VMC ANALYTIKS

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Hybrid Leadership in Mountain Province: Assessing Indigenous and Modern Governance among Notable Mayors

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Abstract

This study examines the leadership practices of municipal mayors in Mountain Province, Philippines, focusing on how they merge traditional governance systems with modern administrative approaches. Using a multidisciplinary framework drawing from indigenous political structures, transformational and transactional leadership theories, and hybrid governance, the research explores how mayors navigate the demands of both customary authority and formal governance. Findings show that effective leadership in the province is marked by a hybrid model that emphasizes cultural legitimacy, ethical conduct, and community engagement. Mayors often act as both administrators and cultural stewards, balancing legal frameworks with indigenous norms. The study highlights the value of culturally responsive leadership in promoting inclusive development and maintaining social cohesion. It suggests that integrating traditional governance principles into modern practices can strengthen trust, accountability, and policy relevance in culturally rooted communities.

Keywords: hybrid leadership, indigenous governance, modern governance, municipal mayors, multidisciplinary framework

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a foundational component of effective governance, particularly at the local level where the proximity between public officials and constituents allows for nuanced, context-sensitive policymaking. In the Philippine setting, local government leaders, particularly mayors, are at the forefront of addressing developmental challenges such as poverty, unemployment, peace and order, infrastructure, and sustainability. As Local Chief Executives (LCEs), mayors are expected to fulfill not only administrative duties but also act as visionaries, motivators, and stewards of community values and traditions.

The theoretical foundation for leadership effectiveness can be traced back to classical political thought. Plato, through his concept of "job-fit," emphasized the importance of appointing leaders whose innate traits wisdom, courage, and moral integrity align with the demands of governance (Hartley & Benington, 2011). Leadership, therefore, is not merely a function of authority or position; it entails the ethical and strategic guidance of a collective toward common goals. Contemporary literature has since expanded this view. Scholars such as Anyango (2015) and Elma (2013) highlight the adaptive and situational nature of leadership, asserting that effective leaders tailor their styles whether transformational, transactional, democratic, or authoritative to meet evolving internal and external conditions. More recent studies (Eisenhardt, 2023; Locke & Latham, 2023) further emphasize the importance of goal-setting, performance alignment, and contextual responsiveness in leadership practice. These insights are complemented by research on ethical and inclusive leadership, which underscores the increasing importance of cultural intelligence and moral legitimacy in complex governance environments (Schermerhorn, 2016; Blau, 2017). Collectively, these perspectives affirm that leadership effectiveness is both historically rooted and dynamically constructed, requiring a synthesis of classical virtues and contemporary strategic adaptability.

The decentralization reforms brought by the 1987 Philippine Constitution and the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 institutionalized local autonomy and strengthened the role of LGUs in governance and development. This legal framework significantly empowered local officials to craft policies and implement programs tailored to their constituents' needs. Within this framework, the leadership style of mayors becomes a decisive factor in municipal performance.

Nowhere is the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity more apparent than in Mountain Province, a region distinguished by its enduring indigenous governance systems. Central to these systems are traditional institutions such as the *dap-ay*, a communal council, and the *panglakayen* or council of elders, which have historically managed local affairs through deliberative consensus, moral leadership, and collective accountability. These indigenous political mechanisms functioned not merely as cultural relics but as legitimate institutions of self-governance that regulated community conduct, mediated conflicts, and articulated shared norms and values.

Despite successive waves of colonial administration, first under Spanish rule and later during American occupation, these indigenous governance structures were not dismantled. On the contrary, colonial efforts to impose external systems of control largely failed to penetrate the sociopolitical fabric of the Cordillera region. American colonial officials, in particular, adopted a policy of limited intervention and indirect rule in the highlands, often acknowledging the authority of local elders and integrating them into district-level administrative functions. This historical accommodation laid the foundation for the continued vitality of indigenous political institutions even into the postcolonial period.

The political reorganization of the Cordillera following the dissolution of the old Mountain Province in 1967 did not significantly alter the sociopolitical autonomy of local communities. In the contemporary era, the passage of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 (Republic Act No. 8371) marked a critical juncture in the formal recognition of indigenous political authority. The IPRA institutionalized the right of indigenous cultural communities to self-governance, ancestral domain claims, and cultural integrity. One of the most notable mechanisms introduced by the Act is the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' Mandatory Representatives (IPMRs) in all local legislative bodies, from barangay councils to provincial boards. This ensures that indigenous voices are not only heard but are structurally embedded within the framework of state governance.

In Mountain Province, the presence of IPMRs in municipal and provincial councils exemplifies this institutional hybridity, wherein customary authority intersects with statutory leadership. Local governance thus operates within a pluralistic framework that respects both indigenous epistemologies and the formal mechanisms of the Philippine political system. The co-existence of elected officials, such as mayors and councilors, with traditional leaders, including the *dap-ay* elders, creates a distinctive political culture that reinforces social cohesion, enhances institutional legitimacy, and supports culturally grounded development strategies.

