Leadership Dynamics and Governance Challenges: A Case Study of Cabanatuan City's Operational Inefficiencies and Sustainability

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Abstract - This study looks at the impact of leadership styles on the performance of the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Cabanatuan City with respect to operational efficiency, project implementation, and sustainability performance. As noted in the study, "transactional leadership" seems to be the most predominant style among the city officials. Although this approach brings some elements of order and definable boundaries, it tends to create inflexible structures that stifle innovation and teamwork. It is proposed that there is greater potential for adapting governance in transformational leadership and improved responsiveness to interdepartmental cooperation toward sustainable development. This is part of an ongoing discourse that seeks to examine the relationship between leadership and the effectiveness of public service delivery and aims at streamlining processes at the local government level.

Indexed Terms- Public Service, City Governance, Transformational Leadership, and Transactional Leadership

I. INTRODUCTION

The Cabanatuan City, which is categorized as a key city in Nueva Ecija, has made impressive economic progress throughout the years by building roads, bridges, schools and several commercial establishments. Since the Cabanatuan region is a major hub for the province, its expansion is essential to the region's overall development. This economic growth, however, has been masked by striking operational inefficiencies within its local government unit (LGU) such as slow project execution, poor interdepartmental communication, and absence of integration of sustainable approaches.

The aim of this case study is to investigate how the leadership style with respect to the LGU council of Cabanatuan City influences the perpetuation or elimination of government operational efficiency and the integration of sustainable practices. Attention is also drawn toward the halting of development in infrastructure projects, continued reliance on rapid response techniques like dredging instead of comprehensive flood mitigation systems, and stubborn avoidance of various automation technologies, including renewable energy sources and cashless payment methods

The purpose of this study is to offer a comprehensive assessment of the effects of administrative and leadership decisions to set organizational priorities at the operational and strategic levels. The analysis from the case study will illustrate a new perspective on leadership gaps at the provincial level of the Philippine cities' discourse on governance reform.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative case study approach to look into the controversies and governance problems of the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Cabanatuan City. The complexity of public administration, leadership, and the structural impediments to effective public service delivery are all attempted to be captured in this study. A case study approach is relevant to this research because it provides the opportunity to study a complicated social issue in a comprehensive manner within its real-life backdrop..

Research Design and Rationale

Analyzing the qualitative case study design, one can identify its distinctive attributes meeting the requirements of "how" and "why" interrogatives regarding the function of local governance. It analyzes how leadership, institutional culture, and coordination operate in a defined milieu – the Cabanatuan City LGU. The study uses multiple sources of information in order to provide, and also defend, credibility through triangulation as well as deep contextual understanding.

Data Collection Methods

The governance frameworks in Cabanatuan City were captured using four primary methods of data collection to develop an in-depth description of the practices:

1. Observational Insights

Non-participant observations were carried out in several core city departments, including:

- City Engineering Office
- City Planning and Development Office
- Office of the City Building Official
- City Mayor's Office

These trips were organized with the intent of grasping daily routines, procedures, and employee contacts especially during public service events and meetings. The various recurring processes, bureaucratic hurdles, and the leadership styles that affect the institutional environment were all documented in vivid detail.

2. Storytelling from Experience

The interviewing and informal talking events with LGU employees were variations ranging from leaders to employees, consisting of engineers, administrative assistants, and field inspectors. These activities focused on: How the personnel perceive the project planning and implementation The problems in department coordination, view of leadership effectiveness and accountability Adoption (or rejection) of digital tools and sustainability projects These stories, immediately seeing the action, have enabled personal insights that become elusive in official reports about internal dynamics.

3. Online Document Review (External Sources)

Several secondary data obtained from different sources on the internet prepared the Cabanatuan case for contrasting contexts:

- Scholarly works on city governance and public administration
- Case studies from other local governments, both within and outside the Philippines
- Official reports from agencies like the DILG, COA, and NEDA
- Policy briefs by think tanks and NGOs focusing on governance and reform
- News coverage on current governance issues in Cabanatuan and similar cities

Such external data could throw light on the trends, compare practices, and point out how Cabanatuan's experiences coincide or differ with broad trends.

