

Strengthening Local Employment Services Through Barangay PESO: Administrative Readiness, Awareness and Challenges in Libmanan, Camarines Sur

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Abstract

This study evaluates the extent of administrative readiness, level of awareness, and perceived challenges among stakeholders in the Municipality of Libmanan, Camarines Sur regarding the establishment of Barangay Public Employment Service Offices (PESO). It is anchored on the enactment of Municipal Ordinance No. 24-20 (2024), which mandates the creation of Barangay PESO in all seventy-five (75) barangays. However, at the time of the study, these offices had not yet been implemented or made operational.

The study uses the decentralization and institutional governance framework as its theoretical framework. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design/methodology is employed. A structured survey questionnaire instrument, based on a predetermined descriptive statistic list, was utilized to collect data from appointed (or potential) focal persons for PESO in each barangay, municipal PESO staff, and community residents of each suburb (barangay) via stratified and purposive sampling techniques. The two data analysis techniques utilized were descriptive statistics and the Pearson correlation.

The overall findings show that most barangays have moderate administrative readiness (particularly with respect to the availability of personnel and coordination mechanisms), but limitations with regard to the allocation of budgetary resources, infrastructure, and lack of formalized operational guidelines; that stakeholder awareness of Barangay PESO objectives is at a moderate level; and that the absence of leadership support (i.e., political will) is the most significant perceived barrier to establishing Barangay PESOs. The correlation analysis indicates a statistically significant positive correlation between administrative readiness and stakeholder awareness; however, no significant correlation was identified between administrative readiness and perceived barriers.

The study concludes that there is a basic level of capacity within each barangay's system to implement PESO. However, in order to ensure effective and sustainable implementation of the PESO, there is a need to strengthen leadership commitment, establish clear operational policies,



ensure adequate resource allocations, and conduct ongoing awareness programs. Recommendations are made regarding policies and strategies to enhance organizational support, capacity of personnel, system coordination, and long-term viability of the program through the Barangay PESO Service Office.

Keywords: *Barangay PESO, Public Employment Service Office, Administrative Readiness, Stakeholder Awareness, Local Governance*



1. Introduction

Employment facilitation services play an important role in addressing labor market challenges worldwide. Many countries continue to experience issues such as unemployment and underemployment, and the most common is the mismatch between workers' skills and the skills employers need, especially in developing economies.

Organizations such as the International Labour Organization, World Bank, and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development emphasize that effective employment systems help improve labor market efficiency and strengthen workforce participation.

In response to these issues and challenges, many countries adopted a decentralized employment services system that helps and empowers local governments and community-based institutions to deliver employment programs effectively. This approach enhances accessibility and ensures that employment services reach underserved populations, particularly those in rural and marginalized communities. These insights underscore the need to strengthen localized employment service mechanisms, such as the institutionalization of Barangay-level employment support systems, to improve employment facilitation and labor market responsiveness at the community level.

In the Philippines, the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) plays an important part in promoting employment facilitation, livelihood support, and career guidance at the local level. Established under Republic Act No. 8759 or the PESO Act of 1999, and further strengthened by Republic Act No. 10691 in 2015, PESO was designed to decentralize employment services by integrating them into local government units across the Philippines. As a non-fee charging entity, PESO provides employment information, job matching, livelihood assistance, and career facilitation services to job seekers and employers.

In recent years, the national government has emphasized the importance of decentralizing basic services to local government units (LGUs) to improve efficiency and responsiveness. Developments following the Mandanas-Garcia ruling have further expanded the fiscal responsibilities and service-delivery roles of LGUs', underscoring the need to strengthen local institutions and frontline service mechanisms. In this context, bringing employment services closer to communities through barangay-level structures has become increasingly relevant.

Decentralization has long been recognized as an effective governance strategy in public administration. Scholars emphasize that devolving administrative functions to lower levels of government enhances responsiveness, efficiency, and accountability in service delivery. In the Philippine context, decentralization enables local government units to address development concerns specific to their communities. Studies on localized employment services also suggest that community-based institutions can reduce information gaps and improve access to employment opportunities, particularly for marginalized sectors in rural areas. The establishment of Barangay PESO aligns with these principles by bringing employment facilitation services closer to community residents.

Despite these insights, there are still gaps in understanding what is needed to make Barangay PESO fully functional at the grassroots level. Although national laws require Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs) in local government units, and some municipalities have passed ordinances to institutionalize Barangay PESOs, implementation challenges remain. Research on local governance shows that establishing these offices requires more than legal mandates, it also demands sufficient resources, clear operational guidelines, administrative



capacity, and ongoing political and leadership support. Many barangays face budget, staffing, and infrastructure constraints that can hinder the effective delivery of localized employment services. This is especially true in the Municipality of Libmanan, Camarines Sur, the province's largest municipality by land area, composed of seventy-five (75) barangays. These barangays vary widely in geography, including upland, lowland, and coastal areas, and present diverse socio-economic conditions and employment challenges. Such diversity underscores the importance of accessible and responsive employment facilitation services at the barangay level to ensure that opportunities reach all sectors of the community.

Despite the expansion of Public Employment Service Office (PESO) systems in Philippine local governments, there is still limited empirical evidence on barangay-level administrative readiness, stakeholder awareness, and perceived implementation challenges before Barangay PESO units are fully operational. Although national policies encourage decentralized employment services, only a few studies have examined how prepared barangays in first-class municipalities like Libmanan, Camarines Sur are to implement these services. This gap highlights the need to assess barangay readiness, stakeholder awareness, and possible challenges that may affect the effective and sustainable implementation of Barangay PESO at the community level.

In response to these policy directions and local needs, the Sangguniang Bayan of Libmanan enacted Municipal Ordinance No. 24-20, series of 2024, institutionalizing the establishment of Barangay PESO in all barangays. The ordinance aims to further decentralize employment facilitation by empowering barangays to coordinate directly with the Municipal PESO and relevant agencies.

Ensuring not only the institutionalization but also the operationalization of Barangay PESOs has the potential to improve accessibility, enhance labor market participation, and contribute to achieving of the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, n.d.), particularly SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 1 (No Poverty). However, despite these expected benefits, the ordinance had not yet been fully implemented at the time of the study. No Barangay PESO offices were operational, and no Implementing Rules and Regulations had been issued to guide execution. This situation reflects a persistent gap between policy and practice in local governance, where legislative measures exist but administrative readiness and operational mechanisms remain insufficient.

Given these challenges, it is important to examine at what makes Barangay PESO implementation effective at the local level. This includes understanding how prepared barangays are administratively, how aware stakeholders are of the program, and the potential obstacles that may arise during implementation. Examining these factors can give local government units valuable guidance in developing strategies and policies that ensure Barangay PESO operates efficiently and sustainably, ultimately providing better employment support to the community.

The institutionalization of Barangay Public Employment Service Offices (Barangay PESO) in the Municipality of Libmanan through Municipal Ordinance No. 24-20, series of 2024, shows the local government's commitment to bringing employment services closer to the people. By establishing Barangay PESO at the community level, the municipality aims to make labor-market programs more accessible and responsive to residents' needs.

Research Objectives

By assessing barangay administrative readiness and stakeholder awareness, this study provided an empirical baseline to bridge the gap between policy institutionalization and operational implementation. This approach is particularly relevant because understanding local administrative capacity and stakeholder preparedness is essential for translating a theoretical ordinance into a functional service delivery system. Beyond academic inquiry, the findings of this study are intended to inform evidence-based policy decisions, particularly the development of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) and strategic guidelines needed to operationalize Barangay PESO effectively in the Municipality of Libmanan.

Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Determine the level of administrative readiness of barangays in terms of manpower, budget, infrastructure, and coordination mechanisms with the Municipal PESO and related agencies;
2. Assess the level of awareness and understanding of barangay officials, Barangay PESO Coordinator, and community residents regarding the concept, roles, and objectives of the Barangay PESO;
3. Identify the challenges and constraints that may hinder the effective implementation of the Barangay PESO;
4. Examine the relationship among administrative readiness, stakeholder awareness, and perceived implementation challenges related to Barangay PESO implementation; and
5. Formulate policy and strategic recommendations based on statistical findings to support the effective and sustainable implementation of Barangay PESO in the Municipality of Libmanan, Camarines Sur.

SCOPE AND DELIMITATION

This study focused on assessing the administrative readiness, the stakeholder awareness, and the perceived implementation challenges related to the institutionalized Barangay PESO in the Municipality of Libmanan, Camarines Sur.

The study was conducted in the Municipality of Libmanan, which consists of seventy-five (75) barangays. However, only selected barangays were included in the study to represent both poblacion and rural barangays.

A total of **forty (40) respondents** participated in the study. The respondents were composed of representatives from selected barangays, including barangay officials, PESO-related personnel, and community residents who could provide relevant information regarding employment facilitation services at the barangay level.

The study used survey questionnaires to gather data on administrative readiness, stakeholder awareness, and perceived implementation challenges. The analysis focused on identifying relationships among these variables. The findings served as the basis for discussing the potential effectiveness and sustainability of Barangay PESO implementation.

The study primarily examined four dimensions of administrative readiness, namely manpower, budget, infrastructure, and coordination with the Municipal PESO, as these were considered essential in determining the readiness of barangays to implement Barangay PESO. It also assessed the level of awareness and understanding of barangay officials, potential Barangay



PESO Coordinators, and selected community residents regarding the purpose, roles, and objectives of Barangay PESO.

In addition, the study explored the perceived challenges that may hinder the effective implementation and sustainability of Barangay PESO, particularly during the initial stages of operationalization.

