

A study on the understanding levels of the Seal of Good Local Governance for Barangays (SGLGB) in selected municipalities

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between barangay officials' level of understanding of the CY 2024 Seal of Good Local Governance for Barangays (SGLGB) assessment criteria and their corresponding assessment results in the municipalities of Santa Cruz and Pakil, Laguna. Specifically, it aimed to describe the demographic profile of respondents, determine their level of understanding across six SGLGB governance areas, such as Financial Administration and Sustainability (FAS), Disaster Preparedness (DP), Safety, Peace and Order (SPO), Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS), Business-friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC), and Environmental Management (EM). Moreover, it aimed to assess the relationship between understanding and SGLGB performance and identify areas of compliance and deficiency. A quantitative-correlational research design was employed involving 384 barangay officials, including Punong Barangays, Sangguniang Barangay Members, Barangay Secretaries, and Barangay Treasurers. Data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire based on the CY 2024 SGLGB criteria and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson Product-Moment Correlation). Based on the findings, the majority of respondents were middle-aged, had completed tertiary education, and had several years of experience in barangay governance. Overall, they demonstrated a high level of understanding across all governance areas, rated as *Very Aware*, with BFC as the least understood. However, the study showed that most relationships between understanding and actual SGLGB performance were not statistically significant. Several notable negative correlations were observed, indicating that greater understanding did not necessarily lead to better governance performance. Unexpectedly, FAS had the lowest compliance rate among the governance areas, while BFC had the highest, despite being the least understood. The study concludes that the barangay officials' awareness of the SGLGB criteria alone may not be enough to ensure high-level SGLGB performance, as it may also be largely determined by institutional, structural, and implementation-related factors. The findings emphasize the need to bridge the gap between knowledge and actual implementation through strengthened capacity-building programs by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). It is recommended that the DILG enhance its existing training programs, intensify orientation on BFC and other technical governance areas and indicators, enhance the Barangay Information Management System (BIMS), and ensure sufficient institutional support to improve SGLGB compliance and the barangays' overall performance.

Keywords: Barangay officials' understanding; Seal of Good Local Governance for Barangays; governance performance; implementation gap; capacity

1. Introduction

The Philippines, as a member country of the United Nations (UN), is committed to helping achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As defined on the UN website, these goals act as a guide for enhancing the overall well-being of the planet and its people across generations. One of these goals, SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, promotes accountability, transparency, and good governance to further strengthen government institutions (United Nations, n.d.).

Ensuring that these global commitments become a reality requires action at the local level, where governance is experienced firsthand by citizens. Thus, local governance is crucial in determining the quality of life of Filipinos across the country. It is in the barangays, municipalities, cities, and provinces where citizens first experience the impact of government policies, programs, and decisions. To strengthen these local government units (LGUs), Republic Act No. 7160 was enacted in 1991 to enhance local autonomy and empower communities to manage their own resources in accordance with their needs.

Although not absolute, this autonomy allows them to reach their full potential as self-reliant communities and increases their effectiveness as collaborators in achieving national objectives (Republic Act No. 7160, 1991). This vision is realized through decentralization, granting LGUs greater powers and resources to serve the public effectively.

To ensure that decentralization leads to accountable and responsive governance, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) was assigned the responsibility of assisting the President in overseeing local governments through capacity development, monitoring and evaluation, and provision of rewards and incentives (DILG, n.d.).

One major strategy is conducting performance and functionality audits for Provincial, City, and Municipal LGUs. Recognizing the crucial role of barangays, the DILG also introduced similar assessment tools for barangay-based institutions to ensure that monitoring and evaluation extend to the grassroots level.

In 2019, Republic Act No. 11292 institutionalized the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) for Local Government Units. This law improved the earlier Seal of Good Housekeeping, strengthening the accountability system. The SGLG aims to recognize LGUs that demonstrate transparency, integrity, and excellence in governance.

In the same year, the SGLG was introduced to the barangay level to assess the performance of barangays across different core governance areas such as *Financial Administration and Sustainability; Disaster Preparedness; Safety, Peace and Order*; and essential governance areas such as *Social Protection and Sensitivity; Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness, and Environmental Management* (DILG, 2024). Beyond assessment, the SGLG for Barangays (SGLGB) also aims to encourage barangays to continuously improve the quality, equity, and effectiveness of basic public services.

From 2019 to 2022, the DILG conducted two rounds of pilot testing to refine the assessment criteria of SGLGB and identify potential challenges before its full implementation. In 2023, the DILG began its nationwide implementation. During its first national rollout, Laguna produced three (3) SGLGB national passers: Barangay Atinagay, Municipality of Magdalena; Barangay Caliraya, Municipality of Lumban; and Barangay Don Jose, City of Santa Rosa, out of 681 barangays.

In 2024, the number of passers significantly increased from three (3) to seventy-one (71), representing 17 out of the province's 30 local government units. Despite this progress, 13 municipalities still did not produce barangay passers in the SGLGB assessment, including 9 LGUs located in the Fourth District of Laguna (*Cavinti, Famy, Majayjay, Paete, Pakil, Pangil, Santa Cruz, Santa Maria, Siniloan*) and 3 from the Third District (*Victoria Liliw, Rizal*).

This disparity in performance amongst LGUs raises important considerations. The factors that make some barangays progress faster than others, or the elements that support or hinder their ability to meet national governance standards, differ. One possible reason behind this disparity is the differing levels of understanding and interpretation of SGLGB guidelines and standards among barangay officials. According to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS, 2019), differing interpretations of policies and guidelines often present challenges to program implementation. This insight is important in the context of the SGLGB assessment, where barangays' adherence requires clear understanding of various indicators and documentary requirements.