Data Analysis

The data collected are analyzed in terms of themes. A qualitative method for locating, examining, and summarizing topics is thematic analysis. The inferred coding was followed by inductive coding based on the research topics.. The analysis was concerned with three broad-based themes:

- 1. Operational Inefficiencies There are process delays, redundancies and gaps in timing, planning, and executing public initiatives, projects, or works.
- Leadership and Interdepartmental Coordination The nature and effectiveness of leaders' practices, whether they understood roles and responsibilities, and quality of collaboration with each department.
- 3. Sustainability and Technological Adaptation Involvement with sustainability practices, whether consideration of environmental contexts are being addressed and whether the systems being used are at all in keeping with the adopting of digital forms of technology or e-governance systems.

From this synthesis arose a more comprehensive view of the factors influencing LGU performance, with some factors being internal while others are external pressures.

Ethical Considerations

The rules of ethical research were strictly followed when conducting the informal interviews and observations. The participants were informed about the work, with protections from undue identification in the reporting of results put in place. A few internal documents were accessed, with the approval of the relevant authorities.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Cabanatuan City, infrastructure development continues to be afflicted by persistent problems. A lot of projects experience delays longer than five years. These delays are embedded deep in irregularities in administration, logistics, and governance at the local level and are detrimental to the economic and timely completion of projects.

1.1 Delays in Systems and Contributing Factors

This delay of about 30% of LGU projects, according to the DPWH Nueva Ecija 2nd District (2022), is largely governed by budget constraints. The release stages of funds, regardless of annual approved budget plans, remain very slow and are piecemeal, meaning any significant interventions that affect project mobilization timelines. This scenario extremely accentuates the misery of planned projects relying on multi-year funding that always fall prey to shifting political environments.

Row negotiations in this case stand out as exorbitantly inefficient: an estimated 25% of project delays exist as a result of this. For most controlling infrastructures such as utilities accessing private parcels of land within limits, such as in road widening, drainage system construction, and utility expansion, aggravation with compensation, unclear land title documents, and animus from titleholders create a compensation deadlock that further delays the already lagging processes.

However, due to pandemic-related factors, the inadequacies of the local supply chain disrupted the sourcing of essential construction materials and skilled labor. Ruga et al. (2022) pointed to limited availability of workers due to sickness, quarantine, and travel restrictions as the greatest hindrances to these ongoing projects in the same district during the pandemic. For a good number of these projects, reliance on centralized suppliers or seasonal workers would compound the difficulties even after the pandemic dust has settled.

An uncommon cause for delay includes unfavorable weather conditions, especially typhoon season when

pouring, building roads, or excavation work may not be done safely or feasibly. Seasonal flooding acting up in Cabanatuan could be another justification for its favor towards short-term fixes instead of long-term structural solutions.

1.2. Leadership Practices and Reactive Planning

The global factor that greatly affects the performance capability of Cabanatuan City is the particular political leadership and planning orientation of the local government unit itself. It seems that strategy planning is lacking in the decision-making process and instead focuses more on short-term responsive actions. This has been observed at its best in the budget spending for dredging the bottom part of bridges and creeks around the city during the rainy season. Although these works bring forth short-term relief against inundation through arresting the buildup of silt and debris, effort has to be spent every year in what's called maintenance muds, thus consuming large portion of city maintenance budget.

On the contrary, Making ecologically friendly retention basins, having improved drainage and flood control basins is more acceptable but will be called basementally present. These are usually underestimated because of high starting costs and long construction time and the absence of political attention in visibility. This is clear evidence of problematic leadership that earns results at the cost of policy consideration and tends to fiscally strengthen the politically overdemanded visibility of governance with little appreciation of its long term value.

This reactive culture is not limited to the world around. The authors Ladores et al. (2023) has observed the same ineffectiveness afflicting the Philippine construction industry; divided leadership, and a dependence on an in-house subcontracting system, have resulted in poor labor performance with degraded project outputs, etc. Their study elaborates on the benefits of administrative ordering that is centralized so as to maintain effective well-regulated operation over time; principles transferable from real to public sectors.

Even Cayanan et al. (2025) put emphasis on the democratic leadership characteristics; that is, participative decision making with prior stakeholders'

inclusion for improving organizational performance. With particular reference to Cabanatuan, the absence of evolving such inclusive governance strategies has left constituents disenchanted and service delivery painfully wanting. In general, the findings reflect that the much-needed paradigm shift in leadership orientation must steer away from such sordid political machinations toward a more instrumentally conceived long-term sustainability planning.