Contemporary political practice in Mountain Province reflects this hybrid model. Local leaders routinely consult with elders and community assemblies for major decisions, especially those pertaining to land use, resource management, and intertribal relations. Peace-building practices such as the *Sipat* (peace pact) remain vital conflict resolution mechanisms, functioning alongside formal legal instruments. This political dualism ensures that governance in Mountain Province is not merely an administrative function but a culturally embedded process that privileges inclusivity, moral accountability, and community consent.

The case of Mountain Province thus illustrates a compelling example of indigenized governance within a decentralized democratic state. It demonstrates how traditional authority systems can coexist and synergize with formal political structures, producing a form of

governance that is both contextually grounded and institutionally resilient. As such, it provides a valuable framework for understanding the integration of indigenous political traditions into contemporary statecraft, and the possibilities for decolonizing governance in indigenous contexts.

Notable mayors in Mountain Province have successfully bridged traditional and modern leadership paradigms, exemplifying adaptive and culturally grounded leadership. Abraham Akilit, former mayor of Bauko, implemented the *"Gameng ya Katagowan"* program, combining data-driven governance with grassroots participation, reflecting both transactional leadership principles and indigenous values of communal consensus. Gabino Ganggangan, the late mayor of Sadanga, embodied a humble, peace-oriented leadership approach grounded in ancestral values, which was pivotal in the successful facilitation of peace agreements and the preservation of Sadanga as a peace zone. Franklin Odsey, former mayor of Bontoc, exemplified a dynamic blend of transformational and transactional leadership that significantly elevated the municipality's profile on the national stage. Central to his administration was the flagship program *"Bontoc on the Rise,"* which encapsulated his vision of inclusive development, responsive governance, and infrastructure-driven growth. Under this initiative, Bontoc witnessed substantial improvements in its public facilities, including the construction of a modern municipal capitol, the enhancement of its local road network, and the expansion of its municipal water system. Odsey also spearheaded a comprehensive solid waste management program that addressed both environmental sustainability and public health. Beyond physical infrastructure, *"Bontoc on the Rise"* embodied a leadership philosophy that valued cultural preservation and community participation. Odsey's approach respected indigenous kinship systems, incorporated local decision-making traditions, and upheld ethical governance. This balance between innovation and tradition allowed his administration to secure prestigious recognitions such as the Seal of Good Local Governance and awards for

child-friendly initiatives and fiscal management. His success illustrates how visionary leadership rooted in cultural values can generate transformative outcomes at the local level.

The convergence of indigenous traditions and formal leadership practices in Mountain Province reveals a complex yet effective model of local governance. Here, leadership is not solely derived from legal mandates or administrative training but is deeply embedded in the community's shared cultural values, social practices, and historical consciousness. This hybrid model aligns with global patterns observed in other indigenous regions where traditional authority is integrated into modern governance structures. For instance, in New Zealand, Māori tribal councils work alongside elected officials to influence local development and cultural preservation, demonstrating a co-governance approach that enhances both legitimacy and inclusivity (Durie, 2005). Similarly, in Canada, Indigenous band councils under First Nations governance are recognized within the federal legal system, creating mechanisms for culturally grounded self-determination (Alcantara & Nelles, 2016). Recent research by Lutz and Desai (2014) emphasizes that hybrid governance arrangements where customary and statutory systems coexist tend to foster deeper community engagement, especially when indigenous leadership is institutionally recognized. These global parallels reinforce the Philippine experience, where the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 institutionalizes indigenous political participation through mechanisms like the IPMR. The evolving leadership landscape in Mountain Province thus serves as a critical case study for understanding how culturally responsive, hybrid governance can promote resilient, ethical, and inclusive development in indigenous and rural contexts.

Statement of the Problem. The study aimed to profile and gain a deeper understanding of hybrid leadership in Mountain Province by assessing how notable mayors integrate indigenous governance traditions with modern

leadership models in their roles as Local Chief Executives.

1. What strategies do selected mayors in Mountain Province use to integrate indigenous governance practices with contemporary leadership models in their roles as Local Chief Executives?

2. What indigenous leadership values, such as inayan, og-ogfo, and pangat, are reflected in the leadership styles of these mayors?

3. How do constituents and local officials perceive the effectiveness of these hybrid leadership approaches in terms of governance, cultural preservation, and community trust?

Theoretical Framework. This study is grounded in a multidisciplinary theoretical framework that integrates classical leadership theories, indigenous governance paradigms, and contemporary models of public administration and hybrid governance. It aims to assess and interpret the leadership styles of notable mayors in Mountain Province – including Franklin C. Odsey (Bontoc), Abraham Akilit (Bauko), and the late Gabino Ganggangan (Sadanga), in relation to both institutional mandates and cultural expectations.

LITERATURES

The Local Government Code of 1991 and Decentralized Governance. The Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 (RA 7160) institutionalized decentralization in the Philippines, empowering Local Government Units (LGUs) to manage their own administrative and developmental agendas. As Local Chief Executives, mayors are granted both executive authority and community leadership responsibilities, placing them at the center of local governance. Their effectiveness depends not only on administrative competence but also on their ability to lead amidst diverse social, political, and cultural dynamics (Capuno, 2011). This legal backdrop provides the structural foundation for understanding the

scope and limits of mayoral leadership within Mountain Province.