The study was conducted during the academic year 2024–2025, at a time when Barangay PESO had already been institutionalized through a municipal ordinance but had not yet been fully implemented due to the absence of Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The scope of the study was delimited to assessing readiness and perceptions related to the implementation of Barangay PESO. It did not evaluate the actual performance, outcomes, or impact of Barangay PESO services, as these offices were not yet operational at the time of the study. The findings were confined to the Municipality of Libmanan and may not be generalized to other local government units.

THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Decentralization Theory, Diffusion of Innovation Theory, and Institutional Theory to explain the factors influencing the implementation readiness of the institutionalized Barangay Public Employment Service Office in the Municipality of Libmanan, Camarines Sur.

Decentralization Theory, as developed by Rondinelli (1981), emphasizes the transfer of authority, responsibility, and resources from central to local governments. It highlights that effective decentralization depends on the administrative capacity of local units, including manpower, budget, infrastructure, and coordination mechanisms. (Rondinelli, 1981, pp. 133-145) In this study, the theory provides the basis for assessing the level of administrative readiness of barangays in implementing PESO functions.

Institutional Theory explains how policies and programs become embedded within organizational structures and practices over time. It underscores the importance of legitimacy, formal rules such as policies and implementing guidelines, and resource support in sustaining programs. (Institutional Theory - TheoryHub, n.d.) This perspective is used to analyze the institutional challenges that may affect the operationalization of Barangay PESO.

Diffusion of Innovation Theory, on the other hand, explains how new ideas and programs are adopted within a social system. It posits that awareness, perception, and acceptance among stakeholders significantly influence the adoption process. (Rogers, 2003) In this study, the theory guides the examination of stakeholders' awareness, support, and participation in the implementation of Barangay PESO.

This study posits that the effectiveness and sustainability of Barangay PESO in Libmanan are significantly influenced by administrative readiness, stakeholder awareness and perception, and institutional challenges, as grounded in decentralization, diffusion of innovation, and institutional theories.



The integration of these theories provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how local capacity (Decentralization Theory), stakeholder acceptance (Diffusion of Innovation Theory), and institutional support (Institutional Theory) collectively shape the readiness, effectiveness, and sustainability of Barangay PESO initiatives.

Decentralization Theory

The first theory that guides this study is Decentralization Theory, developed by Dennis Rondinelli (1981). Rondinelli (1981) defines decentralization as the transfer of authority, responsibility, and resources from central government to lower levels of administration, including local government units (LGUs). The theory emphasizes that devolving functions to local institutions fosters responsiveness, efficiency, and accountability in service delivery. In the Philippine context, decentralization is embodied in the Local Government Code of 1991, which grants LGUs greater autonomy in delivering basic services, including employment facilitation.

As applied to this study, Decentralization Theory explains how the administrative readiness of barangays in terms of manpower, budget, infrastructure, and coordination directly affects the projected effectiveness of Barangay PESO. The key concepts of the theory, authority transfer, resource allocation, autonomy, and accountability, interact with the study's variables by determining how prepared barangays are to assume devolved employment facilitation functions. The theory holds that when local governments are provided with adequate autonomy, capable personnel, and sufficient resources, they can deliver more responsive and efficient employment services. Therefore, it is expected that higher administrative readiness at the barangay level will lead to greater effectiveness in the operation of Barangay PESO because empowered and capable local units can better implement devolved employment programs.

The institutionalization of Barangay PESOs represents an extension of decentralization, as it seeks to bring employment facilitation closer to the grassroots level. By establishing PESOs at the barangay level, services become more accessible, responsive, and inclusive, particularly for marginalized groups in far-flung communities.

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

The second theory underpinning this study was the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, developed by Everett Rogers (2003). The theory explained how new ideas, programs, or policies were communicated and adopted over time among members of a social system.

According to the theory, the adoption of an innovation occurred through a series of stages, namely knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Individuals first became aware of an innovation, formed perceptions or attitudes toward it, and then decided whether to accept or reject it.

In this study, the Diffusion of Innovation Theory was used to explain stakeholder awareness and perception of the institutionalized Barangay PESO. The theory helped explain how barangay officials, Barangay PESO Coordinator, and community residents became aware of Barangay PESO, how they formed attitudes toward its purpose and benefits, and how these perceptions influenced their willingness to support its implementation at the local level. The knowledge and persuasion stages were particularly relevant, as these stages emphasized the role of information dissemination and perception formation in encouraging acceptance of new public programs such as Barangay PESO.

The theoretical perspective suggests that if local governments are provided with adequate autonomy, capable personnel, and sufficient resources, they can deliver more responsive and efficient employment services. Therefore, it is expected that higher administrative readiness at the barangay level will lead to greater effectiveness in the operation of Barangay PESO, because empowered and capable local units can better implement devolved employment programs.

Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory, as explained by Scott (2004), posits how institutions acquire and maintain the structures, policies, and practices that are necessary for them to be viewed as legitimate and, consequently, stable. Scott pointed out three institutional pillars: the regulative pillar (laws and rules), the normative pillar (social norms and values), and the cultural-cognitive pillar (shared beliefs and meanings). The Theory of Institutions states that organizations are not simply technical structures, but also social entities shaped by the rules and expectations of the institutions and society at large. Here, Institutional Theory sheds light on the projected difficulties and obstacles that result from the Barangay PESO good governance centers' implementation.

The application of the theory suggests that the presence of such policies or ordinances as Municipal Ordinance No. 24–20 can only guarantee partial success, unless supported by institutional mechanisms like Properly Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), sufficient resources, skilled personnel, and stakeholder acceptance. Implementation is expected to be more challenging in barangays that are not supported by institutional structures. On the other hand, barangays with the support of the institutions that are dedicated to the cause will be able to activate the Barangay PESO even though there are laws enforcing this. Thus, Institutional Theory justifies the argument made regarding how much institutional readiness and legitimacy will affect the Barangay PESO sustainability and success.

In the context of this study, these theories collectively explain the factors influencing the implementation of Barangay PESO initiatives. Decentralization theory emphasizes the importance of local government capacity and administrative readiness in delivering employment services at the barangay level. Diffusion of Innovation theory explains how awareness and understanding of Barangay PESO programs spread among stakeholders and community members.

Institutional theory highlights how such initiatives can become embedded within local governance structures, contributing to their sustainability. Together, these theories provide conceptual basis for examining administrative readiness, stakeholder awareness, and implementation challenges in Barangay PESO implementation.

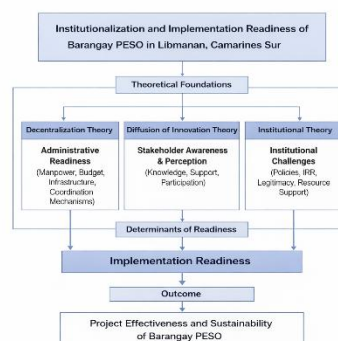


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework of this study presents the key variables influencing the implementation readiness of the Barangay Public Employment Service Office (Barangay PESO) in the Municipality of Libmanan, Camarines Sur. As employment facilitation services become increasingly decentralized, the effectiveness of local initiatives depends not only on policy mandates but also on the readiness of local institutions and the level of stakeholder support. Administrative capacity and stakeholder awareness are therefore essential in ensuring that local employment programs are accessible, responsive, and sustainable.

Despite the policy direction toward decentralizing employment services, translating institutional mandates into actual practice at the barangay level remains a challenge. Limited administrative resources, varying levels of stakeholder awareness, and existing implementation constraints may hinder the operationalization of programs such as Barangay PESO. These gaps highlight the need to assess the conditions that influence implementation readiness at the local level.

In this study, administrative readiness, stakeholder awareness, and perceived implementation challenges are treated as the primary independent variables. Administrative readiness refers to the capacity of barangays in terms of manpower, budget allocation, infrastructure, and coordination mechanisms necessary to support PESO operations. Stakeholder awareness refers to the level of knowledge, understanding, and support of barangay officials and community members regarding the purpose and functions of Barangay PESO. Perceived implementation challenges refer to the administrative, logistical, and institutional constraints that may affect the establishment and operation of Barangay PESO.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship among these variables. The framework shows that administrative readiness, stakeholder awareness, and perceived implementation challenges do not operate sequentially but function simultaneously in influencing implementation readiness, which serves as the central variable of the study.

Implementation readiness reflects the overall preparedness of barangays to establish and operationalize PESO services effectively. Furthermore, the framework posits that higher levels of implementation readiness contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of Barangay PESO.

The framework assumes that higher administrative readiness and stakeholder awareness, combined with manageable implementation challenges, lead to greater implementation readiness and, consequently, more effective and sustainable PESO operations.

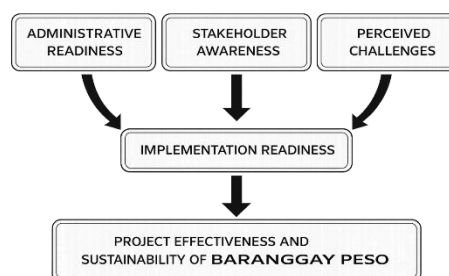


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

II. MATERIALS & METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive–correlational research design. The descriptive approach was used to determine the levels of administrative readiness, stakeholder awareness, and perceived implementation challenges related to the establishment of Barangay Public Employment Service Office (Barangay PESO). The correlational approach was applied to examine the relationships among these variables.

The study focused solely on quantitative data; therefore, qualitative methods such as interviews or open-ended responses were not included. This design was appropriate because the study aimed to measure existing conditions and analyze relationships among variables without manipulating them.