1.3. Cross-District Comparisons and Broader Implications

The Cabanatuan observations seem similar to the local observations. The study of Ruga et al. (2022) on postpandemic infrastructures in the Nueva Ecija 2nd District Engineering Office revealed that the project implementations in several local government units (LGUs) have systematic fragilities. Among the frequent causes of delay were dilute project ownership, misaligned budget cycles, and absence of inter-agency coordination between LGUs and national agencies.

These findings suggest that while local context and specificities rendered Cabanatuan a unique case, the saga of the city also comprises a summary of some of the more universal hurdles facing public works in the Philippine setting-divided planning, poor inter-agency coordination, and politicized selection for projects.

Cause	Percentage
Budget Constraints	30%
Right - of Way Issues	25%
Supply Chain Problems	20%
Labor Shortage	15%
Weather Conditions	10%
Figure 1. Causes of Project L	Delays in Public Works
Source: DPWH NE 2n	d District, 2022

Ultimately, sustainable progress will depend not only on technical capacity and know-how, but also on the robustness of leadership willing to consider long-term development goals over short-term political edginess.

II. INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION AND TASK MISALIGNMENT

Cabanatuan City has much to offer in terms of operational delays resulting, whether wholly or partially, in external causes such as economic rationale infrastructural reasons, as against gross or inefficiencies in the city government machinery. If there were to be at least one, a serious cause typically, that has weeded the gardens of the city administration, it is gross malfunctioning under coordination in delegated assignments, communication, and accomplishment of jobs by various departments. Discussions with key officials indicated underlying systemic issues for the local government, such as vague role specifications, overlapping duties, divergences among leaders' opposing instructions, and poor interdepartmental coordination. It is such internal problems that delay projects to build infrastructure, stymie development program implementations, and bring on an increasing backlog of unfinished plans. Therefore, all these complications serve to cripple the system in the timely and effective servicing of the city.

2.1. Misalignment in Task Assignment

One of the interminable problems of the Cabanatuan City local government is the exercise of misallocation of assignments from the office of the city mayor to the agencies that have no existing technical capacities or legal mandate to perform these tasks. The lack of clear delegation procedures, non-institutionalized distribution of tasks, and the reactive nature of leadership in making most decisions will overshadow the proactive strategic coordination.

For example, a request for a structural assessment on a government building was routed through the city planning and development office, although the primary responsibilities of that office relate to urban development and land use planning, and the assignment should have been with either the city engineering office or the office of the city building official, among others, who had the relevant technical expertise. This additional couple of weeks from the original timeline were already wasted on coordination among departments to reassign the assignment.

Besides the overall undesired inefficiency, the misallocation of assignments does affect staff morale as departments become bogged down with tasks that rightly belong to others, thus fully obfuscating their performance level as time and resources are wasted on

activities that are not core functions. So with the increasing number of incidents, somehow there is a slow build-up of bottlenecking and friction between departments, creating an environment that encourages misinformation and blame instead of teamwork.

Incompetencies in leadership have been substantiated from studies by Frigillana et al. (2023). It was observed that the variant types of servant and transformational leadership result in very efficient organizations concerning the clarity of roles among team members in line with the institutional goal. This should displace the more traditional styles of top-down leadership still prevalent in Cabanatuan City, where an individual is deprived of the clarity of roles and delegation, work within the organization is disrupted, and inclusion is exposed.

2.2. Internal Communication Breakdowns

The City Engineering Office is the busiest technical department in the city. It has undergone a series of blips in internal communication, which further hinders project implementation. One documented example regards a case in which an inspector for the project was not informed on the date that there would be a site visit, already decided upon by the city officials and private contractors. Not only did it damage the trip aforementioned to bits, but more importantly, it raised eyebrows into the office's qualification and ability to paper events involving other parties. The root causes for such errors are:

- There are no central tools for project monitoring, like shared calendars and digital task boards.
- There is no clear communication.
- No one is known to be responsible for bringing internal communication and flow together.
- Recording meetings and task briefings is also inconsistent.