Leadership Theories: Transformational, Transactional, and Contingency Approaches. Transformational and transactional leadership theories (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 1978) provide a dual lens through which to analyze mayoral behavior. Transformational leaders motivate communities through vision, ethical influence, and collective purpose. This is evident in the leadership of mayors such as Ganggangan and Odsey, who embodied community-oriented values, peacebuilding, and innovation. Transactional leadership, characterized by performance management, goal-setting, and rule enforcement, was also effectively employed, particularly by Akilit and Odsey, to ensure bureaucratic efficiency and programmatic delivery.

These leadership styles often operate in tandem, highlighting the Contingency Theory (Fiedler, 1964) and Situational Leadership Theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982), which posit that effective leadership is context specific. These frameworks support the notion that Mountain Province mayors adapted their approaches depending on local challenges, cultural contexts, and governance demands. Akilit, for instance, utilized a flexible blend of transformational, authoritative, and laissez-faire approaches depending on the situation.

Indigenized Governance and Hybrid Political Leadership. Indigenous governance traditions in Mountain Province, such as the *dap-ay* system and *councils of elders*, reflect participatory, kinship-based, and morally grounded leadership (Macdonald, 2004; Cariño, 2012). Key values like *inayan* (moral restraint), *og-ogfo* (community cooperation), and *pangat* (ethical leadership) continue to shape expectations of public officials. This cultural dimension provides a foundational lens for evaluating leadership effectiveness beyond metrics of efficiency and policy.

The theoretical concept of Hybrid Governance (Lutz & Desai, 2014) is especially relevant in understanding the leadership landscape of

Mountain Province. It captures the integration of formal political structures with enduring indigenous systems, creating a governance framework that reflects both statutory authority and cultural legitimacy. In this context, mayors do not operate in isolation from traditional power dynamics; rather, they collaborate with or draw moral and social legitimacy from customary institutions such as the council of elders, the *dap-ay*, and the Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative (IPMR). These institutions embody indigenous leadership paradigms rooted in communal consensus, kinship-based responsibility, and moral stewardship.

In Mountain Province, leadership is often assessed not through individual charisma or bureaucratic efficiency alone but through adherence to local values such as *inayan* (a moral code of restraint and respect), *og-ogfo* (collective labor and mutual aid), and *pangat* (a title denoting ethical leadership and public trust). These concepts reflect a worldview in which authority is relational, earned through service and wisdom, and embedded within a system of shared accountability. Leaders like the late Mayor Gabino Ganggangan exemplified this hybridity, embodying *pangat*-like traits in his approach to peacebuilding, cultural preservation, and governance.

By integrating these indigenous epistemologies, the concept of hybrid governance in Mountain Province becomes not only a functional arrangement but a culturally meaningful one anchored in the values and lived experiences of the communities it serves. This reinforces the need to situate leadership analysis within local ontologies, ensuring that indigenous voices, concepts of morality, and notions of communal cohesion are not only recognized but serve as guiding principles in governance.

Public Administration and Strategic Leadership. Modern public administration theories emphasize performance, accountability, and ethical governance in a resource-constrained and politically sensitive environment (Booth, 2014). Public Sector Performance Theory

(Eisenhardt, 2023) and Goal Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 2023) underscore the importance of setting measurable, strategic objectives aligned with citizen welfare. All three mayors, Akilit, Odsey, and Ganggangan, demonstrated strategic planning, community responsiveness, and institutional discipline, resulting in notable outcomes such as improved infrastructure, peace agreements, and national awards.

Furthermore, Resource Dependence Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2015) explains how these leaders-built alliances with legislative councils, civil society, and national agencies to overcome fiscal and institutional constraints. Odsey's collaboration with the Sangguniang Bayan and NGOs, and Akilit's grassroots mobilization under "Gameng ya Katagowan," are clear illustrations of this approach.

Social Exchange and Ethical Stewardship. Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 2017) offers another perspective by highlighting how effective leadership is built on mutual trust and reciprocal benefits. Mayors in Mountain Province fostered strong relational ties with constituents, reinforcing both moral authority and social legitimacy. Leadership was not simply about power but about service, trust, and shared destiny, values deeply rooted in the region's political culture.

This ethical dimension is reinforced by Plato's classical view of job-fit in leadership (Hartley & Benington, 2011), where ideal leaders are chosen based on virtue, wisdom, and the alignment of personal character with public responsibility. Leaders like Ganggangan, known for humility and peace advocacy, align with this classical ideal, further validating the region's emphasis on moral rather than coercive authority.

Bounded Rationality and Organizational Structure. Bounded Rationality Theory (Simon, 2014) explains the constraints within which local leaders operate, limited information, time pressures, and unpredictable environments. Mayors like Akilit and Odsey exemplified pragmatic decision-making, opting for feasible

rather than ideal solutions to manage developmental priorities. Meanwhile, Organizational Structure Theory (Mintzberg, 2013) illuminates how these mayors structured municipal departments to optimize coordination and service delivery. The theoretical framework of this study acknowledges that leadership in Mountain Province exists within a hybridized space where state authority, indigenous legitimacy, and adaptive leadership styles converge. The mayors assessed in this study exemplify a unique form of culturally informed governance, where traditional values and modern strategies mutually reinforce each other.