The study was guided by a post-positivist philosophical worldview, which assumes that social phenomena can be examined objectively through systematic data collection and statistical analysis. This perspective is appropriate for quantitative research because it emphasizes observable evidence and the testing of relationships among variables.

B. Respondent/Participants of the Study

Stratified sampling was used to ensure representation from both poblacion and rural barangays. Purposive sampling was applied in selecting barangay officials and PESO personnel due to their specific roles in the implementation of Barangay PESO. Community residents were selected based on availability during the data collection period. A total of forty (40) respondents participated in the study, considering accessibility and availability constraints at the time of data gathering.

Although the respondents belonged to different sectors—barangay officials, PESO personnel, and selected community residents—the data were analyzed at the aggregate level. The study did not aim to compare responses across respondent groups; rather, it examined the relationships among administrative readiness, stakeholder awareness, and perceived implementation challenges related to Barangay PESO implementation. The findings served as the basis for discussing the potential effectiveness and sustainability of Barangay PESO initiatives.

Sampling

Stratified sampling was used to ensure representation from both poblacion and rural barangays in the Municipality of Libmanan. The barangays were first grouped according to their classification, and selected barangays from each group were included in the study to capture differences in administrative conditions and stakeholder awareness.

Purposive sampling was then used in selecting the respondents, particularly barangay officials, PESO staff, and selected community representatives who possess relevant knowledge about barangay governance and employment facilitation programs.

A total of forty (40) respondents participated in the study. Although the sample size is relatively limited, the respondents were selected because of their familiarity with



the institutionalization and potential implementation of Barangay PESO. The study, therefore, focuses on obtaining informed perspectives from key stakeholders to assess administrative readiness, stakeholder awareness, and perceived implementation challenges related to Barangay PESO in the Municipality of Libmanan.

C. Demographic Profile

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 40 respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, current position or role in the barangay, years of service, years of residency, and barangay classification. These personal and professional attributes may influence how individuals perceive administrative readiness, awareness of programs, and the challenges encountered in implementing barangay initiatives. Moreover, the demographic information ensures that the interpretation of the findings is aligned with the actual conditions and experiences of the respondents. Most respondents were aged 36–45 (30.0%), followed by 46–55 (25.0%) and 26–35 (20.0%), indicating that the majority belonged to the productive working age. In terms of sex, female respondents (62.5%) outnumbered male respondents (37.5%). Most participants were married (57.5%), while 37.5% were single.

Regarding educational attainment, the majority were college level or college graduates (67.5%), followed by high school graduates (22.5%). In terms of role in the barangay, the largest group consisted of residents/community members (35.0%), followed by Barangay Captains (20.0%) and Barangay Kagawads (12.5%). Most respondents had more than 10 years of residency in the barangay (87.5%), indicating strong familiarity with their community. Lastly, 55.0% of respondents were from rural barangays, while 45.0% were from urban or Poblacion areas.

D. Research Instrument

A structured survey questionnaire was used as the primary data-gathering instrument. The questionnaire consisted of four parts: (1) demographic profile of the respondents, which gathered the information on age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, role in the barangay, years of residency, and barangay classification. (2) administrative readiness of barangays, which measured the level of preparedness of barangays in terms of manpower, budget allocation, infrastructure, and coordination mechanisms with the Municipal PESO and partner agencies. (3) stakeholder awareness, which assessed the level of knowledge and understanding of barangay officials and community residents regarding the purpose, functions, and objectives of Barangay PESO. (4) Implementation challenges, which identified perceived constraints that may hinder the effective implementation of Barangay PESO, including administrative, logistical, and institutional limitations. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree.

The research instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire consisting of forty (40) items designed to measure the key variables of the study. The instrument included 20 items for administrative readiness, 10 items for stakeholder awareness, and 10 items for perceived implementation challenges related to the institutionalization of Barangay Public Employment Service Office (Barangay PESO).

The instrument underwent content validation by experts in Public Administration and employment facilitation to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study. A pilot test was conducted in one barangay not included in the final sample with a total of 40 participants, similar to the sample of this study. Using Cronbach's Alpha (α), the results of the pilot test indicated that the instrument was reliable for use in actual data collection, gaining 0.89 and indicating good consistency.

Figure 4 presents the methodological flow of the study. The process began with identifying the research problem and formulating the research objectives and variables. A quantitative descriptive–correlational design was used, and a survey questionnaire was developed and validated through expert review and pilot testing. Respondents consisting of barangay officials, PESO staff, and community residents were selected, and data were collected through survey administration.

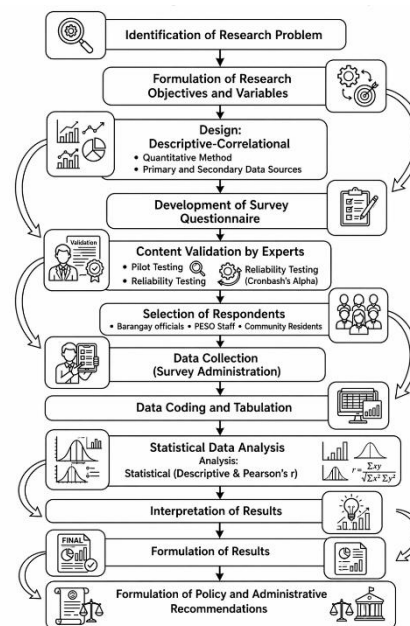


Figure 4. Methodological Flow of the Study

E. Data Analysis Techniques

The data gathered from the survey questionnaires were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to address the objectives of the study. First, the completed questionnaires were checked to ensure that all responses were complete and accurate. The data were then encoded and organized in a statistical spreadsheet for analysis.

To examine the relationships among the variables, the Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was used to assess the relationships among administrative readiness, stakeholder awareness, and perceived implementation challenges. A $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance was used as the basis for accepting or rejecting the null hypotheses.

Range Interval		Verbal Description	
4.50 – 5.00	Highly Ready	Fully Aware	Very High Perceived Challenge
3.50 – 4.49	Ready	Aware	High Perceived Challenge
2.50 – 3.49	Moderately Ready	Moderately Aware	Moderate Perceived Challenge
1.50 – 2.49	Not Ready	Slightly Aware	Low Perceived Challenge
1.00 – 1.49	Not at All Ready	Not Aware	Very Low Perceived Challenge

Table 2. Likert Scale Used

F. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research standards to ensure the protection of the respondents. Before the data collection, permission was obtained from the Mayor's Office thru the Municipal Public Employment Service Office and barangay officials in the Municipality of Libmanan. Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature. Responses were coded to ensure anonymity, and identifying information was not disclosed. Respondents were allowed to decline or withdraw from participation without penalty. The study avoided harm and ensured that findings were presented constructively.

The researcher is currently engaged in public service within the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) of the Municipality of Libmanan. This professional background provided a valuable contextual understanding of employment facilitation programs and the operational environment of local government units. However, to maintain objectivity and minimize potential bias, the researcher adhered strictly to standardized data collection procedures and relied on structured survey instruments. Data analysis was conducted using statistical methods to ensure that interpretations were based on empirical evidence rather than personal experience or assumptions.

Informed Consent. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and their right to refuse or withdraw at any time. Participation was purely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before data collection.

Confidentiality. The identities of the respondents were kept confidential. No personal identifiers were included in the questionnaire, and all responses were treated with strict confidentiality.

Data Protection. All data gathered were used solely for academic purposes. Completed questionnaires and electronic data files were securely stored and accessed only by the researcher to ensure data protection and prevent unauthorized use.

3. RESULTS

Administrative Readiness of Barangays

Administrative readiness in this study refers to manpower and human resource capability, budgetary support, logistical support, infrastructure facilities, and coordination and linkages. Mean and ranking pairs provided the researcher of this specific tool to know which of the areas are little of the barangay's strengths and which need improvement.

This was done by knowing the highest and lowest rating, and their need of priority for interventions and capacity-building efforts basically help the barangay to be overall ready for program implementation. This is important as to know the readiness of barangay and its overall capacity to support the objectives of the Barangay PESO and projects that empowers local communities.

As shown in the literature map, similar with Barangay PESO, administrative readiness is an important factor that influences its success implementation. Like manpower capability, financial and logistical support, infrastructure, and institutional coordination.

Manpower and Human Resource Capability

Table 3 reveals the assessment of the respondents on the manpower/human resource readiness of the barangays for PESO operations. The best assessed statement is "Barangay staff are willing to attend training related to employment services" with a mean of 4.52, interpreted as Highly Ready. This implies the willingness of barangay personnel to carry out employment-related functions. In the case of Libmanan, this could be attributed to their current exposure to the Municipal PESO of which they have been invited to attend training programs and other activities relative to the said program.

The statement "The barangay leadership supports staff assignments for PESO operations" obtained a mean of 4.35, interpreted as Ready signifying support from the barangay leadership on the involvement of personnel in PESO-related activities. The "A potential Barangay PESO Coordinator has already been identified" got the lowest mean of 3.25, interpreted as Moderately Ready indicating that although the barangays have shown ready in capabilities competence, others have not identified a PESO focal-person.

The computed over-all mean of 3.97, interpreted as Ready, infers that in general, the barangays are more rehabilitative and a better preparedness in manpower ready for the possible establishment of Barangay PESO.

In general, the finds show that many of the barangay personnel, by nature are willing and so is the leadership on the matter, although the formal designation of PESO coordinator, should have been given the importance the same was needed.