Guided by this, the researcher decided to analyze the level of understanding of barangay officials regarding the CY 2024 SGLGB criteria, focusing on the barangays of the Municipalities of Santa Cruz and Pakil in the Fourth District of Laguna. These municipalities are among those that have yet to produce SGLGB passers since the program's rollout. This study seeks to determine whether the level of understanding of

barangay officials is associated with SGLGB policy implementation and, ultimately, whether their understanding of the standards and criteria affects their assessment performance.

Finally, this research aims to identify which SGLGB indicator is the least understood and least complied with, and accordingly, propose an action plan to the concerned DILG Cluster Heads and Field Officers to improve their respective barangays' compliance therewith. By doing so, the findings of this research will help enhance barangay governance and improve compliance with national and local directives.

1.1. Background of the Study

The Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) emerged as part of the government's efforts to institutionalize good governance practices across local government units (LGUs). Its origins trace back to the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991, which decentralized authority from the national government to local governments and strengthened their role in service delivery (Atienza et al., 2020). The program was initially introduced in 2010 as the Seal of Good Housekeeping (SGH) under the leadership of the late DILG Secretary Jesse Robredo. It aimed to promote transparency and fiscal responsibility but it eventually evolved into a more comprehensive assessment framework covering various governance areas (DILG, 2010).

The SGLG was formally established by virtue of Republic Act No. 11292 (2019), as a progressive assessment and incentive mechanism aimed at encouraging local governments, including provinces, cities, municipalities, and even barangays, to institutionalize good governance. Initially, the program adopted the "3+1" principle, which required LGUs to pass three core governance areas: Good Financial Housekeeping, Disaster Preparedness, and Social Protection, and either of the essential areas: Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness, Peace and Order, Environmental Management, or Tourism, Culture, and the Arts (DILG, 2024).

Over the years, the assessment outline evolved into a "4+1" principle, and by 2018 into an "all-in" principle, requiring LGUs to pass all governance areas to qualify for the seal (DILG, 2024). Based on RA No. 11292 (2019), the SGLG currently covers 10 governance areas that reflect the growing demands on LGUs to demonstrate competency, transparency, and community-centered service delivery. Passing these standards reflects an LGU's ability to provide quality services and maintain good governance principles and practices.

Despite the established and enhanced framework, barangays, being the smallest and most community-based unit of government, often vary in their level of awareness and involvement in the SGLG process (DILG Iloilo, 2025). This impacts their ability to make significant contributions to national goals and meet program implementation standards. Research shows that comprehension and active participation at the barangay level have a major impact on the overall outcome of local governance (MPRA, 2023).

In the Municipalities of Santa Cruz and Pakil in the Fourth District of Laguna, barangays function within a variety of social and economic contexts. These differences create unique governance challenges and opportunities for each barangay. Gaining insights into the barangays' understanding on the SGLGB assessment indicators helps identify weaknesses and offer capacity-building interventions appropriate for this part of the province (PIDS, 2024).

For the SGLGB to be implemented successfully, certain knowledge gaps must be addressed. When barangay officials clearly understand the program's requirements, process, and objectives, they can make better decisions, become more transparent, involve the community, and give services that truly help the people.

Overall, the studies show that while the SGLG framework has greatly improved in supporting higher governance standards, the preparedness and understanding of barangay officials are crucial to its effectiveness. Although the LGC gives barangays the power to manage their own resources and decide on their own, the effectiveness of barangay governance lies within the barangay leaders' knowledge, skills, and involvement. In places like Santa Cruz and Pakil, where local conditions differ greatly, analyzing barangay understanding is essential for identifying gaps and developing solutions that promote inclusive and successful governance.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory. According to Hussein (2023), Rogers explained diffusion as the way by which an innovation is communicated across members of a social system over time through specific channels. Adoption happens in stages and involves different types of adopters, rather than happening all at once. Potential users are more likely to adopt a newly introduced innovation if they believe it has a clear advantage, is compatible with current values and practices, is easy to understand, can be tested on a small scale, and yields visible results to others.

In this view, individuals or organizations move through five stages of the innovation-decision process. First is knowledge, when they learn about the innovation. Next is persuasion, where they form an opinion. The third stage is the decision stage, when they choose to adopt or reject it. Then comes implementation, where they start using it. Lastly, confirmation is when they look for support for the choice they made.

In the context of this study, the SGLGB is treated as the "innovation" introduced by the national government to strengthen barangay governance standards. Barangay officials are the "adopters" who must decide whether and to what extent they will adopt and implement the SGLGB assessment criteria in their day-to-day barangay operations. Their level of understanding of the CY 2024 SGLGB core and essential governance areas represents their position in the knowledge and persuasion stages of the diffusion process. Barangays that clearly understand the requirements of the governance areas are more likely to view SGLGB as advantageous and compatible with their existing mandates and, therefore, are more likely to move toward decision-making and implementation.

The performance of barangays in the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment reflects the implementation and confirmation stages of innovation adoption. Higher performance ratings suggest that the innovation has not only been adopted but is being standardized in their operations and practices. On the other hand, low performance may indicate incomplete diffusion, where knowledge is weak or local conditions hinder implementation.

Communication channels provided by the DILG, such as orientations, technical guide notes, and program guidelines, function as deliberate mechanisms to accelerate diffusion by clarifying the innovation, reducing perceived complexity, and showcasing successful "early adopter" barangays as models. Thus, Diffusion of Innovations Theory provides a coherent perspective for examining how the level of understanding of SGLGB among barangay officials influences the degree to which SGLGB principles are adopted and translated into measurable governance performance in the selected municipalities.

1.3. Conceptual Framework

This study aims to analyze the level of understanding of barangay officials in the municipalities of Santa Cruz and Pakil, Laguna, regarding the latest assessment criteria of the SGLGB for CY 2024. Understanding this will help determine whether understanding alone significantly influences barangays' effectiveness in implementing governance programs and meeting national standards.