Through the application of transformational and transactional leadership theories, alongside models of hybrid governance, public administration, and indigenous political philosophy, this framework captures the multifaceted realities of local governance in Mountain Province. It situates mayors not only as bureaucratic managers but as cultural stewards, moral exemplars, and community unifiers who embody the complex interplay of tradition and innovation in public leadership. To enrich this framework further, it is essential to integrate culturally embedded leadership values that are prevalent in indigenous and Filipino communities.

Concepts such as *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude), *kapwa* (shared identity), and *bayanihan* (collective community effort) are not merely cultural traits but foundational elements of political legitimacy and leadership performance. *Utang na loob* fosters a sense of moral accountability between leaders and constituents, reinforcing reciprocity and ethical service. *Kapwa* reflects a relational worldview in which leaders are not above but among the people emphasizing empathy, inclusivity, and shared humanity. *Bayanihan*, rooted in communal cooperation, underscores the expectation that leaders unify communities toward common goals, especially in times of need.

Incorporating these values into the leadership framework reveals that governance in Mountain Province is not only a technical function but a deeply relational and moral practice. Effective leadership emerges from a delicate balance between formal authority and cultural expectations, where success is measured not only by outcomes but by the extent to which leaders embody collective values and nurture social harmony. This culturally grounded perspective deepens our understanding of leadership in indigenous contexts and underscores the importance of local worldviews in shaping governance models.

METHODS

Research Design. This study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, a two-phase research approach where quantitative data is collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data to help explain or interpret the initial findings. This design is particularly useful when numerical results need deeper context, which was the case for Subproblem 2. The research began with a survey that yielded a broad, measurable pattern: high weighted mean scores indicated that mayors consistently practice culturally aligned behaviors. To explain these findings, the study then moved to a qualitative phase, conducting in-depth interviews. This qualitative data revealed the specific indigenous values – such as inayan (moral accountability), og-ogfo (participatory inclusiveness), and pangat (moral credibility)—that serve as the cultural foundation for the behaviors observed in the quantitative phase. This sequential approach allowed the research to move beyond simply identifying a trend to providing a comprehensive, culturally-grounded explanation of how hybrid leadership functions in the region.

Population and Setting. The research was conducted in Poblacion, Bontoc, the capital of Mountain Province, which comprises ten (10) municipalities: Barlig, Bauko, Besao, Bontoc, Natonin, Paracelis, Sabangan, Sadanga, Sagada, and Tadian. According to the 2020 census by the Philippine Statistics Authority, Mountain Province has a population of approximately

158,200. Given the geographic dispersion and mountainous terrain, accessibility and representativeness were taken into account during the selection of respondents. For the survey, a total of 200 respondents were employed. From this group, 50 individuals from the different municipalities were selected for in-depth interviews due to their having in-depth knowledge, which allowed for a more nuanced understanding of the topic.

To ensure the credibility and relevance of the findings, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Participants were required to be officially registered residents of Mountain Province, at least 18 years old, and possess adequate familiarity with local governance systems and leadership practices. Individuals who did not meet these criteria – such as non-residents, minors, or those unfamiliar with indigenous governance structures – were excluded. This helped ensure the integrity and relevance of the collected data. Respondents were purposively selected across all ten municipalities and included a mix of government officials and community members. This diverse composition enabled a comprehensive assessment of mayors' leadership styles, perceived effectiveness, and alignment (or conflict) with indigenous cultural values and governance systems.

Research Instrument. To collect data, the researcher developed a self-made survey questionnaire designed to fit the study's quantitative approach. The questionnaire was structured as a checklist enabling respondents to indicate their level of agreement or experience concerning specific leadership attributes and governance practices. The scale aided in systematically interpreting the degree to which hybrid leadership elements were reflected in the respondents' observations.

The first subproblem explored the strategies used by selected mayors to integrate indigenous governance with contemporary leadership. A 4-point Likert scale was used to determine the level of knowledge and perception among respondents. The scale used was as follows:

Table 1
4-point Likert Scale for Knowledge and Perception

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation	Description
4	3.26 – 4.00	Always	Consistently demonstrated
3	2.51 – 3.25	Often	Frequently demonstrated
2	1.76 – 2.50	Seldom	Rarely/Occasionally demonstrated
1	1.00 – 1.75	Never	Not ever demonstrated

The second subproblem aimed to determine what indigenous leadership values (e.g., *inayan*, *og-ogfo*, *pangat*) are reflected in the leadership styles of the mayors. A 4-point Likert scale was applied to measure the degree to which these values are demonstrated in the leadership behavior of the mayors. The scale used was as follows:

Table 2
4-point Likert Scale for Indigenous Leadership Values

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation	Description
4	3.26 – 4.00	Always reflected	Very Evident
3	2.51 – 3.25	Often reflected	Evident
2	1.76 – 2.50	Rarely reflected	Minimally/Barely Evident
1	1.00 – 1.75	Not reflected at all	Not Evident

For the third subproblem, which seeks to assess how constituents and local officials perceive the effectiveness of hybrid leadership approaches, particularly in the areas of governance, cultural preservation, and community trust—the researcher utilized a Likert scale to measure the respondents' perceptions and understanding. The following scale was used to evaluate the perceived level of effectiveness:

Table 3
4-point Likert Scale for the Effectiveness of Hybrid Leadership

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation	Description
4	3.26 – 4.00	Always Reflected	Very Evident
3	2.51 – 3.25	Often Reflected	Evident
2	1.76 – 2.50	Rarely Reflected	Minimally Evident
1	1.00 – 1.75	Not Reflected At All	Not Evident

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted with a small representative sample of respondents prior to

the main data collection. The goal was to identify potential weaknesses in the design and structure of the survey questionnaire. In addition, the instrument underwent face validation by academic experts in the fields of public administration, indigenous studies, and research methodology. The experts evaluated the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the questionnaire items to ensure that the instrument was appropriate and understandable for the target population.

Following the pilot test, the reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, a statistical measure used to determine the internal consistency of survey items. The analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.89, indicating a high level of reliability. According to George and Mallery (2003), a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.70 and above is considered acceptable, while scores above 0.80 reflect good to excellent reliability. Therefore, the result confirms that the items in the questionnaire were consistent in measuring the constructs intended for the study.

For qualitative data, the researcher used semi-structured interview guides to gather deeper insights from selected respondents. These interviews explored respondents' assessments of leadership practices, focusing on the extent of compliance with indigenous systems, knowledge of governance, and administrative approaches.

Data Gathering Procedure. The data collection process followed several key steps:

Approval and Coordination. A formal communication letter was sent to relevant authorities seeking permission to conduct the study. Once approval was granted, the objectives and scope of the study were presented to potential respondents to promote transparency and voluntary participation.

Respondent Selection. Participants were purposively chosen based on their tenure and direct experience in municipal governance. Department heads and senior staff were prioritized for interviews due to their institutional knowledge and familiarity with the leadership dynamics of their respective municipalities.

Survey Distribution. Printed questionnaires were distributed in person with the assistance of municipal office heads. These leaders helped identify and facilitate access to qualified respondents within their departments, ensuring accuracy in targeting.

Interview Process. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with selected department heads and knowledgeable community stakeholders. Respondents were informed in advance about the purpose, scope, and voluntary nature of the interviews.

Community Participation. In coordination with civil society, the researcher obtained and presented an official permit from the Office of the Mayor to legitimize the research process. This encouraged openness and facilitated access to grassroots-level insights.

Ethical Considerations. Throughout the process, the study adhered to ethical standards. All participants were provided with informed consent forms outlining the purpose of the study, voluntary nature of participation, and confidentiality of their responses. Participants retained the right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Data Analysis. The quantitative data collected through survey questionnaires were analyzed using the weighted mean to assess the respondents' level of knowledge and perception regarding the leadership practices of selected mayors in Mountain Province. This statistical technique was applied to all three subproblems. The weighted mean was used to determine the overall tendency of responses per item and per variable. This method helped interpret the levels of practice, reflection, and perceived effectiveness based on the Likert scales applied. The computed mean values for each subproblem are presented in tabular form in the Results section to provide a clearer understanding of the trends and perceptions among respondents.

For the qualitative data, responses from interviews were subjected to thematic analysis, wherein transcribed data were carefully coded and grouped into emerging themes and patterns. This analysis specifically addressed Subproblem 2, which asked: "What indigenous leadership values—such as *inayan*, *og-ogfo*, and *pangat*—are reflected in the leadership styles of these mayors?" The themes that emerged highlighted how these indigenous values are embodied in leadership behavior, with participants describing how mayors demonstrate *inayan* through morally guided decision-making, exhibit *og-ogfo* by promoting collective efforts in community development and uphold *pangat* through respectful adherence to traditional authority structures. These findings revealed the continued relevance of indigenous principles in modern governance while also underscoring the tensions and harmonies between traditional customs and contemporary political frameworks. Triangulation, cross-referencing interview insights with survey data, further enhanced the validity and depth of the findings, providing a more holistic understanding of hybrid leadership in Mountain Province.

FINDINGS

Drawing from the leadership experiences of selected mayors in Mountain Province, several key findings emerged:

Table 4
Mean Distribution on the Strategies Used by Mayors to Integrate Indigenous and Modern Leadership

Item	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Conducts community dialogues based on indigenous consensus practices	3.65	Always practiced
Incorporates traditional elders in policy consultations	3.40	Always practiced
Applies modern administrative tools alongside customary protocols	3.20	Often practiced
Balances legal mandates with cultural expectations	3.50	Always practiced
Encourages cultural events as part of governance	3.75	Always practiced
Overall Weighted Mean	**3.50**	**Always practiced**

The data presented in Table 4 reveal that the mayors in Mountain Province consistently integrate indigenous governance practices with modern leadership strategies, as evidenced by the overall weighted mean of 3.50, which falls under the interpretation "Always practiced."