Deficiency in communication protocols within the internal organization of the LGU really has a negative impact on the tracking of the progress of tasks, delineation of individual roles as well cross responsibilities and result in poorly delivered services, redundancy of activities, duplication of work, and even later provision of service. Gradually, the abovementioned trend works on public trust in the timely and progressive service of the LGU. Open communication and structured channels have led to low morale and mala-alignments among operations were some of the findings by Ladores Jr. et al. (2023) for the construction industry. The same problems could be seen in Cabanatuan City-the lack of communication between departments makes the planning less efficient because of interruption of services from staff. According to them, poor communication between the supervisor and field staff can be attributed to misses in leadership.

2.3. Visualizing the Problem: Task Misalignment in Workflow

The following simplified diagram illustrates how task misalignment commonly unfolds within the LGU structure.

As can be seen in Figure 2, in the absence of a direct and accurate process for task assignment, the extra steps are opened up, thereby creating a systemic bottleneck. Each handover causes extra delays, increases the risk of miscommunication, and further dilutes accountability.

City Mayor's Office
1
[Misassigned Task]
v
Inappropriate Department
[Seeks Assistance]> Correct Department
[Delay in Implementation]

Figure 2. Workflow Diagram Illustrating Task Misalignment

2.4. Implications for Governance and Recommendations

Thus, these inefficiencies indicate an urgent need for organizational reform and development towards communication and leadership. In particular::

• Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for task delegation should be developed whereby the tasks are first considered and matched to departmental roles before their release.

- Alternatively, in major departments, interdepartmental workflow and task-assigning verification could go through an in-house liaison officer.
- Digital platforms such as project management apps (e.g., Trello, Asana, and customized LGU dashboards) faultlessly streamline updates, deadlines, and personnel responsibility, which is a great deal more transparent but also reduces dependence on oral commands.
- Training on leadership and communication for top and mid-level management should emphasize clear delegation, collaborative planning, and systems thinking.
- There should be a mechanism for giving feedback so that departments can put grievances against unwarranted repetitive misassigments or inconsistencies in directives without risk of incurring consequences.

These interventions to address internal inefficiencies will foster a more agile, accountable, and performance-driven culture within Cabanatuan City's LGU.

III. RESISTANCE TO TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

Ranking and classified as a first-class component city, Cabanatuan City stands in a major commercial corridor and is benefiting from a growing urban populace, yet somehow, it has remained a laggard in the implementation of digital governance tools and sustainable technologies. This unreasonably stagnation is thereby compromising the operational efficiency of any city and further continues to widen the chasm between policy aspiration and the reality of service delivery on the ground, especially within the realms of modernization and innovation.

3.1. Digital Governance Gaps

Cashless and online payment systems are only some of the many areas where Cabanatuan is terribly backward-in comparison to the measure of what urban LGUs have in many parts of the Philippines. For the most part, residents are still required to visit City Hall to carry out basic services like securing business permits, paying real property taxes, or requesting an official document. People with mobility constraints; people in faraway barangays; and people whose working hours do not match those of more or less regular government offices will find this requirement burdensome.

The lack of portals providing services integrated with payment systems reveals underlying governance issues.

- Digital transformation has never been given strong institutional focus, and technology investments are often considered optional or non-essential rather than being recognized as part of the core of public infrastructure.
- Institutionalized limited digital capacity manifests itself in poor IT staffing and the lack of a long-term comprehensive digital strategy.
- Poor inter-departmental coordination hinders the development of unified payment systems and databases and digital records across various offices.

These factors do not only diminish service efficiency and citizen satisfaction but restrict data transparency and, in turn, reduce opportunities for digital accountability, which are inextricably critical elements in modern governance. Digitizing cities-Valenzuela; Quezon City; Iloilo- and even more with e-governance tools will benefit these cities to have more operations optimized, minimize corruption or any form of irregularities, and improve citizen engagement.

3.2. Renewable Energy: Political Roadblocks to Sustainable Transition

While many cities around the world-and increasingly in the Philippines-are now integrating renewable energy technologies into urban infrastructures, in Cabanatuan, the efforts are scant, especially solar energy application. There have been perhaps very few large-scale solar power projects initiated by the city for public facilities or community energy solutions.