To guide this study, the researcher developed the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1, which illustrates the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Figure 1 shows the independent variables, which are data to be gathered from the respondents, such as their demographic profile in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, position, and years in barangay service; and the level of understanding of the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria in terms of the Core Governance Areas: Financial Administration and Sustainability; Disaster Preparedness; and, Safety, Peace and Order; and Essential Governance Areas: Social Protection and Sensitivity; Business-friendliness and Competitiveness; and Environmental Management. These factors may affect how well barangay officials comply with the SGLGB guidelines and how effectively they implement them. These variables serve as the primary data for the study, collected through survey questionnaires.

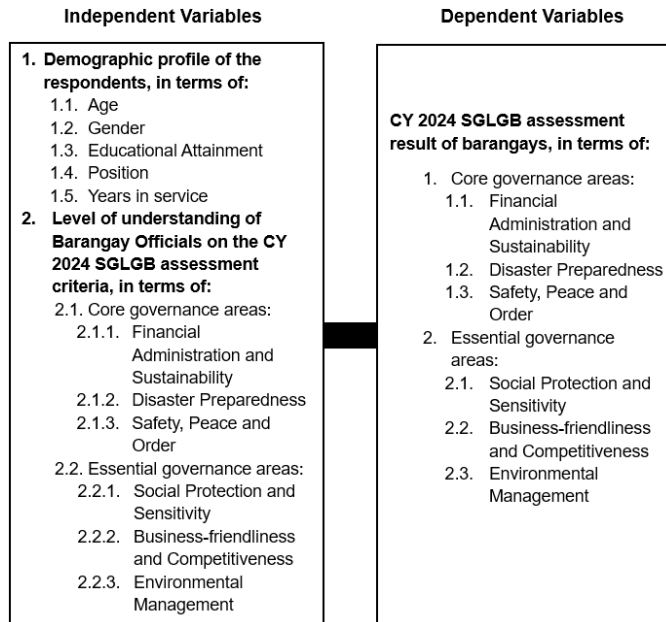


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

The identified dependent variable is the performance of barangays based on the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment, in terms of the Core Governance Areas: Financial Administration and Sustainability; Disaster Preparedness; and Safety, Peace and Order; and Essential Governance Areas: Social Protection and Sensitivity; Business-friendliness and Competitiveness; and Environmental Management. This is the outcome that shows the degree to which barangays successfully met the national standards set by the SGLGB program, and is considered secondary data.

Overall, the conceptual framework shows the demographics of barangay officials and a clear relationship between their understanding of SGLGB criteria and the performance of their barangays. By analyzing these relationships, the study aims to identify which factors most affect the successful implementation of SGLGB and to provide appropriate strategies to improve compliance, awareness, and barangay performance in general.

1.4. Statement of the Problem

This study aims to evaluate the level of understanding of the SGLGB criteria among barangay officials in the municipalities of Santa Cruz and Pakil, both part of the fourth district of Laguna, and examine how this level of understanding affects the implementation of the program.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

* What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:

- age
- gender
- educational attainment
- position and
- years in service?

* What is the level of understanding of barangay officials on the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment criteria, in terms of:

- Core governance areas:
 - Financial Administration and Sustainability
 - Disaster Preparedness
 - Safety, Peace, and Order
- Essential governance areas:
 - Social Protection and Sensitivity
 - Business-friendliness and Competitiveness, and
 - Environmental Management?

* Is there a significant relationship between barangay officials' understanding of the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment criteria and their CY 2024 SGLG assessment results?

* Which of the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment criteria is the least understood, and which one is the least complied with in CY 2024?

* Based on the findings of the study, what action plan can be proposed?

1.5. Hypothesis

Based on the questions stated above, the hypothesis was tested:

There is no significant relationship between barangay officials' level of understanding of the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria and their CY 2024 performance.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This research investigates the relationship between the level of understanding of barangay officials on the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria, and their respective barangay's CY 2024 assessment results. The study aims to offer useful insights to the DILG and other stakeholders to enhance the implementation of the SGLGB, especially in the municipalities of Pakil and Santa Cruz, by analyzing how knowledge and understanding of governance indicators affect actual barangay performance.

The findings of this study are expected to benefit several key stakeholders as follows:

Barangay Officials - This study will help barangay officials, including Punong Barangays, Sangguniang Barangay members, Barangay Secretaries, and Treasurers, identify the specific SGLGB governance area/s where they have low level of understanding. It will guide them in identifying knowledge gaps and encourage them to enhance their capacity in these areas. In the end, this may lead to better performance and a higher chance of passing the next SGLGB assessment.

Municipal and Provincial Governments - The findings of this study can be used by higher-level local government units that oversee barangay operations, such as Municipalities and Provinces, to design training programs, capacity-building initiatives, and information dissemination strategies that better meet the needs of barangay leaders. This can help ensure that governance programs like the SGLGB are understood and implemented effectively across all barangays.

Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) - As the main agency responsible for carrying out SGLGB, the DILG can gain insights on how well the SGLGB assessment criteria are comprehended and effectively practiced at the barangay level. The study's findings can inform DILG's policy adjustments, particularly by revising guidelines, clarifying assessment indicators, and strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Additionally, the study can guide the development of more targeted and responsive capacity-building interventions, such as training programs, technical assistance, and coaching strategies that address specific knowledge gaps among barangay officials. It may also support the improvement of communication and information dissemination strategies to promote same level of understanding and implementation of governance standards across barangays.

Future Researchers and Academics - This study adds to the existing body of knowledge on local

governance initiatives in the Philippines. It highlights the critical role barangays play in institutionalizing good governance through structured performance frameworks. Ultimately, it will contribute to the limited studies on the DILG's assessment tools, specifically the SGLGB.

