preparing staff to address ethical challenges and fostering a culture of integrity. Another top-rated aspect is building coalitions for shared goals, emphasizing the importance of collaboration in achieving common objectives and public welfare. Conversely, the lowest-rated trait involves encouraging ethical decision-making and a commitment to public service, suggesting a need for greater emphasis on instilling ethical values across all levels of government to promote ethical behavior and organizational citizenship (Guo et al., 2023; Febriansyah et al., 2023). The findings reflected a generally practiced approach to fostering political wisdom but indicated room for improvement in promoting ethical leadership and collaboration within teams, underscoring the importance of ethical decision-making and supportive environments for organizational success (Wal & Demircioğlu, 2020). This reinforces the necessity for ongoing ethical leadership training and the establishment of ethical cultures to ensure consistent ethical behavior and integrity in public service.

The study also assessed public values of elected local government officials, particularly

regarding equity and fairness. Prioritizing equal opportunities and access to government services signifies a strong commitment to social equity and inclusive governance, promoting community participation and addressing systemic inequalities (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2019). Emphasizing fairness fosters trust, unity, and community bonds. Fair leadership is crucial for cohesive communities and governmental integrity, highlighting leaders' dedication to equitable governance and community welfare.

The public values of elected local officials concerning justice are assessed. Efforts to correct past wrongs foster fairness and equality. Challenges in advocating for legal reforms highlight barriers such as bureaucracy and conflicting interests. Despite obstacles, leaders demonstrate dedication to fairness and justice, working to rectify injustices, support legal reforms, and safeguard rights. Ethical leadership and fairness are crucial for trust-building, organizational behavior, and societal equity, underscoring their vital role in effective governance (Alhaidan et al., 2024). Fairness not only shapes individual conduct but also underpins governmental integrity, highlighting the enduring value of ethical leadership in public service.

The public values of elected local leaders regarding transparency and accountability highlight their dedication to promptly addressing corruption, showcasing honesty and responsiveness in ethical governance (Dynes et al., 2021; Amagnya, 2024). Swift action against misconduct upholds credibility and boosts citizen trust in government integrity. Collaboration with justice-oriented organizations, though still room for improvement, is vital for just policies and effective governance (Fathirah et al., 2024). While officials demonstrate a commitment to transparency and accountability, there are areas for improvement. Maintaining ethical standards, transparency, and accountability is crucial for effective governance and public trust, highlighting the ongoing importance of ethical leadership in local governance.



The study also revealed that elected local leaders prioritize community needs over individual interests. Transparency and accountability are crucial for ethical governance and public trust. On the other hand, the lowest mean score highlighted the need to consistently evaluate and share policy impacts with the community. Understanding the effects of policy is vital for informed decision-making. Finally, the study noted that leaders generally strive to act in the common good, working to unite communities and promote peace and prosperity. Prioritizing the common good contributes to societal cohesion and shared responsibility. Effective leadership that values inclusivity, transparency, and community input is crucial in maintaining democracy and ensuring the well-being of society.

The study on the public values of elected local government officials regarding service-oriented leadership highlighted a strong commitment to high-quality public service. Lack of accountability and poor leadership can erode trust, necessitating systemic improvements to build community confidence (Dula et al., 2022). Seeking feedback for service enhancement, even with a lower mean value, underscores the importance of engaging the community to improve services (Nabatchi & Amsler, 2024). The results indicate officials' dedication to serving the community, enhancing services, and meeting community needs, which are crucial for effective governance and accountability. Balanced leadership is vital, addressing potential negative impacts such as employee stress and ensuring both service excellence and well-being (Zhang & Wu, 2021).

Finally, the public values elected local government officials for demonstrating responsibility in all roles, emphasizing their commitment to balancing diverse responsibilities and stakeholders. Elected officials' closeness to the people necessitates not only meeting obligations but also taking initiative to ensure justice and democracy. The study also reflected an essential component of successful local government, emphasizing the importance of responsibility, accountability, and

continuous training to sustain these values among political leaders and enhance decision-making processes. One area of development highlighted is government officials' proactive approach to addressing community concerns, suggesting room for improvement in anticipatory actions to address issues before they escalate.