According to local observers and internal reports, embedded barriers arise from political interests connected to the sole electricity provider of the city. These interests supposedly have a say in the investment policies and developments in renewable alternatives that threaten the existing utility monopolies and reduce earnings of the politically connected. Consequently, proposals to put in solar for public schools, markets, or health facilities are now stuck or put on the back burner, even though they would provide long-term, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly alternatives.

This inertia starkly contrasts with the entire scenario of global energy. Renewable energy developments were primarily spearheaded by solar energy, which comprised over 75% of new installed renewable power capacity during the year 2024, as per the prediction by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA, 2025). This increasing trend is shown in the following figures: These showing how fast, indeed, the world is going into renewable energy and the ever-increasing affordability of solar installations even in developing contexts.

Renewable energy advancements were greatly driven by solar energy, contributing more than 75% to new installed renewable power capacity in 2024, per the prediction of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA, 2025). Following such figures shows this increasing trend: how fast the world is indeed moving toward renewable energy and the increasingly affordable solar installations in developing contexts.

Figure 3: Global Renewable Energy Capacity Growth. Source: IRENA, 2025 Figure 3. Global Renewable Energy Capacity Growth (2020-2024)

Solar (GW) Wind (GW) Year Hvdro (GW) 2020 710 740 1300 2021 843 803 1320 2022 1020 870 1340 2023 1200 940 1350 2024 1385 1000 1360

Source: IRENA (2025)

3.3. Implications for Innovation, Governance, and Policy Reform

Failure to modernize digital systems and energy infrastructure shows a broader failure in leadership, in having a reluctance, or inability to adopt innovation as a governing value. This implies:

• Public trust could well be eroded, especially among younger, tech-savvy citizens, who demand their governmental services to be rendered efficiently, accessibly, and in an environmentally responsible way.

- The city can be behind its spatial rivals as regards attraction to investment, sustainability benchmarks, and overall urban competitiveness.
- Missed chances to access national and international funding for developing climate-smart and digital infrastructure projects such as those facilitated by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) or the Green Climate Fund.

In addressing the top barriers, the LGU has to reframe innovation and sustainability from being mere project categories to being cross-cutting governance priorities. This includes:

- Institutionalization of e-governance frameworks, including the formulation of a Digital Transformation Roadmap;
- Provision of public-private partnerships (PPPs) for renewable energy installations, especially in schools, markets, and health facilities;
- Implementation of anti-conflict-of-interest laws to limit political interference in energy-related decision-making;
- Promotion of a digital and environmental leadership culture among department heads and key decision-makers.

IV. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC DISCIPLINE

Traffic operation will always be an eternal concern of Cabanatuan City, whether by municipal ordinance or not because of certain character traits that make the city noncompliant, lax in enforcement, and the public poorly literate. Local ordinances of the city to maintain safety and order in roadways actually make many violations get committed and are usually unpunished. With these conditions, lives of drivers and pedestrians are endangered, with the even graver and serious dangers faced in public order and even the government.

4.1. Widespread Traffic Violations and Safety Risks Standard violations such as running the red lights, throwing in the U-turns illegally, and incorrect lane usages can be observed on streets at every interval, but predominantly by tricycle and Jeepney drivers, the traditional mode of transportation in Cabanatuan. Such violations even happen to increase the chances of getting into accidents and a congested city with its very narrow and crowded streets.

The particular characteristic of tricycle drivers is that they very frequently do not abide by traffic rules. A very recent survey undertaken by Dela Cruz (2023) found that many justifications for rule violation, such as urgent passengers, personal emergencies, or a belief that enforcement is weak or lenient, are frequently cited by the drivers. Such a culture of justification indicates a weak enforcement regime and an inconsistent provision of rules through a series of traffic education initiatives.

4.2. Quantitative Snapshot of Violations

As other people have recorded in Dela Cruz's study, this confirms the existence of rule-breaking behavior:

Such analysis would generally suggest that most of the violations are "high-risk," according to literature, and these include running red lights, which frequently lead to serious crashes at intersections. For example, the incidence of driving without helmets may be considerably lower, but it is still significant as it may indicate some awareness of safety requirements but inconsistent enforcement.