1.7. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study focused on barangay officials of the municipalities of Santa Cruz and Pakil, both located in the Fourth District of Laguna, and examined their level of understanding of the CY 2024 Seal of Good Local Governance for Barangays Assessment Criteria. It also investigated how this level of understanding influences their CY 2024 performance, in terms of the core governance areas: financial administration and sustainability; disaster preparedness; and safety, peace and order; and essential governance areas: social protection and sensitivity; business-friendliness and competitiveness; and environmental management.

Respondents include all barangay officials from the 26 barangays of the Municipality of Santa Cruz, and 13 barangays of Pakil, who voluntarily subjected themselves to the study. This includes the *Punong Barangay*, seven (7) Sangguniang Barangay Members or *Kagawads*, Barangay Secretary, and Barangay Treasurer. Data were collected using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire. The results were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's *r* correlation to explore relationships between variables.

It was limited to the municipalities of Santa Cruz, and Pakil; therefore, findings may not be generalizable to all barangays in the Fourth District of Laguna, or the province. The findings will be based on self-reported data, which may be influenced by response bias or inaccuracies. External factors, such as political dynamics, resource constraints beyond knowledge and awareness, or unforeseen events, are not deeply explored. The study focused specifically on the CY 2024 period, using the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment criteria as the latest available data, given the deferment of the 2025 SGLGB assessment. Any updated guidelines or program changes beyond this period were not included.

1.8. Definition of Terms

To help readers understand the study, the following definitions are provided based on related laws and issuances:

Barangay Officials. As provided under RA No. 7160 (1991), barangay officials refer to elective and appointive officials at the barangay level, including the Punong Barangays, Sangguniang Barangay members or Kagawad, Barangay Secretaries, and Barangay Treasurers. Each barangay has ten (10) barangay officials in a complete setup.

Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness. BFC involves barangay initiatives to support local economic activities (business and employment) through structures, systems, and legislation (DILG, 2024).

Core Governance Areas. DILG MC No. 2024-068 states that these are the fundamental indicators that ensure effective governance, especially when providing important public services. The SGLGB assessment consists of Financial Administration and Sustainability, Disaster Preparedness, and Safety, Peace and Order (DILG, 2024).

Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). A national government agency responsible for the promotion of peace and order, maintenance of public safety, and strengthening LGU capacities (DILG, n.d.).

Disaster Preparedness. It pertains to a barangay's proactive actions to prepare for the potential effects of hazards and to implement disaster risk reduction and management programs (DILG, 2024).

Environmental Management. This refers to a barangay's effort to help preserve the environment by complying with existing environmental laws such as the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (DILG, 2024).

Essential Governance Areas. In view of DILG MC No. 2024-068, these indicators include the provision of basic social welfare services, promotion of business and income-generating activities, and the

protection of the environment, with the following sub-indicators: Social Protection and Sensitivity, Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness, and Environmental Management (DILG, 2024).

Financial Administration and Sustainability. This refers to the exemplary practice of accountability and transparency in financial administration, by adhering to government accounting and auditing standards (DILG, 2024).

Governance Areas. It refers to the specific areas, roles, or functions within an organization or the government, in particular, where governance principles and techniques are used (DILG, 2024).

Safety, Peace, and Order. Based on DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2024-068, this refers to a barangay's excellent performance in maintaining peace and order through programs, projects, and activities that protect communities from threats to life, health, and security (DILG, 2024).

Seal of Good Local Governance for Barangays. Section 1 of DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2024-068 defined SGLGB as the DILG's performance assessment and recognition mechanism, designed to identify barangays that have demonstrated exceptional performance across different governance areas (DILG, 2024).

Social Protection and Sensitivity. DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2024-068 provides that SPS includes a barangay's responsiveness to the needs of the members of the disadvantaged or challenged sectors and the provision of support for basic education, food security, access to social welfare services, and participation of people's representatives in local special bodies (DILG, 2024).

1.9. Review of Related Literature and Studies

This chapter reviews relevant literature and studies, both foreign and local, that establish the conceptual and legal foundations of the Seal of Good Local Governance for Barangays (SGLGB). The review includes discussions on the development of local governance in the Philippines, the role of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) in governance, and academic perspectives on barangay performance and governance capacities. These works give the researcher a clearer understanding of the frameworks that influence the current study.

Under Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991, the concept of decentralization was born to help transform the implementation of local governance in the Philippines. Decentralization gave local government units, including barangays, greater freedom or autonomy and responsibility in delivering basic services and implementing governance programs at the grassroots level. By empowering LGUs to address the specific needs of their communities and constituents, this policy change aimed to improve local accountability, responsiveness, and citizen participation.

However, when LGUs were given greater powers and responsibilities by the central government, it became necessary to ensure they exercise these powers within the bounds of the law and national policy. For this reason, the 1987 Philippine Constitution and the Administrative Code of 1987 mandated the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to exercise general supervision over LGUs. This oversight function ensures that LGUs remain accountable and compliant with national standards and governance policies. To oversee LGU performance, the DILG developed various performance assessment and monitoring mechanisms to evaluate governance effectiveness and institutionalize accountability among LGUs.

One example of these mechanisms is the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG), and its barangay counterpart, the Seal of Good Local Governance for Barangays (SGLGB). The SGLGB is anchored on Republic Act No. 11292, which establishes a performance-based recognition system to promote accountability, integrity, transparency, and efficiency in public service delivery. Through this program, barangays are evaluated across several governance areas to determine their compliance with national governance standards.

The ability, readiness, and competency of local officials play a major role in the successful implementation of these governance reforms. As frontline implementers of the SGLGB assessment criteria, barangay officials play an important role in turning these governance standards into actual policies, programs,

and services at the grassroots level. As a result, their level of understanding of governance standards may greatly influence how effectively these policies are carried out and complied with.

Numerous studies suggest that demographic characteristics affect governance capability and policy implementation. Firmase and Prieto-Carolino (2021) who studied women barangay leaders in Iloilo, found that gender norms and educational background greatly affected women's engagement and influence in barangay politics. Their findings imply that differences in educational exposure, learning opportunities, and social expectations may shape how local officials, especially women leaders, understand and practice governance standards like those required under the SGLGB framework.