Without an assigned specialized staff needed for Employment facilitation and without a role assignment, along with training of staff, PESO operations may entail utilization of general staff administrative tasks rather than people responsible with specific knowledge of employment facilitation. The results are in line with Tabuga (2021, PIDS), who asserted that barangay-level employment services can only be effective if the staff have the necessary knowledge and are subjected to continuous training.

The results shown here are congruent to Tabuga (2021, PIDS), who noted that employment services at the barangay level can only be achieved if staff has requisite knowledge and is eligible for upgraded continuous training. The strong support from the leaders is congruent



to ILO (2019), OECD (2017) who said that frontline officers that are empowered offer an effective measure of employment facilitation.

Table 3.

Level of Administrative Readiness in Terms of Manpower and Human Resource Capability

STATEMENTS	MEAN	INTERPRETATION
Barangay staff are willing to attend training related to employment services.	4.52	Highly Ready
The barangay leadership supports staff assignments for PESO operations.	4.35	Ready
The barangay has enough qualified personnel to manage PESO-related functions.	3.87	Ready
Barangay staff are knowledgeable about basic employment facilitation processes.	3.85	Ready
A potential Barangay PESO Coordinator has already been identified.	3.25	Moderately Ready
OVERALL MEAN	3.97	Ready

Legend:

- 4.50-5.00 - Highly Ready
- 3.50-4.49 - Ready
- 2.50-3.49 - Moderately Ready
- 1.50-2.49 - Not Ready
- 1.00-1.49 - Not at All Ready

The willingness of barangay personnel to accept training is a reflection of an enabling environment for the development of institutional capacity. This disparity in qualifications and designating a focal-person is in accord with DOLE's PESO institutionalization framework regarding the need for clear role assignments and formal staffing structures in order to have functional PESO units.

The comparison finds resonance with Institutional Theory, regarding leadership, on the advisability of formal role assignment and routinization indicating first stages of an institutionalization process. The designation of personnel responsible for PESO related functions serves to enhance program legitimacy, even without full specialization, and indicates ingrained goodwill on the part of the organization. Agreements of this nature assist in normalizing the function within all governance levels on.

Empirical studies emerge from observations of DOLE and PIDS on the institutionalization of PESO in Philippine LGUs. Barangays are shown to rely on available personnel during initial implementation, and such studies conclude that continued training, along



with gradually increased staff specialization, rather than a sudden ramping up, seem to be the most achievable approaches to dealing with employment service at the grassroots level". It would be helpful for barangays to prepare a formal resolution stating the designation of a Barangay PESO Coordinator, to strengthen accountability and coordination.

They may also embark on training programs on employment facilitation and labor market information systems for the personnel. They can prepare a competency based human resource plan aligned with PESO functions and increasing their partnership with the Municipal PESO office to avail training/ mentoring and capacity building support. Finally, with the increasing operations of PESO, personnel or Focus Persons may also gradually appointed for improved services and sustainability.

Budgetary and Logistical Support

Table 4 shows the overall weighted mean of 3.58 is interpreted as Ready, which indicates that barangays in the Municipality of Libmanan have achieved administrative readiness in terms of budgetary and logistical support for the potential operation of a PESO.

The highest mean score of 3.95, interpreted as Ready, was obtained for the indicator "There are available logistics (supplies, printing material materials, communication tools) for PESO activities". Barangays seem to have some basic resources for operational and employment facilitation activities.

In contrast the indicator "The barangay is capable of supporting honoraria for PESO personnel if needed" had the lowest mean of 3.30, interpreted as Moderately Ready, which suggests that while barangays have available logistics, the availability of financial or other logistical resources for the sustainability of PESO seems somewhat limited. The material or logistical support appears to be relatively more available than dedicated financial resources. These findings suggest that financial allocation pertains to one of the hurdles to the establishment and operation of PESOs at the barangay level. Without additional budget allocations, employment facilitation activities may put a strain on existing administrative funds and may hamper the ability of barangays to sustain programs and services related to the PESO.

These findings are corroborate finding of Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), Orbeta et al. (2016) and Tabuga (2021), that many local governments have limited budgets to support the concrete employment service delivery. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2019) also reinforces that inadequate local financing is the constraint affecting the effectiveness of employment facilitators.

Table 4.

Level of Administrative Readiness in Terms of Budgetary and Logistical Support

STATEMENTS	MEAN	INTERPRETATION
There are available logistics (supplies, printing materials, communication tools) for PESO activities.	3.95	Ready
The barangay allocates funds for employment and livelihood programs.	3.70	Ready

The barangay can provide financial support for local job fairs or livelihood events.	3.62	Ready
The barangay budget includes allocations that may support PESO operations.	3.35	Moderately Ready
The barangay is capable of supporting honoraria for PESO personnel if needed.	3.30	Moderately ready
OVERALL MEAN	3.58	Ready

Legend:

- 4.50-5.00 - Highly Ready
- 3.50-4.49 - Ready
- 2.50-3.49 - Moderately Ready
- 1.50-2.49 - Not Ready
- 1.00-1.49 - Not at All Ready

“Implementation of sustainable local employment services would require stable and predictable budget to support service delivery particularly for manpower, facilities, and operational activities”, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2017).

Based on our findings, we recommend that the Barangays start proposing the PESO component of the investments to be embedded in their Annual Investment Plans (AIP) to ensure its sustainable financial backing for employment facilitation services. Also, the barangays may further explore partnership with Municipal PESO, DOLE, TESDA and other partner organizations to help mobilize resource, submit proposals to livelihood grants and allocations for honoraria/incentive of PESO personnel will make its service operation sustainable at the barangay level.

Infrastructure and Facilities

Table 5 presents the level of administrative readiness of the barangays in terms of infrastructure and facilities for the potential implementation of Barangay PESO. The results show an overall mean of 3.95, reading as Ready. It means that barangays have sufficient facilities and government infrastructure to conduct employment facilitation services. Indicating that barangays have the right technology and nullable to infrastructure to conduct PESO related activities.

The indicator “The barangay office maintains records of employment or livelihood programs” have lowest mean of 3.50, still readies, shows that while the infrastructures and physical facilities are available, the missing point is in administration and record support findings by International Labour Organization (ILO, 2017), validates that employment service centers must be “accessible, physical proximity to job seekers, particularly for vulnerable job-seeking assistance”.

Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2017) highlighted that “Digitalisation of tools and information and communication technology (ICT) have an important role in strengthening contemporary employment”. In addition, Tabuga (2021) noted that many barangay level employment service initiatives in the Philippines face challenges related to data monitoring and documentation systems, which may affect program tracking and evaluation.

Table 5.
Level of Administrative Readiness in Terms of Infrastructure and Facilities

STATEMENTS	MEAN	INTERPRETATION
The barangay is accessible to job seekers and residents who may avail of PESO services.	4.47	Ready
Computers and internet access are available for employment-related services.	4.02	Ready
There is sufficient furniture and office equipment for PESO operations.	3.87	Ready
The barangay has an office space that can serve as a PESO Action Center.	3.87	Ready
The barangay office maintains records of employment or livelihood programs.	3.50	Ready
OVERALL MEAN	3.95	Ready

Legend:

- 4.50-5.00 - Highly Ready
- 3.50-4.49 - Ready
- 2.50-3.49 - Moderately Ready
- 1.50-2.49 - Not Ready
- 1.00-1.49 - Not at All Ready

Based on these findings, barangays are encouraged to strengthen documentation and record management systems for employment facilitation programs. Establishing a digital records management system may improve the monitoring of job matching of activities, beneficiaries and service outcomes. In addition, barangays may allocate a dedicated PESO service space to complement the visibility of their service and improve the access of job seekers. Regular maintenance of ICT facilities and training of personnel in data management and documentation procedures may further strengthen the level of administrative readiness of the barangays in implementing PESO.

Coordination and Linkages

Table 6 presents the level of administrative readiness of the barangays in terms of coordination and linkages with partner institutions for the potential implementation of Barangay PESO. The overall mean was of 4.19 or Ready. The barangays manifest a strong level of coordination and collaboration with relevant employment service agencies.

Among the indicators, the statement “The Municipal PESO provides updates or guidance to the barangay regarding PESO programs” has the highest mean score of 4.45 or Ready. Hence, barangays receive regular guidance/technical support from the Municipal PESO. This is important in facilitating employment-related programs and service at the local level.

The coordination of communication channel between barangay service providers and the municipal PESO are also clear, with a likert of 4.30 or Ready from the response on the statement “Coordination mechanisms between the barangay and municipal PESO are clear and effective. Another indicator “Communication with TESDA or other partner agencies for training and employment support (mean = 4.17); Participation in municipal job fairs or DOLE-sponsored activities (mean = 4.05)” was likewise rated as Ready, indicating that barangays establish linkages with agencies for employment facilitation.

Table 6.

Level of Administrative Readiness in Terms of Coordination and Linkages

STATEMENTS	MEAN	INTERPRETATION
The Municipal PESO provides updates or guidance to the barangay regarding PESO programs.	4.45	Ready
Coordination mechanisms between the barangay and municipal PESO are clear and effective.	4.30	Ready
The barangay communicates with TESDA or other partner agencies for training and employment support.	4.17	Ready
The barangay has participated in municipal or DOLE-sponsored job fairs or activities.	4.05	Ready
The barangay regularly coordinates with the Municipal PESO regarding employment programs.	3.97	Ready
OVERALL MEAN	4.19	Ready

Legend:

4.50-5.00 - Highly Ready



- 3.50-4.49 - Ready
- 2.50-3.49 - Moderately Ready
- 1.50-2.49 - Not Ready
- 1.00-1.49 - Not at All Ready

However, the indicator “The barangay regularly coordinates with Municipal PESO (Public Employment Service Office) regarding employment programs” obtained the lowest mean score of 3.97 (Ready), which means that although there is some coordination, it is not as regular as it could be.