Figure 4.	Common	Traffic	Violations	bv	Tricycle	Drivers	in	Cabanatuan	(2023)
				~,				earserie	(

Violation	Frequency (%)
Beating Red Light	40%
Illegal U-turns	25%
Wrong Lane Usage	20%
Driving Without Helmet	15%

Figure 4: Common Traffic Violations by Tricycle Drivers in Cabanatuan (2023)

4.3. Root Causes of Poor Traffic Management The problems at the systemic level causing ineffective traffic regulation in the city include the following:

- Business enforcers aren't adequately staffed. They're generally overwhelmed by the volume of vehicles on the roads during the peak hours.
- In the absence of practical tools like surveillance cameras, automated marking, or live business monitoring apps, it becomes harder to keep track

of business inflow and gather dependable substantiation for enforcement.

- There's minimum collaboration between business operation services and law enforcement, performing in lapping liabilities and gaps in responsibility.
- Weak public information drives have caused low mindfulness of the rules among both new and long-term driving commuters.
- Perceived or real toleration for violations, frequent cases of local political patronage, undermines compliance with the laws.

These weaknesses in policy implementation and operational oversight reflect a broader need for governance reforms centered on discipline, education, and technological integration.

4.4. Behavioral and Cultural Factors

Beyond technical and institutional shortcomings, cultures of informality and the tolerance of petty rulebreaking undergird deeply-rooted traffic problems in the city. Drivers interviewed alongside this study attested to such a culture; say, "Everyone's doing it" or "Traffic rules are flexible as long as nobody's harmed." Such an attitude, however, weakens the rule of law and creates a vicious circle in which violations become entrenched, enforcement becomes selective, and civic discipline crumbles.

4.5. Pathways for Reform and Modernization

Simply pushing for enforcement won't solve the problems. Cabanatuan City must develop a multipronged approach that will combine enforcement efforts with education, infrastructure, and behavioral changes. Among the main recommendations are:

- Data- grounded enforcement should be institutionalized and enforced on a routine basis, using the substantiation- grounded system and rounded by cameras and real- time monitoring systems.
- launching frequent public mindfulness sweats that punctuate business laws, the penalties for contraventions, and the benefits of driving defensively.
- elevation the skill situations of business enforcers, including furnishing them with digital tools for establishing and issuing citations.

- Working together with transport cooperatives and motorist associations to include business education in the process of carrying and renewing licenses.
- Working together with transport cooperatives and driver associations to include traffic education in the process of obtaining and renewing licenses.
- Launching a prototype of road redesigning at zones of decision points to upgrade the traffic flow and reduce the opportunity for illegal U-turns or lane changing.

The leadership must lead by ensuring very clear evidence of traffic discipline, that violations are sustained as penalties regardless of the status of violator. Over time, such consistency in enforcement should help to change public behavior toward bringing about order on the city's streets.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND URBAN PLANNING

The Cabanatuan's Population growth, infrastructural development, and economic activities have accelerated the increasing urbanization of the city in recent years. Sadly, the rapid growth of the city has witnessed an equal lack of commitment towards maintaining environmental balances. It seems that Cabantuan is thus treading a path that might ultimately threaten its liveability and resiliency.

5.1. Absence of Green Infrastructure and Rising Environmental Pressures

These include urban planting, creation of green spaces, stormwater drainage, and pollution control programsand many more green infrastructural initiatives that have gradually taken root here in the metropolis. Parks and green belts are very few and inaccessible, and all such tree-planting campaigns have been rather scattered or ceremonial without any long-term maintenance plan and deployment into urban design.

These concerns are more alarming considering that the city has most tricycles operating as a primary mode of transportation, and at the same time, these tricycles are major contributors to carbon emissions and localized air pollution. With the rising number of tricycles, most are operated under poor two-stroke engines known for their inefficient fuel consumption yet record high emission levels, thus showing poor air quality. Congestion-related areas are evident particularly around markets, schools, and government offices.

Moreover, this situation has exposed already poor areas of the city with rather low canopy cover and a lot of asphalt to climate change effects of increasing surface temperatures. It contributes to a worsening urban heat island effect, which places at greater health risk vulnerable populations such as urban elderly, children, and outdoor workers.