From the residents' perspective, similar patterns were observed. Garcia, et al. (2023) studied how residents view governance in Barangay T. Padilla and found that evaluations of transparency, rule of law, and accountability showed a relationship with demographic variables. According to their findings, residents' opinions on governance are influenced by the competence and backgrounds of barangay officials. For instance, officials with higher educational attainment or longer government service may be viewed as more transparent and effective. This may also reflect a higher level of understanding of governance standards, including SGLGB expectations.

According to Valdez (2024), barangay officials' demographic profiles, such as age, educational attainment, and years in service, influence the effectiveness and quality of their leadership. It was discovered that officials who were older and more seasoned had a wider range of institutional knowledge and stronger familiarity with governance systems. This supports the idea that years in barangay service may influence how officials interpret and implement SGLGB governance indicators.

Likewise, Floranza (2021) noted that barangay officials with higher levels of education and those who have served longer in government tend to perform better in fiscal administration and governance compliance because of their greater familiarity and exposure to government procedures, policies, and regulations. It was found that officials with higher educational attainment are generally more capable of interpreting these policies and implement systems.

Tan (2025) also highlighted that different demographic groups have distinct perspectives and approaches to governance, suggesting that differences in educational background, age, and exposure to governance influence how local officials understand governance standards.

Aside from these demographic variables, understanding governance standards is a crucial factor in effective policy implementation and governance. According to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2019), differing interpretations of policies and governance indicators often lead to inconsistent implementation across LGUs. The study explained that when local officials do not fully understand technical requirements, guidelines, and assessment indicators, policy implementation becomes more challenging. This study validates the need for proper interpretation and implementation of the SGLGB because of its numerous technical governance indicators.

The SGLG was described by Medina-Guce and Sanders Jr. (2024) as a comprehensive governance monitoring methodology intended to improve institutional accountability, transparency, and service delivery. However, they also pointed out that there are still implementation gaps, as local implementers have varying levels of understanding of governance indicators and compliance requirements. This strongly supports the goal of determining whether barangay officials' level of understanding on indicators and compliance requirements has a major impact on their assessment results.

According to Torres (2023), some local government units comply only procedurally rather than substantively because officials do not fully understand the objectives and principles behind governance indicators, despite the fact that governance assessment systems enhance organizational discipline and accountability practices. This seems to imply that barangay officials could adhere to documentary requirements without fully understanding the purpose and real-life application of governance principles. Therefore, high awareness alone may not necessarily result in strong governance performance.

Linguian and Pascual (2021) likewise argued that smaller barangays are often unable to fully understand and implement governance standards due to the technical complexity of auditing and compliance

systems. This finding supports the idea that barangays with little technical capacity may find it difficult to translate comprehension into actual compliance outcomes.

Distrito (2024) also highlighted how barangay officials' understanding and implementation of governance programs are influenced by organizational stress, motivation, and technical preparedness. All of these studies suggest that comprehension is a critical component of effective governance implementation as well as institutional and structural factors.

In relation to these governance dimensions, one of the core governance areas under the SGLGB framework is Financial Administration and Sustainability (FAS), which focuses on accountability, transparency, budgeting, and compliance with accounting and auditing standards. According to Villamor's (2025) research, barangays that have a greater understanding of budgeting and fiscal management typically demonstrate better governance performance and service delivery outcomes. This establishes that barangays' ability to meet the FAS indicators under the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment may be strongly influenced by their understanding of financial governance standards.

Atienza et al. (2020) explained that many barangays still struggle with financial management and revenue generation due to their limited technical capacity, despite decentralization strengthening local fiscal responsibility. Similarly, Monocay and Mejica (2020) argued that inequalities in institutional capacity and resource availability significantly affected barangays' compliance with financial governance standards. These findings establish that even if barangay officials possess awareness of financial policies, institutional limitations may hinder actual implementation and compliance.

Linguian and Pascual (2021) also highlighted that smaller barangays have implementation difficulties due to the technical complexity of auditing and compliance requirements. According to De Guzman (2020), barangays must continuously improve their fiscal management systems, transparency, and accountability to adapt to the evolving governance assessment framework. All of these studies suggest that improving FAS governance performance requires a better grasp of financial governance standards and principles.

Another important governance area under the SGLGB framework is Disaster Preparedness (DP). The presence of typhoons, flooding, landslides, earthquakes, and other climate-related hazards in our country underscores the importance of strengthening barangay-level disaster preparedness mechanisms. Under the SGLGB framework, barangays are expected to institutionalize disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) mechanisms through functional local DRRM committees, risk assessment systems, early warning mechanisms, and preparedness programs.

Republic Act No. 10121, also known as the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act of 2010, serves as the legal basis for disaster preparedness governance in the Philippines. This law became the backbone of disaster risk reduction and management systems across all levels of government. It emphasized proactive disaster preparedness rather than reactive disaster response. The law requires LGUs, including barangays, to establish DRRM Committees, formulate local DRRM plans, and allocate funds for disaster prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and rehabilitation activities. Compliance with these mandates is part of the Disaster Preparedness indicators under the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment criteria.

According to Ocampo and Delos Reyes (2022), barangays with stronger institutional coordination and governance structures typically perform better in terms of disaster preparedness. Their study found that barangays' preparedness capabilities are strengthened through regular DRRM trainings, planning activities, and coordination with higher LGUs. This finding supports the idea that barangay officials who possess a stronger understanding of DRRM practices may be better equipped to effectively implement disaster preparedness indicators.

Similarly, Albris et al. (2020) stressed that disaster governance depends heavily on the integration of technical knowledge into local governance systems and community preparedness mechanisms. The study explained that local officials who understand disaster risk reduction principles are better equipped to translate policies into practical preparedness measures.