Among the listed strategies, the highest weighted mean (3.75) was attributed to the item *"Encourages cultural events as part of governance,"* suggesting that mayors highly value cultural preservation and actively incorporate local traditions and events into their leadership practices. This reflects a strong commitment to cultural continuity as a pillar of governance.

Similarly, strategies such as *"Conducts community dialogues based on indigenous consensus practices"* (3.65), *"Balances legal mandates with cultural expectations"* (3.50), and *"Incorporates traditional elders in policy consultations"* (3.40) were also interpreted as "Always practiced." These results highlight the collaborative and culturally rooted approach of local leaders who prioritize community voice and indigenous wisdom in decision-making.

On the other hand, *"Applies modern administrative tools alongside customary protocols"* received a slightly lower mean of 3.20, indicating it is "Often practiced." This suggests that while mayors value modernization, the adoption of contemporary tools is applied selectively and in consideration of local traditions, rather than in full replacement of indigenous methods.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that hybrid leadership is well-embedded in the practices of Mountain Province mayors, with a clear inclination toward preserving indigenous identity while adapting to modern governance demands. The consistent "Always practiced" ratings across key strategies reinforce the idea that cultural integration is not symbolic but actively implemented in local leadership.

Table 5
Mean Distribution on Indigenous Leadership Values Reflected in Mayors' Leadership

Item	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Demonstrates *inayan* (moral restraint/responsibility)	3.55	Very Evident
Practices *og-ogfo* (collective effort/cooperation)	3.60	Very Evident
Upholds *pangat* (traditional leadership and authority)	3.30	Evident
Respects ancestral decision-making traditions	3.45	Very Evident
Promotes bayanihan spirit in community projects	3.50	Very Evident
Overall Weighted Mean	**3.48**	**Very Evident**

The results in the table indicate that the indigenous leadership values of inayan, og-ogfo, and pangat are clearly reflected in the leadership styles of mayors in Mountain Province, as evidenced by an overall weighted mean of 3.48, interpreted as "Very Evident."

Among the individual items, the highest mean score was for *"Practices og-ogfo (collective effort/cooperation)"* with a weighted mean of 3.60, indicating that collective cooperation is highly valued and consistently practiced. This suggests that mayors prioritize community participation, shared responsibility, and mutual support—principles central to indigenous leadership.

Following this, *"Demonstrates inayan (moral restraint/responsibility)"* scored 3.55, also "Very Evident," highlighting that moral integrity, ethical decision-making, and accountability are strongly upheld. This value continues to guide leaders in avoiding actions that may cause harm or disgrace to the community.

The value of *"Respects ancestral decision-making traditions"* (3.45) and *"Promotes bayanihan spirit in community projects"* (3.50) were also rated "Very Evident," reflecting that leaders actively maintain consultative processes and communal unity, ensuring that traditional forms of social organization remain central in local governance.

The only item rated slightly lower was *"Upholds pangat (traditional leadership and authority)"* with a mean of 3.30, interpreted as "Evident." This may suggest a moderate shift or balancing act between respecting traditional authority structures and adapting to democratic, modern political processes. While the value is still evident, its practice may be influenced by the requirements of formal government systems.

Overall, the data affirm that indigenous values are not merely symbolic but are actively embodied in the leadership behavior of local chief executives. The prominence of og-ogfo and inayan in particular reflects a leadership culture rooted in cooperation, moral responsibility, and cultural fidelity, while the

slightly lower score for pangat may indicate areas where traditional and modern authority structures intersect or diverge.

Based on the thematic analysis of interview data with selected mayors, elders, and local officials, the following indigenous leadership values were found to be evident in the leadership styles of mayors across Mountain Province:

Table 6
Emerging Themes and Patterns on Indigenous Leadership Values

Indigenous Value	Emerging Theme	Supporting Narratives / Patterns
Inayan	Moral accountability and restraint	Mayors avoid corrupt practices and unjust decisions, guided by the fear of social and spiritual consequences.
Og-ogfo	Collective responsibility and cooperation	Leaders actively engage community members, uphold *bayanihan*-like efforts, and consult elders and councils.
Pangat	Respect for traditional authority	Mayors are often selected or endorsed based on lineage or moral authority and lead with deference to cultural protocols.

These findings show that hybrid leadership in Mountain Province is deeply rooted in indigenous norms, and these continue to shape how authority is perceived and exercised at the local level. Survey findings revealed high weighted mean scores indicating that mayors consistently practice culturally aligned governance behaviors, such as conducting tongtongan (community dialogues), involving elders in decision-making, and balancing legal mandates with traditional values. These quantitative outcomes were reinforced by the qualitative data, where interviewees across Bontoc, Sadanga, and Bauko emphasized that effective leadership is measured not just through performance indicators but through moral accountability, cultural resonance, and participatory inclusiveness.