The results are indicative of the fact that even if the barangays have a strong web of institutional linkages for employment facilitation, coordination mechanisms such as Municipal PESO, or TESDA etc., is an important factor in the effectiveness and success of these initiatives, (ILO, 2019). Similarly, studies from the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) highlight that collaboration between local government units and PESO offices significantly increase employment service delivery and program result. In addition, according to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2017) strong linkages need to be established between employment services and skills development institutions (such as TESDA) to strengthen the local labour market interventions.

Based on these findings, coordinates may formally agree with the Municipal PESO and TESDA on regular schedule of meetings to discuss PESO program implementation. Enhancing participation in municipal job fairs and in the job fairs sponsored by the DOLE may as well enhance the barangay employment facilitation services. Formulating partnership agreement with some NGO, private employers or training centers may as well enhance employment opportunities. Formulating system of coordination monitoring or logbook ensures regular communication and strengthens institutional collaboration among partner agencies.

Table 7 presents the level of administrative readiness of barangays of the Municipality of Libmanan in four domains of manpower and human resource capability, budgetary and logistic support, infrastructure and facilities, and coordination and linkages. The overall weighted mean of 3.92 is interpreted as Ready, indicating that in general barangays are assessable on an adequate level to ready for potential implementation of the Barangay Public Employment Service Office (Barangay PESO).

Of the four domains of readiness, coordination and linkages obtained the highest mean of 4.19 points interpreted as Ready. This indicates that barangays have maintained strong collaborative relationships with the Municipal PESO and agencies partner in employment facilitation; inter-agency contacts and networks at the local level are also well established. Following this are manpower and human resource capability (mean = 3.97); infrastructure and facilities (mean = 3.95) both interpreted as Ready, indicating that in general barangays are responsive personnel administrative support and physical resources that will make PESO activities possible.

These results imply that resources and operational facilities are adequately available to enable employment services at barangay level. Support for budgetary and logistical concerns had the lowest average mean of 3.58 but still interpreted as Ready. This indicates that while barangays are organized and staffed and have good enough infrastructures with which to provide Barangay PESO, financial capacity is the weakest link in their administrative capacity. Overall, this route shows that the barangays have the institutional framework to support implementation



of PESO but not the resources for employment facilitation services to be sustainable, or nor do they have budgets, even if limited, to support PESO operations.

This matches the findings of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (Tabuga, 2021) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE, 2018), that many local government units are reasonably well-endowed with adequate administrative capacity but do not have the money to institutionalize PESO operations. International studies like ILO (2019) and OECD (2017) locate the strong balance between manpower capability, infrastructure and support, institutional coordination, and sustainable financial resources as prerequisites on which effective employment service delivery rests.

Table 7.

Summary of Level of Administrative Readiness in Terms of Manpower and Human Resource Capability, Budgetary and Logistical Support, Infrastructure and Facilities, and Coordination and Linkages.

STATEMENTS	MEAN	INTERPRETATION
Coordination and Linkages	4.19	Ready
Manpower and Human Resource Capability	3.97	Ready
Support, Infrastructure, and Facilities	3.95	Ready
Budgetary and Logistical Support	3.58	Ready
OVERALL MEAN	3.92	Ready

Legend:

- 4.50-5.00 - Highly Ready
- 3.50-4.49 - Ready
- 2.50-3.49 - Moderately Ready
- 1.50-2.49 - Not Ready
- 1.00-1.49 - Not at All Ready

The findings suggest that proposals for budgeting and support for PESO operations at the barangay should be part of their annual budget and included in their comprehensive and sectional development plans. They may wish to strengthen this by leveraging their existing strong coordination network with Municipal PESO, DOLE, TESDA, and partner agencies and groups to mobilize technical and financial resources.

Furthermore, ongoing investments in capacity building and infrastructure enhancement, as well as in improving digital employment service systems should also enhance the administrative readiness of barangays in adopting PESO for a longer period.

Awareness and Understanding of Barangay PESO

This part of the study explored how well acquainted the respondents are to the functions of PESO in providing employment services, resources for livelihood, and in aiding the economic growth of the community. Awareness is an important factor in the successful implementation of the program. A program is more valuable if the stakeholders are aware of what the program sets out to help achieve and the type of services it will provide through the PESO. If barangay officials and residents are aware of these things, they can maximize to its fullest, involve themselves in the program and support its tenability. Knowing the functions of Barangay PESO is important because that determines the view of the community on the relevance and applicability of the services.

The perception of the respondents, knowing about job matching, skills training, career guidance, and employment facilitation shows their acquaintance at how the PESO help improve employment as a whole. If community members are aware, they will avail of the services rendered and may recommend it to other members of the community and even lobby for its advancement for the barangay, otherwise low level of awareness indicates gaps in disseminating information, clarity and the atmosphere in the program.

Table 8.

Summary of Administrative Readiness of Barangays

ADMINISTRATIVE DIMENSION	WEIGHTED MEAN	INTERPRETATION	KEY OBSERVATION
Manpower	3.97	Ready	Personnel willing to undergo training but formal coordinator designation is limited
Budgetary Support	3.58	Ready	Financial allocation for PESO operations remains limited
Infrastructure	3.95	Ready	Physical facilities available but record management needs improvement
Coordination	4.19	Ready	Strong linkages with Municipal PESO and partner agencies

This section of the study touches how awareness creates attitudes towards Barangay PESO. People that are acquainted with the usefulness of the program may see its value in contributing to local economic growth, assisting jobseekers and in giving out necessary employment services right at their community.

Furthermore, awareness enables barangay officials to incorporate PESO initiatives into local development strategies and to ensure effective coordination between the barangay and municipal or provincial PESO offices. The readiness matrix highlights the four key administrative dimensions impacting the establishment of Barangay PESO. The overall results show a tendency toward readiness for coordination and manpower, but it seems that the financial sustainability may be a liability which may impact long-term viability.

Table 9 shows the level of awareness and understanding of respondents of the purpose, function and benefits of Barangay PESO. The statements showed the willingness to participate in PESO related activities, the knowledge of PESO services in general, as well as the recognition of the benefits of setting up of Barangay PESO in their community. The overall weighted mean was 4.54 which means Fully Aware. It represents a high degree of awareness and understanding of the purpose and importance of Barangay PESO on the part of the respondents.

Some indicators got the highest mean score of 4.75 which is interpreted as Fully Aware. Willingness to support or participate in PESO related activities; recognize the importance of reinforcing partnership with DOLE, TESDA and others; and: understanding that Barangay PESO could also help reduce migration by providing local employment and livelihood opportunities. The foregoing signified that respondents believed in the value of the Barangay PESO attached to employment and economic opportunities. Likewise, respondents strongly Agreed on the establishment of Barangay PESO in the community (mean = 4.72) and agreed that PESO services try to bring employment facilitation near to the people (mean = 4.57). Respondents also agreed that PESO programs can benefit the residents of the barangay (mean = 4.52).

Table 9.

Awareness and Understanding of Barangay PESO Regarding Purpose, Function, and Benefits

STATEMENTS	MEAN	INTERPRETATION
Being willing to support or participate in PESO-related activities once established.	4.75	Fully Aware
Strengthening partnerships with DOLE, TESDA, and other agencies for employment and skills development.	4.75	Fully Aware
Establishing a Barangay PESO can help prevent migration by providing local job opportunities and livelihood support.	4.75	Fully Aware
Supporting the establishment of a Barangay PESO in our community.	4.72	Fully Aware



Understanding that the Barangay PESO aims to bring employment services closer to the people.	4.57	Fully Aware
Believing that the Barangay PESO will be beneficial to the residents of our barangay.	4.52	Fully Aware
Being familiar with the types of services offered by the PESO.	4.45	Aware
Being aware of the existence and purpose of the Public Employment Service Office (PESO).	4.42	Aware
Barangay officials and residents are adequately informed about PESO services.	4.30	Aware
Having attended or heard about employment or livelihood programs organized by the PESO.	4.20	Aware
OVERALL MEAN	4.54	Fully Aware

Legend:

- 4.50-5.00 - Fully Aware
- 3.50-4.49 - Aware
- 2.50-3.49 - Moderately Aware
- 1.50-2.49 - Slightly Aware
- 1.00-1.49 - Not Aware

However, the following surveys items elicited lower means scores: Familiarity with the exact services PESO offers (mean = 4.45), Awareness of the existence of PESO and what it does (mean = 4.42), and I am adequately informed about PESO services (mean = 4.30). Although these indicators can still be interpreted as Aware, the overall result implies that the respondents understand the general purpose and benefits of Barangay PESO, yet their familiarity with the programs and services offered by PESO might need some “enhancing”.

Given the results of the analysis of the data, the following conclusions are drawn. Respondents are supportive of the establishment of Barangay PESO in their community, and recognized its potential role in empowering local employment opportunities. However, the lower scores related to service familiarity indicate that there is room for improvement in how PESO programs are specifically communicated to the public. There is a need for wider information dissemination and orientation programs in communities to further enhance familiarity with PESO services.

This finding corresponds with other studies stressing that community knowledge is an important factor in the success of local employment programs in the community (Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE, 2020), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA, 2018)). Employment programmes proved to be more effective the better informed the



community was, regarding the services and actively participates in programme activities. Essentially, this is similar to other forms of outreach; it is apparent that the barangays should conduct information campaigns and orientations, and community awareness programs about PESO services. Lastly, strengthening community involvement and support for the center will help enhance public support for its goals in the community.