Panda et al. (2023) further emphasized the importance of community-based practices in

strengthening disaster preparedness and resilience, as well as the presence of indigenous knowledge among citizens. Their study explained that communities that combine technical disaster governance systems with local knowledge and experiences typically exhibit stronger disaster resilience.

In another study, Bankoff (2019) explained that the Philippines developed a “culture of disaster preparedness” because of its high exposure to natural hazards. However, the study also found that preparedness capacities greatly differ among LGUs depending on the competence of local leaders, available resources, and institutional readiness. Additionally, Gaillard and Mercer (2018) emphasized that improving disaster preparedness requires local involvement and awareness of governance. Their study argued that disaster preparedness becomes more effective when local officials and communities clearly understand DRRM mechanisms and emergency operations.

Meanwhile, Dator-Bercilla and Bercilla (2021) found that barangays with organized early warning systems, evacuation planning, and disaster response mechanisms exhibit better governance performance during emergencies and calamities. The study emphasized that a better understanding of disaster preparedness systems improves coordination and decision-making during disasters.

Cuaresma (2020) likewise explained that the ability of local officials to implement policies effectively is important to the success of disaster preparedness. The study emphasized that organizational readiness, technical expertise, and planning capability have a major impact on local disaster governance outcomes.

A study conducted by Porio (2021) further highlighted the importance of community involvement and institutional cooperation in disaster preparedness governance. The study found that barangays that maintain active partnerships with local organizations, educational institutions, and community groups typically demonstrate stronger preparedness and resilience capacities. This suggests that comprehension of governance structures affects not only policy implementation but also community mobilization and participation.

Furthermore, Hilhorst et al. (2020) argued that continuous technical assistance, training, and institutional support for local officials enhances disaster preparedness governance. According to the study, repeated exposure to DRRM capacity-building programs improves local officials’ confidence and understanding of preparedness systems. This emphasizes that barangay officials who receive regular orientations and trainings may have a better understanding of disaster preparedness indicators.

Overall, the reviewed literature and studies indicate that institutional capability, governance coordination, technical knowledge, and community involvement greatly influence disaster preparedness governance. The results consistently show that barangay officials’ understanding of DRRM principles and governance systems significantly affects preparedness implementation and governance outcomes.

Another governance area included in the SGLGB criteria is Safety, Peace, and Order (SPO). It also plays an important role in barangay governance because peace and security are essential pillars of local development. According to Roy (2024), effective peace and order systems contribute to leadership integrity, governance efficiency, and public trust in local communities. This finding supports the study's idea that barangay officials who understand SPO governance mechanisms may better implement programs related to Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Councils, Lupong Tagapamayapa, and Barangay Peace and Order Councils, which are its sub-indicators.

Similarly, Sitchon et al. (2024) highlighted that accountability and transparency mechanisms enhance the peace and order governance outcomes in barangays. This, however, was countered by Lardera (2024), who noted that resource limitations and political conflict continue to hamper the implementation of peace and order governance systems. These findings indicate that while understanding may influence implementation, external institutional limitations may also affect governance outcomes.

Studies on barangay justice systems further highlight the importance of the *Lupong Tagapamayapa* in promoting community stability and conflict resolution. Acabo (2021) found that mediation, conciliation, and arbitration mechanisms under the *Katarungang Barangay* contribute to social harmony and effective conflict resolution. Similarly, studies on Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Councils reveal that technical guidance

and understanding of policy have a significant impact on how well programs are implemented. Rebusquillo (2020) found that barangay officials' ability to implement rehabilitation and anti-drug mechanisms effectively is essential to the success of BADAC drug-clearing initiatives.

Another crucial aspect of the SGLGB framework is Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS). This governance area focuses on welfare services, child protection, gender sensitivity, nutrition, and inclusive governance mechanisms. A study by Buenaventura and Labatete (2025) found that stakeholder involvement and participation improve governance outcomes in social protection programs. This highlights the importance of inclusivity in effective local governance.

This inclusivity in local governance was also mentioned by Khim and Tenorio (2024) as one of the factors that enhances responsiveness in barangay-level governance, specifically child protection programs. Aside from child protection, one of the main programs that promotes inclusivity is Gender and Development (GAD). Natividad and Gabutero (2020) found that local government units that actively integrate GAD principles into their governance initiatives show stronger responsiveness to community welfare concerns and gender-related issues. Their study further highlighted the importance of strengthening gender awareness and understanding of policies among local officials to improve governance effectiveness and inclusivity.

Likewise, studies on Violence Against Women (VAW) indicate that barangay officials who are knowledgeable of protection systems and gender-related laws are more capable of providing responsive support mechanisms to victims of abuse and violence. Dela Cruz (2021) found that barangay officials who are trained and knowledgeable on referral systems, intervention procedures, and gender-sensitive approaches in handling community concerns are usually linked with functional VAW desks. These findings show that knowing how gender-sensitive governance systems work can greatly improve the effectiveness of social protection and support at the barangay level.

Additionally, Ocampo and Delos Reyes (2022) noted that continuous DILG orientations and trainings help improve barangay awareness on social welfare and protection programs. Together, these findings suggest that stronger understanding of SPS governance indicators leads to more responsive and inclusive local governance. It also gives premium to the role of the DILG in helping barangays build their capacity.

The SGLGB framework also includes Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC), which focuses on regulatory efficiency, local taxing powers, and compliance with Republic Act No. 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business Law.

A study made by Co (2025) revealed that governance improves when barangays have strong planning systems and technical capabilities. This finding underscores the importance of understanding the technical aspects of governance systems, such as taxation, regulatory processes, and frontline service delivery. Relatively, Atienza et al. (2020) noted that the lack of technical expertise and weak fiscal independence make it difficult for many barangays to exercise their taxation powers. Monocay and Mejica (2020) similarly argued that institutional inequalities affect barangays' ability to comply with business and regulatory governance standards.