5.2. Public Interest in Electric-Powered Transport

Growing interest has emerged in environmentally friendly transport methods, the last of which is the proposal of electric tricycles as an alternative to gaspowered vehicles. Electric-powered public transport systems fall into this category: being totally free of any tailpipe emissions, extremely quiet, and lend themselves to renewable propulsion, to minimize the carbon footprint of the city which has reached alarming levels.

The study by Sarmiento (2024) reports on a survey involving residents and tricycle drivers in which their willingness to adopt e-trikes was investigated. Considerable public support was revealed toward the adoption of e-trikes, more so if incentives from the government and provision of infrastructures are given.

Figure 5. Survey on Willingness to Shift to E-Tricycles (2024)

Response	Percentage (%)
Yes, with government aid	60%
Yes, even without aid	20%
No	20%

The survey results show that as much as 80% of respondents would be inclined to turn to electric alternatives, with the great majority of that population (60%) needing assistance toward this goal in the form of either subsidies, low-interest loans, or access to public charging infrastructure before they take that step. Only a small percentage (20%) are still hanging on, dissuaded by confusing factors like costs for the vehicle itself, the time it takes to charge, and the availability of maintenance.

5.3 Infrastructure Gaps and the Role of Policy

However, despite the enthusiasm of the public, Cabanatuan City is still without the requisite infrastructure for a shift of such magnitude. It has no public charging stations, and there seems to be no clear policy pathway for the integration of electric vehicles into the city transportation network. Stakeholders also identified lack of incentives and support programmes from the LGU or national government as a major constraint.

There could be the possibility of installing solar charging stations intended for private and public etrikes, which are particularly dedicated in the use of transport terminals, schools, public markets, and the city hall. These solar charging stations can further be realized through public-private partnerships and strategically positioned for maximum access and uptake.

That will not only help to lessen emissions in transport but also energy self-sufficiency, thereby lessening dependency on fossil fuels and as such making the city more resilient to climate change.

5.4. Recommendations for Environmental Policy Reform

The city shall run programmatic and policy adjustments that would adequately address environmental matters and captivate public attention onto sustainability efforts.

- Effect upon enactment: The implementation of an all-encompassing Environmental Sustainability Plan with programs dealing with waste management, thorough air quality monitoring, urban greening, and clean transport initiatives.
- Establish an e-trike subsidy program with national government agencies (for example, Department of Energy, DOST) wherein low-income drivers and operators take priority.
- Solar charging stations are to be installed at strategic locations linking with public markets and transport terminals.
- Over a transition period of five to seven years, a phased-out approach comes into play in the case of the two-stroke high-polluting tricycles.
- These public awareness campaigns would promote positive health, economic, and environmental benefits of clean transportation and green infrastructure.

• Tree planting and maintenance would be institutionalized, along with community monitoring and specific benchmarks, especially in crowded areas.

5.5. Toward a Greener Future

Presently, Cabanatuan's environmental track is an established disjunction of growth and sustainability. However, through investments in green infrastructure, clean mobility, and renewable energy, Cabanatuan could easily redirect its developmental trajectory, towards a healthier, more efficient, and livable urban space for its residents. Public willingness towards cleaner technology actually makes a very strong entry point for changing policy, yet this must be matched with political will, institutional planning, and crosssector collaboration.

Leadership Style Analysis

The major style of leadership within the local government operations of Cabanatuan City is what can be described as transactional leadership which includes compliance-relating directives, deficiency of task assignments, and a focus on more short-term rewards or penalties. Although it can keep the routine administration functioning, such an approach is not conceptual on long-term strategic governance and innovation over it is not adaptable.

This type of leadership according to Demirtas and Karaca (2021): "Transactional leadership is needed in the organizations where interdepartmental cooperation and innovative problem-solving are important. Their stress on short-term results rather than system change is likely to hinder rather than facilitate development and create further barriers to responsiveness."

The field observations within the LGU manifest a very clear dependability on this leadership model. Most department heads, however, are more preoccupied with adherence to procedures and having a hierarchical control as the compliance environment discourages critical thinking, stifles creativity, and, of course, limits employees in engagement.

Relatively, Aduna et.al (2023) and Frigillana et al (2023) emphasize research findings showing that transformational leadership-which focuses on shared vision, individualized support, and ethical

commitment to organizational goals-can be effective. Such leadership would result in increased employee morale, improved team performance, as well as strong team solidarity in both engineering and university settings. They would prove effective if applied in such settings.