Perceived challenges and constraints in establishing Barangay PESO

Constraints that make it difficult to establish and keep one of these Barangay PESO operations are perceived challenges. These felt challenges and difficulties are specified as an outcome variable as part of exploring both administrative readiness and stakeholder awareness. They include the following:

Financial constraints are commonly cited difficulties since establishing an action center in the first place requires budget, deployments for workers, equipment, facilities and training programs. Where budgets are tight, barangays may find it hard to get or keep action centers operational. Manpower effects may be felt, too, when barangay personnel are already overburdened with work or are unprepared as employment aides. In addition to logistical and infrastructural limitations (e.g., lack of transit, inadequate office space, or improper communication tools), coordination-related obstacles arise from the fact that many barangays do not have an established link with PESO, LGUs, and NGOs, as well as other private institutions that provide job opportunities or training. Because there is less collaboration, barangays cannot access resources, receive technical assistance, or seek guidance from their partner organizations to pursue an employment facilitation program; therefore, barangays should establish barriers at the beginning of a project to better allocate resources, improve their capacity-building programs, improve coordination mechanisms, and create action plans for their long-term establishment and sustainability.

Table 10 displays the respondents' perceived challenges/constraints affecting the establishment and operating of Barangay PESO. The data showed an overall weighted mean of 3.27, which represents a Moderate Perceived Challenge, indicating a recognition by the respondents of the many operational/institutional barriers influencing the implementation of the Barangay PESO.

Table 10.

Perceived Challenges and Constraints in Establishing Barangay PESO

STATEMENTS	MEAN	INTERPRETATION
Lack of support or political will from local leadership affects PESO establishment.	3.77	High Perceived Challenge
Limited internet or communication infrastructure may hinder operations.	3.47	Moderate Perceived Challenge
Limited or unstable internet access affects employment data and online job processing.	3.45	Moderate Perceived Challenge



Community residents are not yet fully aware of employment facilitation programs.	3.40	Moderate Perceived Challenge
The sustainability of Barangay PESO is uncertain without external support.	3.30	Moderate Perceived Challenge
Barangay officials have limited knowledge of PESO operations.	3.25	Moderate Perceived Challenge
Lack of financial resources to establish Barangay PESO.	3.15	Moderate Perceived Challenge
Barangay personnel already have too many administrative duties.	3.15	Moderate Perceived Challenge
There are no specific guidelines or instructions yet for Barangay PESO implementation.	3.10	Moderate Perceived Challenge
Coordination with the Municipal PESO is irregular or unclear.	2.67	Moderate Perceived Challenge
OVERALL MEAN	3.27	Moderate Perceived Challenge

Legend:

- 4.50-5.00 - Very High Perceived Challenge
- 3.50-4.49 - High Perceived Challenge
- 2.50-3.49 - Moderate Perceived Challenge
- 1.50-2.49 - Low Perceived Challenge
- 1.00-1.49 - Very Low Perceived Challenge

The greatest perceived challenge listed was the "Lack of support or political will from local leadership for establishing the PESO" with a mean of 3.77, indicating a High Perceived Challenge and supporting the importance of the commitment of local leadership to implement and sustain employment facilitation programs in the barangay.

The next greatest challenges are Limited Internet/ Communication Infrastructure (mean = 3.47) and Lack of Reliable Internet Access, which impacts the job data management and job processing (mean = 3.45); both of these were perceived as Moderate Perceived Challenges. The findings indicate possible limitations of digital infrastructure affecting the efficiency and delivery of employment services, particularly with the ability to access labor market information systems and online job search matching platforms.

Respondents also expressed concern over the limited financial resources available for establishing the Barangay PESO (mean = 3.15), the administrative burden placed on officials from the Barangay (mean = 3.15), unclear guidelines regarding how to implement the Barangay



PESO (mean = 3.10), and limited understanding by officials about how PESOs operate (mean rating = 3.25). These responses indicate that limited capacity and resources in the administrative area may create moderate challenges to the effective implementation of the program.

Meanwhile, "Coordination between the Municipal PESO and Barangays is irregular and/or unclear" received the lowest mean rating of 2.67, despite being classified as Moderate Perceived Challenge, which would suggest there is generally a level of coordination between the Barangays and the Municipal PESO; however, there may be a need for further improvements in this area to ensure more consistent communication and collaboration.

In summary, these findings suggest that while there is a general public desire for the establishment of the Barangay PESO, there may be several institutional, technological and resource-based obstacles that could delay and/or negatively influence the long-term sustainability of the program. To achieve the effective operation of the Barangay PESO, issues such as leadership commitment, digital infrastructure, and capacity building of personnel will need to be further developed.

These findings are consistent with local employment facilitation program research carried out prior to this study documenting the existence of challenges related to political support, technological infrastructure and resource availability. According to both the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE, 2019) and the Asian Development Bank (2021), implementing Local Employment Services is dependent upon strong leadership support, adequate funding, skilled staff and effective collaboration with higher-level agencies.

This information indicates that Barangays should improve leadership engagement to obtain political and institutional support for Barangay PESO. The implementation of improved digital infrastructure and internet connectivity can expand the availability of online employment services. Additionally, emphasis on training programs must be placed on Barangay personnel; implementation guidelines should be developed; and additional funding sources or partnerships should be explored to further support the long-term establishment and maintenance of Barangay PESO.

Relationship Between Administrative Readiness, Awareness, and Perceived Challenges

Challenges of establishing and maintaining Barangay PESO is critical evaluating the overall feasibility of implementing localized employment services. A statistical analysis using Pearson's correlation assessed the relationships between these variables in order to better understand how Administrative Readiness, Knowledge, and Perceived Barriers, relate to each other.

These results provide insight as to which of the three variables are true drivers of Administrative Readiness, with respect to reading the evidence for and against them through policy, training, or community engagement; and provide an empirical foundation that relates the patterns identified in this research to existing theories and literature as well as support the development of recommendations that will improve the institutionalization of Barangay PESO in the municipality. Results from the Pearson correlation analysis of administrative readiness reveal that there is a moderate, positive, and statistically significant correlation between workforce capability (manpower/human resources) capabilities of the Workforce/Economic Development Program (PESO) in a community ($r=0.4708$, $p=0.00217$).

This finding suggests that if your workforce is highly trained, clearly assigned roles (in terms of job descriptions), and has an increased capacity for human capital (workers), then these factors will equate to greater levels of understanding about the functions/benefits of PESO. Workforce will play a major role in how information is disseminated, programs are prepared, and stakeholders engage with each other, resulting in increased awareness of PESO during the implementation phase of the program.

Likewise, budgetary and logistics support for PESO from the Barangay also showed a moderate, positive, and statistically significant correlation between their abilities to create awareness and understanding about PESO ($r=0.485$, $p=0.001515$). As such, if the Barangay has the financial and logistical resources necessary to provide stakeholder orientation sessions, coordination meetings, and dissemination of information about PESO, these resources will result in the increased understanding and awareness of stakeholders regarding PESO.

Table 11.

Relationship Between Level of Administrative Readiness and Awareness and Understanding of Barangay PESO and Perceived Challenges and Constraints.

	LEVEL OF ADMINISTRATIVE READINESS			
	Manpower and Human Resources Capability	Budgetary and Logistical Support	Infrastructure and Facilities	Coordination and Linkages
Awareness and Understanding of Barangay PESO	$r= 0.4708$ P-value= .00217*	$r= 0.485$ P-value= .001515*	$r= 0.6364$ P-value = .00001***	$r= 0.7453$ P-value= .001604*
Perceived Challenges and Constraints	$r= 0.0952$ P-value= .558995	$r= 0.2058$ P-value= .20266	$r= 0.2412$ P-value = .133784	$r= 0.0878$ P-value= .590073

Legend:

** .01 < p ≤ .05

Significant

* .001 < p ≤ .01

Highly Significant

*** p < .001

Very Highly Significant

Degree of Freedom: $n-2 = 40-2$

Also, the statistics demonstrate a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation ($r=0.6364$, $p<.001$) between awareness and understanding related to the PESO programming and the availability of infrastructure/facilities. Office space, technology and equipment are generally perceived to support access to documents, information and activities that support the coordination of program understanding and familiarity of staff from barangays and other stakeholder entities.

The strongest relationship between awareness/understanding and administrative readiness indicators was with coordination/linkages ($r = 0.7453$, $p = .001604$). This means by working closely together with agencies such as DOLE, TESDA, and other partnering organizations, there is increased sharing of knowledge, assistance with technical problems, and better flow of information regarding PESO programs.

In comparison, there was no statistically significant relationship between perceived constraints and challenges and any of the administrative readiness indicators. The correlation of administrative readiness to perceived constraints and challenges in relation to capability issues ($r = 0.0952$, $p = 0.558995$), budgetary/logistical support ($r = 0.2058$, $p = 0.20266$), infrastructure/facilities ($r = 0.2412$, $p = 0.133784$), or coordination/linkages ($r = 0.0878$, $p = 0.590073$) was minimal and all were not statistically significant, indicating perceived barriers may not yet be strongly tied to administrative readiness.

Since administrative readiness was not significantly related to perceived barriers, it is likely that improving only the structural readiness will not necessarily eliminate perceived barriers to implementing Barangay PESO. It may also be possible that the program is still in its initial progress toward institutionalization of Barangay PESO, so these responses may reflect anticipated barriers rather than actual operational difficulties. Factors such as commitment from leadership; clarity of policies; stakeholder involvement; and the existence of clear operational guidelines, can all shape how an individual perceives the experience of working with Barangay Public Employment Service Office (PESO). Therefore, enhancing administrative capacity should be accompanied by clear governance structures and ongoing institutional support for the successful implementation of Barangay PESO.