Studies related to RA No. 11032 further show that understanding streamlined government processes enhances service effectiveness and efficiency and promotes business facilitation. According to the Anti-Red Tape Authority (2023), compliance with simplified processing systems and citizen-centered service mechanisms enhances institutional efficiency and increases public trust in government services. Similarly, Brillantes and Fernandez (2019) clarified that local governments with stronger administrative and technical capability typically exhibit better regulatory compliance and governance performance.

Research on local revenue generation also suggests that top-performing LGUs have sustainable local governance through fiscal independence and the integration of inclusive development and digital innovations (Beltran et al., 2025). These findings imply that a deeper level of understanding is essential in improving local governance through the Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC) indicators under the SGLGB framework.

Another essential governance area in SGLGB is Environmental Management (EM), which focuses

on ecological solid waste management, environmental protection, and compliance with Republic Act No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (DILG, 2024). According to Sulasula (2024), barangays with effective waste segregation and environmental planning systems perform better in terms of governance.

Ocampo and Delos Reyes (2022) highlighted that digital systems improve environmental monitoring and enhance governance compliance. Studies on RA No. 9003 further reveal that barangay environmental performance improves when people are more aware of and follow ecological solid waste management practices. Aquino and Leonio (2020) found that LGUs with stronger implementation of waste segregation, recycling, and community-based environmental programs exhibit better compliance with environmental governance standards.

Similarly, research on Barangay Ecological Solid Waste Management Committees (BESWMCs) indicates that active environmental governance structures improve community involvement, policy compliance, and the effectiveness of waste management programs. Nacpil and Ballados (2021) emphasized that functional BESWMCs strengthen environmental awareness among communities and encourage their involvement in ecological solid waste management initiatives. These findings suggest that the level of understanding environmental governance systems significantly influences barangay compliance with EM indicators under the SGLGB framework.

Collectively, the reviewed literature and studies suggest that governance performance is not determined solely by awareness or the existence of policies, but also by local officials' ability to understand, interpret, and operationalize governance standards within their respective barangays. Moreover, the aforementioned studies reveal that institutional support systems, technical capability, governance resources, and organizational readiness significantly affect implementation outcomes.

While several studies have explored governance performance, institutional capability, and policy implementation among local government units, limited research has specifically examined the relationship between barangay officials' level of understanding of the SGLGB assessment criteria and their actual governance performance outcomes. Thus, the present study seeks to address this gap by determining whether the level of understanding of barangay officials in the municipalities of Santa Cruz and Pakil, Laguna, significantly influences their CY 2024 SGLGB assessment results. Specifically, the study aims to determine whether higher levels of understanding of the SGLGB governance areas correspond to stronger compliance and governance performance at the barangay level.

2. Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed throughout the entire study. This includes the research design, population and sampling techniques, research instrument, research procedure, and statistical treatment of data. It explains how the study was conducted to ensure reliability, validity, and ethical compliance throughout the process.

2.1. Research Design

This study used a quantitative-correlational research design. This non-experimental method examines the statistical relationship between two or more variables without changing them (Pubrica, 2025). The quantitative approach allows the researcher to gather and study numerical data to describe variables, test hypotheses, and assess relationships (Paperpal, 2025).

The study collected numerical data on the respondents' demographic profile in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, position, and years in barangay service, and their self-assessed level of understanding of the SGLGB criteria, particularly the three (3) core governance areas, and the three (3) essential areas. The correlational design then helps determine whether a relationship exists between the barangay officials' level of understanding and their barangay's CY 2024 performance.

2.2. Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the barangay officials from the 26 barangays of the municipality of Santa Cruz and 13 barangays of the municipality of Pakil. Each barangay had a total of 10 officials: the *Punong Barangay*, seven (7) Sangguniang Barangay Members (Kagawads), Barangay Secretary, and Barangay Treasurer, as of the time this study was conducted. In total, 384 respondents participated in the study.

The respondents' demographic profiles were described in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, position, and years in barangay service, as these variables may influence how well barangay officials understand the CY 2024 SGLB assessment criteria.

2.3. Sampling Technique

This study used purposive sampling, a nonprobability sampling method in which participants are selected based on their particular characteristics relevant to the research, such as their roles as barangay officials actively involved in SGLB implementation (Bullard, 2024). In this study, all barangay officials (10 per barangay) of the selected municipalities were surveyed, as they are the most directly involved in the SGLB process.

The use of purposive sampling ensured that participants were directly relevant to the research; thus, it enhanced the practical value of the findings. However, it may add selection bias and limit generalizability to the larger population of barangay officials.

2.4. Research Procedures

This study followed a systematic process to ensure consistency and ethical compliance. Approval and Endorsement: The researcher secured approval from the Graduate Studies and Applied Research, College of Business, Administration, and Accountancy - Laguna State Polytechnic University, Santa Cruz Campus, as part of the academic requirements for the master's degree in public administration. Upon approval, a formal letter-request was sent to the Department of the Interior and Local Government – Laguna Provincial Office. This step guaranteed that the study was conducted in accordance with institutional research protocols and with the approval of the agency and LGUs directly involved.

After the request was approved, the researcher began validating the research instrument. The survey questionnaire was developed using the CY 2024 SGLB assessment criteria (DILG, 2024), the study's conceptual framework, and relevant literature. Experts in local governance and research methodology reviewed the questionnaire for content and face validity. Their feedback and recommendations were taken into consideration to make the questions clearer, more relevant, and better aligned with the study's objectives.

After validating the research instrument, the researcher proceeded with data collection. Depending on respondents' preferences and accessibility, the survey was administered in both printed and online formats. The survey questionnaire was disseminated to barangay officials through a Memorandum from the DILG Laguna Provincial Office, their respective DILG Cluster Heads, and Field Officers. Respondents gave their informed consent before taking part and were told that their answers would be kept confidential. A two-month data collection period was allotted to allow sufficient time for data retrieval and verification.