For the analysis of underlying association, the study also shared some interesting insights. There was a weak, non-significant association between phronetic leadership and public values among elected government officials. New studies show that relying solely on moral judgment in government can sometimes cause problems. Bruycker and Rasmussen said that leaders who focus too much on doing what they think is right may end up making rules that do not match what people want. Their study found weak links between Judging Goodness (JG) and values like Equity and Fairness (EF) and Justice (Jus). This means that being moral is important, but it is not enough to make sure public values are followed. Dula et al. (2022) also said that leaders need to balance moral thinking with practical actions. Their study showed that local leaders struggle to help people when they focus solely on doing what is right and forget about real solutions. Too much focus on right and wrong can make leaders less responsible. This means that focusing only on ethics can lead to poor results.

Also, the idea of Communicating the Essence (CE) shows that the way leaders talk affects how people see them. CE had weak but positive links with values like Justice (Jus) and the Common Good (CG). Studies show that clear, honest communication helps people trust leaders. For example, Graham and Svulik (2020) said that leaders who speak clearly and are easy to understand help grow trust in democracy. But they also said that good communication alone is not enough to keep public trust or protect good leadership. The literature supports and extends the current study's findings, suggesting that while phronetic leadership qualities such as moral judgment and understanding are vital, their effective



application requires a multidimensional approach that integrates ethical behavior, effective communication, and community engagement to reinforce public values in governance. Integrating these elements is essential to cultivating an accountable, responsible leadership dynamic that aligns with public expectations.

The study has also shown that a high level of triviality in the prediction of responsibilities, however, for some of the leadership qualities (teaching goodness and fostering political wisdom), they are not important, that is, they did not successfully account for public responsibilities. This is in line with the literature, which theorizes that the complexity of leader qualities in terms of their effectiveness and theoretical significance explains the differences that exist in ethical leadership frameworks. For instance, Murni et al. (2024) highlight that certain leadership traits are presumably beneficial for gaining the public's trust and mobilizing them, but this impact can be constrained by political context and Emotions. This aligns with our model findings, in which some properties that seem crucial according to theory have no clear observable effect. Moreover, effective and transformational leadership also includes other dimensions, such as communication and ethical decision-making, which, in general, contribute to the performance of the organization as a whole (Wagner et al., 2020). However, as our model did not yield statistically significant relationships among these dimensions, we recommend paying attention to their conceptualization and contextualization when discussing ethical leadership.

On the other hand, Gentsoudi (2024) has also noted that, even though transformational leadership has a strong effect on public sector performance, there are leadership behaviors that cannot be predicted directly, or at least not in the way they do in the regression model. Instead, they augment the culture of accountability and worth that effective leadership is based on (Gentsoudi, 2024). Consequently, the small phronetic leadership

characteristic effects observed in the current study may reflect the complex public sector environment, in which a detailed grasp and application of such characteristics in situ may be required for effects to be significant. Kurian and Nafukho (2021) examined how authentic leadership affects perceptions of workplace fairness. They found that when leaders act ethically and communicate well, workers feel greater fairness. Their study shows that moral actions and clear communication help people perceive justice within their group. This supports the idea that "Communicating the Essence" is a strong part of justice. Clear communication, which is part of real leadership, helps people believe in fairness.

But Wang et al. (2022) examined how a leader's expectations affect people's commitment. They said that how leadership traits affect people's behavior depends on factors such as emotional connection and the group's commitment. Their study shows that leadership effects may not always be direct. They can change depending on the group's values and support. This differs from earlier findings because it shows that other leadership traits can also be important, not just communication. These two studies show that good communication and ethical behavior both matter. But they also show that fairness in government is complex. Many things can affect it. So, leaders may need more than just good communication. They need to try different ways to help others better understand fairness and justice.

The absence of strong associations between leadership attributes and public sentiment regarding the public good suggests that public sentiment's responsiveness to the public good is susceptible to systematic external factors, rather than to the leader's attributes. This interpretation is supported by recent literature. For instance, Murni et al. (2024) investigated the effect of political leadership on public trust and participation, and found that the leader's characteristics are significant, but they do not immediately lead to improved inhabitant relations once the political condition of a leader



is considered. They stress that the relationship of trust between leaders and citizens is predominantly conditioned by a broader political context, meaning the currently relevant influences of other factors are greater than the effects of any one leader's attributes. This suggests that the public's consensus on the common good may be more responsive to changes in rhetoric than to variations in leadership preferences.