The results show that administrative readiness has a significant impact on improving awareness and understanding of Barangay PESO and its implementation in phase 1 of Institutionalization. This is because having a strong workforce, adequate resources, existing infrastructure, and effective institutional linkages promote the sharing of information and engaging with stakeholders. However, administrative readiness by itself does not define how an individual perceives the challenges related to the implementation of Barangay PESO. Finding solutions to possible barriers to the implementation of Barangay PESO could involve developing clear operational guidelines, providing ongoing training opportunities, and conducting continuous monitoring after Barangay PESO has been established.

Policy Implications from the Statistical Analyses

From the statistical analysis, the findings provide several policy and strategic options to support the effective implementation of Barangay PESO in the Municipality of Libmanan, Camarines Sur. Administrative readiness emerged as a significant predictor of stakeholder awareness and understanding of Barangay PESO. Strengthening the coordination mechanisms,



manpower capacity, infrastructure and directly support the enhancement of both stakeholder awareness and preparedness within the community for Barangay PESO.

Findings from the research that were collected from respondents in relation to the expected challenges, the lack of significant association found between the barriers reported by the participants and the current level of administrative readiness, as anticipated barriers instead of real barriers are demonstrated, as Barangay PESO is still being newly implemented.

This highlights the need for stronger institutional support, clearer operational guidelines, and more sustained engagement of stakeholders. Therefore, the results of this study were used to create policy and strategic recommendations that will assist with stronger implementation of Barangay PESO which are presented in Chapter 5 through the proposed PESO READY Framework.

The PESO READY Framework was created in order to consolidate and integrate the key recommendations made throughout the study into a clear and practical document for the Municipality of Libmanan, Camarines Sur so that all of the components of the Framework will work together as a cohesive whole and effectively and sustainably implement Barangay PESO.

Results from the study indicate that creating a collaborative and holistic approach is essential for improving employment services at the barangay level. It is not enough to focus solely on either the policy or funding aspect, according to the results of this study, the Framework has identified that there needs to be better alignment between the policies that support employment services, the capabilities of personnel, the systems and infrastructures used by personnel to implement policies, the way in which organisations coordinate with one another and the way in which they engage with their communities. When these elements are effectively connected, they produce a better and more responsive delivery of employment services.

The PESO READY Framework also incorporates the developing notion that there is an ongoing and iterative nature associated with the implementation process. An example of this in relation to the Municipality of Libmanan, is that the Local Government Unit and Municipal PESO efforts cannot end with program implementations. This type of effort must be complemented with regular monitoring, evaluation, and feedback to ensure that the delivery of services remains relevant and effective to the needs of the barangays.

As well, the PESO READY Framework serves as a guide to local implementers. The Framework will provide barangay officials and PESO coordinators with clearer understanding of their roles in implementing employment services and other PESO programs and will assist with coordination of employment services for the community with partner organisations that provide employment services. Furthermore, by creating a structured Blueprint for Implementing PESO at the local government, the Framework will create more consistent and organised delivery of PESO services throughout the Municipality.

4. Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Research Objective 1: *Determine the level of administrative readiness of barangays in terms of manpower, budget, infrastructure, and coordination mechanisms with the Municipal PESO and related agencies.*

Findings

1. In terms of manpower, evidence indicates that barangay personnel indicated that are willing to improve their skill development through training programs (e.g. capacity building initiatives; high willingness for participation equals to high openness). However,

there were lower ratings for the designation of PESO Coordinators, which indicates that the assignment of job roles are more organized; as such, this may reflect that assignment was performed through an established framework. With respect to budgetary readiness, logistical and physical support for PESO-related activities was generally available. In contrast, financial provision for personnel honoraria was rated lower, reflecting limitations in sustaining human resource support.

2. In terms of being budget-ready, there were availability of all logistical and physical support to allow the implementation of PESO-related activities, although financial support/funding for the provision of personnel to provide honorariums received a lower rating (due to lack of sustainability) limiting human resource investment.
3. In terms of infrastructure-related support for residents who are looking for employment, barangays have very good access for job-seekers creating favorable conditions to deliver frontline services; however, low document management both in terms of quality control and in the terms of recording electronically will hinder the ongoing documentation for employment programmes in the future.
4. In terms of methods for coordination, there is regular date and correspondence between Municipal PESO and the Barangays' Coordinators communicating to each other with updated information that demonstrates that coordination between the Municipal PESO and various agencies exists; however, coordination activities between the Barangays and the Municipal PESO receives relatively low ratings indicating that a need for a structured and systematic method of coordination is required to strengthen and improve coordination.

Conclusion

The study identified the existing level of administrative readiness for Barangay PESO's implementation (i.e. development of human resources and infrastructure and coordinating with Municipal PESO) at a moderate level of completion. However, the need for formal appointed PESO coordinators, limited budget for financial support and poor record-keeping have resulted in an incomplete state of operational readiness. To effectively implement Barangay PESO requires the development of institutional frameworks, resource allocation, and coordination mechanisms.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, it is recommended that...

1. The Local Government Unit of Libmanan should work with the Municipal PESO and each Barangay from now on to establish a dedicated and formal role as a Barangay PESO Coordinator in each Barangay. This would enhance the overall employment facilitation service's coordination and accountability as it relates to employees. The study found that the readiness of human resources exists but there are limited designated personnel to perform this function: the designation of PESO Coordinator will create formal recognition of the position. This could be accomplished through the issuance of local barangay resolutions and the addition of PESO responsibilities to the barangay organisational structure.

2. To address the limitations created by the lack of financial resources, it is recommended that each Barangay: (i.e. barangay) integrate the PESO programme funding into the annual investment plan, (ii) collaborate with local government agencies, Department of Labour and Employment , Technical Education and Skills Development Authority , and Non-Government Organisations to secure resources for funding; (iii) prepare project proposals to obtain grant funds to assist in funding PESO initiatives; (iv) budget an honorarium or incentive to the personnel providing services for PESO. By doing so, there will be assurance that funding for Employment Services will be an ongoing activity, rather than an occasional one, in the local development planning process. Establishing a digital documentation process and creating dedicated workspace for PESO; increasing ICT Facilities; creating a training program for personnel on how to handle data and report it accurately; improving infrastructure and records management systems.
3. Develop a regular schedule of coordination meetings with Municipal PESO; greater participation in local job fairs hosted by DOLE and in partnerships (i.e., MOUs) with NGOs and private employers; develop a coordination logbook or tracking system that would facilitate ongoing communication.

Research Objective 2: *Assess the level of awareness and understanding of barangay officials, Barangay PESO Coordinator, and community residents on the concept and objectives of the Barangay PESO.*

Findings

The findings revealed that barangay officials, Barangay PESO Coordinator, and community residents showed very high levels of awareness/understanding regarding Barangay PESO. Respondents expressed willingness to participate in PESO events, perceived PESO's strength in building networks with DOLE, TESDA, etc., and believed PESOs provide a means to reduce outmigration via local employment. Gaps exist in respect to participant attendance at or access to information regarding ongoing Employment/livelihood Programs (PESO continues to experience a lack of ongoing information dissemination)

Conclusions

Stakeholders in Libmanan support and understand PESO's concept; value programs that facilitate employment; have a strong commitment to PESO initiatives; and demonstrate positivity about their ability to obtain employment as a result of their participation in PESO.

Nevertheless, the outcomes also demonstrate that greater awareness at the general level than with regards to specific services indicates a requirement for greater consistency and target information distribution activities.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that the barangay should engage in educational campaigns and offer community orientations to create familiarity with PESO service. Also, to encourage more active involvement of the community in all PESO activities, thereby enhancing community support for and involvement in local employment initiatives



Research Objective 3: *Identify and evaluate the challenges and constraints that may hinder the effective establishment of Barangay PESO.*

Findings

The outcomes indicated that the lack of support by local leadership is considered the major barrier that inhibits the implementation of barangay PESO. Insufficient commitment to leadership would slow down or undermine the implementation efforts.

However, coordination with the Municipal PESO was considered the least constraining factor, although some respondent's experiences indicated that the coordination process had not always been clear or well defined.

Conclusions

The findings support the idea that leadership support is the most important consideration for implementing Barangay PESO, even though there was significant support for a barangay PESO programme from the community.

In the absence of adequate or supportive leadership, the development of such programs will continue to be delayed or poorly coordinated; thus, additional effort to establish institutional support for barangays will be necessary.

Recommendations

The study recommends that leadership be involved in the planning, decision making, and monitoring of Barangay PESO implementation to reinforce institutional support and accountability. It is also recommended that barangay officials and the Barangay PESO Coordinator be provided with specific guidelines for operational direction and in order to ensure Barangay PESO's successful and sustainable operation, improvements to digital infrastructure, personnel training, and exploration of sustainable funding were also recommended.

Research Objective 4: *Examine the relationship among administrative readiness, stakeholder awareness, and perceived implementation challenges related to Barangay PESO implementation*

Findings

Relationship among the variables was different across study variables. Readiness positively related to stakeholder awareness and understanding of Barangay PESO; therefore, more ready barangays have greater stakeholder awareness.

However, readiness alone did not explain perceived challenges indicating that other factors (e.g., leadership, communication, policy clarity) played a role in determining implementation success. Stakeholder awareness and understanding were positively related to perceived challenges; therefore, stakeholders that have been educated tend to have fewer barriers to implementation thus are better equipped to manage potential obstacles to implementation.