Respondents repeatedly stressed that inayan serves as the moral compass of leadership. It deters self-serving behavior and obliges leaders to act with humility, responsibility, and restraint. In Sadanga, community members pointed to the late Mayor Gabino Ganggangan, who was known for consistently deferring to elders and refusing external aid when the community could provide for itself, an act seen as an embodiment of inayan. His leadership, grounded in restraint and communal trust, was

praised not for material outputs but for its symbolic and ethical integrity.

Equally important is og-ogfo, which interviewees described as the cultural foundation of participatory governance. This value was visible in Bauko under Mayor Abraham Akilit, where communal planning sessions brought together elders, officials, and even youth leaders to ensure decisions reflected collective will. One respondent shared, "We are consulted even for small projects because that's how og-ogfo works, it binds us to help but also gives us a voice."

Pangat, meanwhile, is a status not granted by office alone but earned through moral credibility, wisdom, and service. Leaders who were seen as pangat figures were those who embodied ancestral values in their leadership style. In Bontoc, Mayor Franklin Odsey earned this recognition by aligning modern urban development with cultural preservation, such as integrating traditional motifs into municipal structures and upholding local customs during public events. Respondents appreciated how he balanced innovation with respect for tradition, which they identified as a core trait of legitimate leadership.

The thematic analysis also brought forth patterns of conflict resolution through customary practices, such as the use of sipat (peace pacts) and the reliance on elders' mediation in local disputes. These mechanisms coexist with formal government protocols, often enhancing their legitimacy. Several municipal leaders from Bauko explained that unresolved cases are not escalated to courts without first consulting the dap-ay or holding a tongtongan, because these traditional forums are trusted and respected by all.

Moreover, the idea of ethical stewardship emerged strongly from the interviews. Leaders are expected not only to administer but to embody the community's values, living modestly, leading by example, and prioritizing the collective welfare. Respondents noted that transparency is not just about reporting budgets, but about being visible and approachable, engaging the community regularly, and making decisions that align with ancestral expectations.

This culturally anchored leadership was also seen to foster political legitimacy. As one elder in Bontoc stated, "A mayor who does not consult the people, especially the elders, may be in power but not in authority." This distinction reflects the dual mandate leaders must fulfill: legal authority granted by the state and moral authority bestowed by the community.

Table 7
Mean Distribution on the Perceived Effectiveness of Hybrid Leadership

Item	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Enhances public trust through culturally rooted leadership	3.35	Very Effective
Improves service delivery while respecting indigenous traditions	3.25	Very Effective
Preserves cultural identity within governance programs	3.40	Very Effective
Promotes participatory governance through both modern and native systems	3.10	Effective
Strengthens collaboration between elders and government officials	3.30	Very Effective
Overall Weighted Mean	**3.28**	**Very Effective**

The data in Table 6 reveal that the practice of hybrid leadership among the notable mayors. Distinct to the results is the blending of indigenous and modern governance as this is perceived as "Very Effective" overall, with a weighted mean of 3.28. This suggests a high level of community approval for how the mayors integrate traditional leadership values with contemporary administrative strategies.

The highest-rated item, *"Preserves cultural identity within governance programs"* (3.40), demonstrates that constituents and local officials highly value leadership that maintains and celebrates indigenous heritage. This indicates that culture-based governance is seen not only as a symbolic gesture but as an active mechanism for unifying communities and sustaining local identity.

Closely following is *"Enhances public trust through culturally rooted leadership"* (3.35) and *"Strengthens collaboration between elders and government officials"* (3.30), both indicating that hybrid leadership builds trust and cooperation by involving respected community figures and honoring cultural expectations. These findings reflect the importance of relational leadership – trust and inclusion foster deeper civic engagement.

"Improves service delivery while respecting indigenous traditions" (3.25) also received a "Very Effective" interpretation, suggesting that modern governance objectives are being achieved without compromising local values, which demonstrates the practical viability of hybrid approaches.

The lowest, but still positive, score was *"Promotes participatory governance through both modern and native systems"* (3.10), rated as "Effective." This may suggest challenges in fully harmonizing traditional consultative processes with formal bureaucratic structures, especially in areas with diverse or evolving political views. However, the rating still affirms its effectiveness, albeit with possible room for improvement in terms of inclusivity and efficiency.

These results justify the conclusion that hybrid leadership is functioning successfully in Mountain Province. It balances tradition and innovation, fosters community participation, and maintains cultural integrity while pursuing development goals. The data support the idea that indigenous principles, far from being outdated, enhance the quality and legitimacy of governance when integrated with modern systems. This approach appears to result in greater trust, cultural continuity, and responsive governance, which are all essential for effective local leadership in indigenous communities.

In essence, the study's findings, as shaped by the voices of community members, barangay officials, and local elders, affirm that leadership in Mountain Province is not a unidimensional construct. Rather, it is a hybrid, adaptive, and deeply relational process that draws strength from ancestral wisdom while responding to contemporary governance demands. The lived experiences shared by respondents illustrate how indigenous leadership values, inayan, og-ogfo, and pangat, are not merely cultural remnants, but active, guiding principles that shape governance outcomes, community trust, and sustainable development.