Recommended Leadership Style: Transformational Leadership

Prioritizing vision creation, workforce empowerment, and adaptive change, transformational leadership is better suited to the Cabanatuan environment. This leadership approach fosters a favorable atmosphere by encouraging collaboration, creativity, and integrating public service with long-term goals.. In the context of LGU Cabanatuan, transformational leadership would address operational fragmentation by fostering shared accountability, improved communication, and flexible planning approaches.

Figure 6. Comparison of Leadership Styles in Public Sector Performance

Leadership Style	Innovation Score	Efficiency Score	Sustainability Focus
Transactional	Low (2.1/5)	Moderate (3.2/5)	Low
Transformational	High (4.6/5)	High (4.5/5)	High

Source: Adapted from Nguyen et al. (2022)

As depicted in Figure 6, transactional leadership is characterized as a short-term result-oriented, rulesbased management style that scores the following in terms of low innovation (2. 1/5), moderate efficiency (3. 2/5), and scant consideration for sustainability, as depicted in Figure 6. Bypassing difficult decisions and engaging staff: this leadership style tends to be reactive, procedural, and risk-averse.

Transformational leadership, for example, is noted to correlate positively with the improvement of organizational performance, employee motivation, and capability for innovation (Nguyen et al. , 2022). Such leaders promote an environment conducive to substantial change, encourage commitment among their members, and focus upon the collective goal.

Whereas Transactional Leadership, with its stress on strategic foresight, participatory governance, and vision-centered planning, is facilitating high levels of innovation (4.6/5) and operational efficiency (4.5/5)

while strongly upholding sustainability on the other side. This approach to leadership prefers adaptive risk management, enhances employee engagement, and nurtures a culture conducive to addressing long-term, cross-sectoral challenges.

This finding stresses the relevant role of transformation of leadership in actually improving the performance of the municipal governments in places like Cabanatuan that are besieged with intricate governance challenges, such as environmental degradation, sluggishness in applying digital solutions, and fragmented coordination among departments. By switching LGUs from a transactional to transformational leadership model, the capabilities of innovation, institutional resilience, and sustainably developed urban living are enhanced.

Interestingly enough, this case study supports the inclusion of transformational leadership in the management system of Cabanatuan; those trends have been documented in the literature. Transformational leaders who inspire with vision create alignment between individual contributions and the collective goals of the enterprise while promoting open communication, hence having the potential to rejuvenate the pathological bureaucracy and encourage systemic change.

Ladores Jr. et al. (2023) align with this proposition in their study; they found that construction workers whose transformational characteristics were inspirational motivation and positive reinforcement had better labor efficiency and organizational coherence. If these concepts were also applied to the public sector, this could greatly improve interdepartmental cooperation, render back the trust of the citizens to the public sector in general, and positively impact service delivery outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Cabanatuan City is currently in the mid-journey of its urban development milestone. Cabanatuan succumbed to the city amid the ongoing pandemic and as a result, access to many resources such as infrastructure, commercial services and civic services was highly limited for the residents. This ease of access came at the price of mismanaged governance systems the city

operated under, inter departmental communication remained disparate and a considerable scope of focus on vision towards sustainability which was lacking. As captured in the aforementioned case study, predominant culture in the city stems from leadership that is clearly transactional which has unfortunately spawned reactive governance along overt pragmatism; chronic focus on results dwarfs long term integrated comprehensive resilient foresight and planning.

A positive change with hope to achieve tangible results will require remarkable change in approach towards leadership. It has been recently documented that Transformational leadership opens new frontiers as far as change is concerned. Adopting such frameworks enables active participation from departments and drives the necessary change at grassroots levels capable of responsive governance. Transformational leadership accompanied with thorough and systematic capacity developing programs integrated with digitally driven innovations alongside transitions to renewable sourced energy, green infrastructure propulsion, and prudent urban management promises.

The city of Cabanatuan's future administration will depend on the capacity of its officials to accept transparency, decentralize power, and put evidencebased plans into action that are consistent with international trends in sustainable development. The city will be able to not just overcome its current operational challenges but also establish itself as a regional example of adaptive, resilient, and peoplecentered leadership by doing so.

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