Conclusions

This research reveals that administrative readiness plays a significant role in educating and improving awareness of stakeholders regarding the role of Barangay PESO; therefore, more administratively ready barangays will generally possess better-informed stakeholders.

However, administrative readiness itself does not explain the perception of implementation challenges and, therefore, addressing barriers to implementation require



continued engagement of stakeholders in addition to structural readiness; continued provision of acceptable guidelines for operation; and continued capacity building through comprehensive and ongoing training efforts.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that Municipal PESO and barangay governments provide extensive orientation programs for the public regarding the role of Barangay PESO, continue to maintain regular communication with stakeholders, and continue to train and develop both officials and community members to increase understanding of the function of Barangay PESO.

Research Objective 5: *Formulate policy and strategic recommendations based on statistical results to strengthen the implementation of Barangay PESO in the Municipality of Libmanan, Camarines Sur.*

Findings

The study's findings indicate that while Barangay PESO has been formally established through ordinance at the municipal level, its actual implementation is constrained by a variety of related factors, including lack of administrative readiness in terms of such factors as personnel designation, budgetary allocation, record keeping and coordination mechanisms. The results of this study further indicate that awareness of the program by stakeholders has a direct impact on their perceptions of the challenges facing the implementation of Barangay PESO, which emphasizes the continuing importance of disseminating information and engaging stakeholders. The results also indicate that the absence of clear implementation guidelines and poor commitment from some barangay leaders as well as weak monitoring mechanisms have created significant gaps that impact the expected effectiveness and sustainability of Barangay PESO. These findings underscore the need for a comprehensive, policy-driven and operationally viable approach to addressing institutional, administrative and community aspects of the implementation process.

Conclusions

The study concluded that the successful implementation of the Barangay PESO Program in Libmanan could not solely depend upon the legal institutionalization of the program through an ordinance at the municipal level. Although policy support provides an important foundation, the successful implementation of the program depends upon how adequately the barangays are supported through personnel, resources, coordination and involvement of the community. Without these supports, the program will function only in terms of its legal existence, but will not be effectively carried out in practice.

Recommendations

The findings of this study offer important information on the level of institutionalization of employment services at the local level.

Based on these results, the majority of the barangays in the Municipality of Libmanan are generally ready to support the implementation of Barangay PESO; however, the results also indicate that the implementation of the program has only recently begun, as evidence of the implementation of employment services at the barangay level is still very limited. Administrative readiness, stakeholder awareness and coordination among stakeholders will provide a solid



foundation for employment services at the local level; however, gaps still exist in terms of personnel designations, budgetary allocations and operational guidelines for the implementation of the program.

These findings suggest that to move from the policy adoption phase to full implementation requires greater institutional support. Overall, the findings of the study indicate that successful employment services at the local level require not only legal mandate, but also ongoing administrative capacity, active stakeholder involvement and coordinated governance among local governments.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, recommendations are consolidated by the PESO READY Framework. The PESO READY framework is suggested as a guide based on the actual findings of this study. Each letter of the acronym corresponds to a strength or gap among the barangays as observed, and not merely an abstract theory.

Policy and IRR Formulation

To improve operational clarity and leadership commitment, the Libmanan Local Government Unit should use the Municipal PESO as the vehicle to develop the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) that will put the Barangay PESO ordinance into effect.

Essentially, the IRR would create the clarity needed regarding the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders including the coordinating mechanisms that exist to connect the different stakeholders, the funding source or sources that will be used to implement the programs at the barangay level and how success will be monitored at the barangay level.

Employment Service Capacity Building

To address the workforce issues, each barangay may establish a designated Barangay PESO Coordinator. In addition, continuous capacity building efforts will be developed to enhance the skills of each of the barangay staff involved in providing employment services. These capacity building efforts will include facilitating employment services, providing labour market information, career guidance, digital profiling, and developing a referral system for those looking for jobs. Regular mentoring by the Municipal PESO in addition to partner organizations such as DOLE, TESDA & DTI will also improve staff member skills.

Systems and Infrastructure Support

Based upon the need for improvements in record management systems and digitalization, barangays may adopt standardized ways of documenting information through digital formats and standardized record management systems in order to be in line with how the Municipal PESO operates. In addition, barangays may also provide space for PESO staff to conduct their work, provide them with Internet connections that are both stable and effective, upgrade the technology used by PESO staff and provide staff training related to handling data and the need to protect the privacy of people using PESO services.

Organizational Coordination and Partnerships

In order to improve co-ordination between agencies, barangays may develop a way of coordinating stakeholders by creating a way of regularly communicating with the Municipal PESO and partner organizations. Establishing quarterly coordination meetings; formalizing relationships between the DOLE, OWWA, DMW, TESDA, DTI (and other national agencies),



non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as partnering with private industry, can assist with a stronger employment facilitation process, greater accessibility to skills training, and linking to other livelihood opportunities.

Resource Allocation and Budgeting

In addressing funding shortages, barangays could create a budget for Barangay PESO operations to be incorporated into the Annual Investment Plan (AIP). This funding could be used for such things as office supplies; computer/telecommunications resources; training activities; and honoraria for PESO personnel. Other resources could be accessed through the mobilization of national agency partners, NGOs and private industry to support long-term funding sustainability.

Engagement & Awareness Strategies

In light of stakeholder awareness being a key component in improving engagement barangays should continue improving their information-sharing and engagement with the community. An ongoing orientation, advocacy campaign and information-sharing could be done through the barangay assembly process, through use of social media, schools, youth organizations and from community bulletin boards in the barangay. A key part of the ongoing public access to employment-related information would be the establishment of ongoing Barangay PESO information boards for public access, at strategic locations throughout the barangay.

Advocacy and Access Enhancement

To expand the reach and inclusiveness of Barangay PESO services, barangays may strengthen advocacy efforts and improve public access to employment-related programs and information. This may include conducting targeted outreach for vulnerable sectors, improving visibility of services in remote areas, establishing accessible help desks or information corners, and ensuring that job seekers, youth, women, OFWs, and other clients can easily access employment facilitation services.

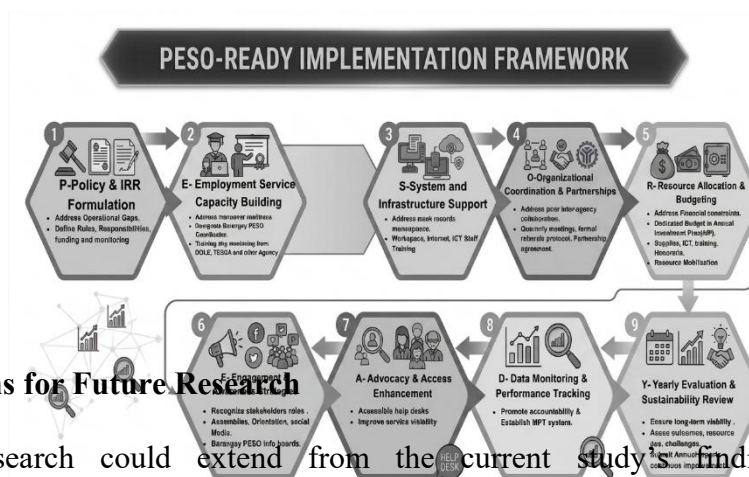
Data Monitoring and Performance Tracking

In order to expand the reach and appropriateness of the services of Barangay PESO; the barangays would continue to build on advocacy efforts to improve access to employment-related programs and information. This will include developing specific outreach efforts to support vulnerable sectors; improve visibility in remote areas; establish accessible help-desk (or information corner) locations; and access employment facilitation services for job seekers, youth, women, overseas foreign workers (OFWs), and all other clients. Examining M&E and Program Performance Active and ongoing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) will help the barangay demonstrate accountability and aid in building evidence-based policies. The barangay can create an M&E system that regularly collects data documenting accomplishments, obstacles, and newly identified needs within the community. The barangay may use standardized tools for reporting aligned with the Municipal PESO in order to monitor and measure program performance and to make program adjustments.

Yearly Evaluation and Sustainability Review

In order to ensure long-term sustainability, the barangay can annually evaluate the performance of the Barangay PESO in terms of its outcomes, resource utilization, and barriers to implementation. The barangay can prepare and submit an Annual Accomplishment Report on the Barangay PESO to the Municipal PESO, which supports transparency, continuous improvement, and sustainability planning.

Figure 5.



Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could extend from the current study findings by additional investigations of the implementation of Barangay PESO in various contexts.

First, comparative research can be conducted with various local government units (LGUs) to review for differences in stakeholder awareness, administrative readiness, and implementation practices by municipality. By leveraging comparative research amongst LGUs, researchers can discover best practices as well as relevant institutional variables that facilitate the effective implementation of localized employment service programs.

Second, researchers may also wish to utilize qualitative research methodologies such as case studies, interviews, and focus groups with barangay officials, PESO coordinators, and other stakeholders within the community (e.g., social service organization) to gain additional insight into their experiences, perspectives, and barriers to implementing Barangay PESOs at the community level.

Third, longitudinal studies may also provide information on the processes involved in implementing Barangay PESOs over time. Longitudinal examinations on the attributes of program success can demonstrate to researchers and policy makers the impact of administrative readiness, stakeholder participation, and institutional assistance on effectiveness and long-term sustainability once the program is fully implemented.

Overall, these future research recommendations have the potential to reinforce the knowledge base concerning Barangay PESO and support the development of employment services policies and programs that better respond to community needs.

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