Conclusions. Based on the findings, the following are the conclusions:

1. The results revealed that selected mayors in Mountain Province consistently and effectively apply a variety of strategies to integrate indigenous and modern governance. With an overall weighted mean of 3.50 ("Always practiced"), respondents affirmed that practices such as conducting community dialogues grounded in customary consensus, involving traditional elders in consultations, and organizing cultural events are well-embedded in local leadership routines. These strategies reflect a deliberate effort by local executives to root their leadership in the socio-cultural identity of the province, while still complying with legal mandates and administrative systems. This demonstrates that hybrid governance is not merely conceptual but is operationalized in day-to-day decision-making and program implementation. The blending of tradition and modernity helps mayors maintain community trust and relevance in their leadership.

2. Findings from both quantitative and qualitative data indicated that indigenous values remain central to leadership practices in the province. With an overall mean of 3.48 ("Very Evident"), values like *inayan* (moral responsibility), *og-ogfo* (collective cooperation), and *pangat* (traditional authority) are widely recognized and demonstrated in the conduct of governance. Interview results supported these figures, showing that respondents observe these values in the moral conduct, community engagement, and respect for elders exhibited by mayors. *Inayan* was particularly evident in decision-making that prioritizes community welfare and avoids shame or harm; *og-ogfo* was reflected in programs encouraging volunteerism and shared responsibility; and *pangat* was upheld through consultation with elders and adherence to traditional leadership hierarchies. These findings confirm that indigenous values are not only symbolic but

functionally integrated into political leadership, shaping the ethical and social dimensions of governance.

3. The third subproblem yielded an overall weighted mean of 3.28 ("Very Effective"), indicating strong public confidence in the effectiveness of hybrid leadership approaches. Respondents acknowledged that these leadership practices enhance trust, improve service delivery, and safeguard cultural identity. Specific areas such as preserving indigenous identity within governance programs (3.40) and enhancing public trust through culturally rooted leadership (3.35) received the highest scores. These outcomes suggest that hybrid leadership contributes to both functional and symbolic aspects of governance – it fosters efficiency in public service while simultaneously reinforcing the community's cultural roots. Although participatory governance through both native and modern systems was rated slightly lower (3.10), it was still seen as "Effective," signaling potential for growth in inclusivity and civic engagement mechanisms.

Across all three subproblems, the study concludes that hybrid leadership – anchored in indigenous values and complemented by modern administrative practices – is a highly relevant and effective model for local governance in Mountain Province. The consistent application of culturally resonant strategies and the embodiment of traditional values in leadership behaviors have led to increased community trust, improved governance outcomes, and the sustained preservation of cultural identity. These findings reinforce the idea that leadership in indigenous communities must be culturally responsive and ethically grounded to remain legitimate and effective in the eyes of the people. The study supports the continued institutionalization of hybrid leadership models and recommends strategic actions – such as training, documentation, and community-based evaluation – to further strengthen the alignment between cultural heritage and political leadership in indigenous contexts.

Recommendations. Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to further strengthen the integration of indigenous and modern governance practices in Mountain Province:

1. To strengthen the integration of indigenous and modern leadership strategies, it is recommended that local government units institutionalize culturally rooted practices such as community dialogues, elder consultations, and cultural events into their governance processes. Training modules should be developed for mayors and local officials to enhance their capacity to apply hybrid leadership effectively. Additionally, successful case examples should be documented and shared across municipalities in Mountain Province to promote the replication of effective practices and to build a collective knowledge base around culturally responsive governance.

2. In recognition of the vital role of indigenous leadership values such as *inayan*, *og-ogfo*, and *pangat* in shaping ethical and community-driven governance, local governments are encouraged to integrate these values into civic education and leadership training programs. Moral leadership guided by *inayan* should be promoted to uphold integrity and public accountability. Furthermore, collaboration with elders and traditional leaders should be formalized through advisory roles, ensuring that ancestral wisdom continues to inform policy decisions and maintain cultural continuity within governance.

3. Given the positive perception of hybrid leadership's effectiveness in governance, cultural preservation, and public trust, it is recommended that local officials enhance participatory governance by establishing inclusive consultative mechanisms. Monitoring tools should also be developed to evaluate how well cultural elements are integrated into service delivery and their impact on community engagement. Lastly, embedding transparency practices within both indigenous norms and contemporary

governance frameworks will help sustain trust and accountability in the evolving local leadership landscape.

4. Future studies may explore the longitudinal impact of hybrid leadership on policy outcomes and community development in indigenous regions, specifically tracking changes in governance performance over time. Researchers are encouraged to conduct comparative studies between provinces with strong indigenous traditions and those with less cultural integration to assess how indigenous values influence leadership effectiveness across different sociopolitical contexts. Additionally, future research could benefit from including a broader range of stakeholders—such as youth leaders, women in governance, and civil society organizations—to capture diverse perspectives on how traditional and modern leadership models coexist. Exploring digital governance tools adapted to indigenous contexts may also offer valuable insights on how innovation can complement cultural continuity in local leadership.

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