Similarly, Mensah et al. (2022) highlighted that the effectiveness of innovative new public administrations, such as digital governance, does not rely solely on effective leadership behavior. They argue that productivity, efficiency, and citizen-centric approaches are robust predictors of public value impacts, and management systems and practices matter more than leader characteristics. This then confirms that leadership qualities, if hypothetically relevant to e-governance, are significantly included in the determinants and influencing of how the public perceives the common good.

Moreover, Tahir et al. (2020) demonstrate how service quality affects public trust through the mediation of leadership and organizational culture, and, in turn, public trust becomes a stimulus for the common good in the form of public organizations. "The content and quality of governance, the broader institutional and ideological context, do shape the public's trust in and perceptions of the overhead, with the latter elements, not individualist leadership traits, being central in the construction of public discourse."

CONCLUSION

From the aforementioned results and discussion, the researchers then concluded the following:

- a) The evaluation of local officials' phronetic leadership reveals strengths in ethical judgment, community engagement, and transparent communication. However, areas for improvement include strengthening moral clarity, understanding community values, and promoting ethical decision-making.

- b) The elected local government officials prioritize equity, fairness, justice, and transparency, addressing injustices and maintaining accountability. However, improvements include engaging with justice organizations, advocating for structural equity reforms, fostering citizen engagement, and promoting data-driven governance and proactive leadership.
- c) Phronetic leadership qualities show weak or non-significant correlations with public values; however, effective communication (communicating the essence) has a significant positive relationship with justice and the common good, highlighting the role of transparent dialogue in promoting fairness and collective welfare.
- d) Exercising political power and fostering political wisdom did not directly predict or significantly influence public values, suggesting that their impact is indirect and mediated by broader factors such as leadership style, institutional culture, and policy context.
- e) Local officials face significant challenges balancing economic growth, environmental sustainability, limited resources, and political pressures. Through ethical, practical, and inclusive leadership, such as fostering collaboration, promoting transparency, and supporting alternative livelihoods, they address these challenges and uphold public values in service to their communities.

IMPLICATIONS

Based on the study's conclusions, the following implications were suggested:

- 1) Strengthen Assessment Tools and Capacity-Building on Phronetic Leadership Dimensions. In response to the assessment of phronetic leadership qualities, it is recommended that standardized tools and indicators be developed and institutionalized within local government units (LGUs) to



measure and monitor leadership behaviors. These tools should cover the six core dimensions: judging goodness, grasping the essence, creating shared context, communicating the essence, exercising political power, and fostering political wisdom. Leadership development programs can be aligned with these indicators to guide officials in reflective practice and ethical decision-making.

2) Promote Values-Based Governance Frameworks Anchored on Public Values to ensure that public values such as equity, fairness, justice, transparency, accountability, and service orientation are embedded in local governance. LGUs should adopt values-based governance frameworks. These frameworks can serve as guiding principles in policymaking, budgeting, and service delivery. Public value audits and citizen scorecards can serve as participatory tools to regularly assess officials' adherence to these values.

3) Foster Phronetic Leadership-Values Alignment Through Ethical Governance Policies. Given the significant relationship between phronetic leadership and public values, it is recommended that national and local policies promote leadership models that integrate ethical reasoning with practical wisdom. Policy instruments such as performance-based incentives, integrity training, and institutional reforms should aim to reinforce alignment between leadership actions and core public values.

4) Integrate Predictive Leadership Analytics into Governance Reforms. To better understand the extent to which phronetic leadership qualities influence public values, local government reform efforts should consider using predictive analytics. By analyzing leadership behaviors and their impact on outcomes such as trust, fairness, and service satisfaction, decision-makers can design more targeted interventions to strengthen areas with low value adherence.

5) Document and Share Lived Experiences of Local Officials to Inform Practice. The unique insights, challenges, and coping strategies shared by local officials in the qualitative

findings reveal valuable lessons for practice. It is recommended that these narratives be compiled into case studies, training modules, or learning exchanges across LGUs. Doing so can foster peer learning, promote adaptive leadership, and encourage reflective governance grounded in real-world contexts.

6) Future researchers are encouraged to explore the indirect effects of phronetic leadership on public values by examining mediating factors like leadership style and organizational culture. Comparative studies across different LGUs can provide broader insights, while mixed-methods and longitudinal designs can deepen understanding of leadership's impact over time. Additionally, incorporating community perspectives will offer a more holistic evaluation of how phronetic leadership is perceived and practiced in local governance.

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