The researcher also collected the CY 2024 SGLB assessment results validated by the concerned DILG Field Officers, Provincial Office, and Central Office. After collecting the data, the researcher organized and analyzed it. The responses were encoded, tallied, and checked before being analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize demographic information and understanding levels. Inferential statistics, specifically the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, were used to explore the relationships between variables.

Lastly, the researcher analyzed, interpreted, and presented the findings in light of the research questions, conceptual framework, and hypothesis. The results were compared with the literature and studies from Chapter 2 to confirm or challenge existing knowledge. Throughout the research, ethical considerations, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and truthful data reporting, were strictly observed. After finishing the study, the summary of the results and their implications for local governance and policy implementation were given to the Graduate School, the participating agency, and LGUs for their consideration.

2.5. Research Instrument

This study utilized a survey questionnaire developed by the researcher, aligned with the CY 2024 SGLGB criteria per DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2024-068. This questionnaire served as the primary data-collection tool of the study, and was divided into two main parts. The first section gathers information on respondents' demographic profiles, including age, sex, educational attainment, position, and years of service in the barangay.

The second part of the questionnaire includes a rating of the level of understanding of CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria in terms of the Core Governance Areas: Financial Administration and Sustainability; Disaster Preparedness; and, Safety, Peace and Order; and Essential Governance Areas: Social Protection and Sensitivity; Business-friendliness and Competitiveness; and Environmental Management, using a 4-point Likert scale (4 = Very Aware, 3 = Aware, 2 = Slightly Aware, and 1 = Not Aware).

The dependent variable, the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment performance of barangays, was gathered from the SGLGB official result validated by DILG Field Officers and the DILG Central Office.

2.6. Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. To show the respondents' demographic profile in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, position, and years in barangay service, frequency and percentage were applied.

To determine the level of understanding of barangay officials on the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria across the areas of Financial Administration and Sustainability, Disaster Preparedness, Safety, Peace and Order, Social Protection and Sensitivity, Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness, and Environmental Management, the weighted mean and standard deviation were used. The weighted mean was used to identify the average level of understanding, while the standard deviation helped measure the consistency of the responses.

To determine whether there is a significant relationship between the level of understanding of barangay officials and their CY 2024 SGLGB assessment results, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used.

Lastly, to identify which governance area of the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment criteria is the least comprehended, weighted mean was used. To identify which area is the least complied with, frequency and percentage were used.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the collected data to determine the relationship between barangay officials' level of understanding of the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment criteria and their CY 2024 SGLGB results.

3.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

This section aims to show the demographic profile of barangay officials: Punong Barangays, Sangguniang Barangay Members, Barangay Secretaries, and Barangay Treasurers, in the municipalities of Santa Cruz and Pakil, Laguna. Said profile includes the officials' age, gender, educational attainment, position, and years in barangay service. In total, three hundred eighty-four (384) barangay officials answered the survey.

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents by age. In terms of frequency, the age group 45-54 y/o has the highest number of respondents, with a total of 117 or 30.5% of the total population, followed by age group 55-64 y/o, with 112 responses or 29.2%, and age group 35-44 y/o with 77 respondents or 20.1% of the population.

On the other hand, the age group 18-24 y/o recorded the least number of respondents with a total of 3 or .8%, followed by the 65 y/o and above group, with 37 respondents or 9.6%, and age group 25-34 y/o, with 38 or 9.9% of the totality of the population.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age

Age Group	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-24 y/o	3	.8	.8	.8
25-34 y/o	38	9.9	9.9	10.7
35-44 y/o	77	20.1	20.1	30.7
45-54 y/o	117	30.5	30.5	61.2
55-64 y/o	112	29.2	29.2	90.4
65 y/o and above	37	9.6	9.6	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Overall, this reflects that 79.80% of respondents belong to the 35 to 65 age bracket, while the remaining 20.20% belong to the younger (18–34) and older (65 and above) age groups.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	217	56.5	56.5	56.5
Female	162	42.2	42.2	98.7
LGBTQIA+	5	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 presents the demographic profile by gender. Of the 384 respondents, 217 (56.5%) are male, 162 (42.2%) are female, and only 5 (1.3%) are LGBTQIA+.

This indicates that while barangay governance remains male-dominated, there is a relatively balanced representation of female officials; however, representation from the LGBTQIA+ community remains minimal. Overall, this suggests emerging inclusivity in local governance structures.

Table 3. Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Elementary Level	19	4.9	4.9	4.9
Secondary Level	137	35.7	35.7	40.6
Tertiary/College Level	223	58.1	58.1	98.7
Masteral Level	5	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

In terms of educational attainment, Table 3 shows that the majority of incumbent barangay officials in the municipalities of Santa Cruz, and Pakil, Laguna, have reached Tertiary/College Level with 223 responses or 58.1% of the total population, followed by 137 or 35.7% who have reached the Secondary Level of their studies. Meanwhile, only 19, or 4.9%, are at the Elementary Level, and only 5, or 1.3%, have reached the master's Level. No one pursued studies up to the Doctoral Level.

Although RA 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991 only requires elective and appointive barangay officials that they are able to read and write, the result of this study reveals that majority of our barangay leaders are relatively well-educated. This increases their potential to better understand and comply with the SGLGB assessment criteria.

Aside from these, the respondents were also asked about their positions. Table 4, presents the number of Punong Barangays, Sangguniang Barangay Members, Barangay Secretaries, and Barangay Treasurers who were able to answer the survey questionnaire. Out of 39 barangays of the two subject municipalities (Santa Cruz = 26, Pakil = 13), the respondents include 37 Punong Barangays, 273 Sangguniang Barangay Members, 38 Barangay Secretaries, and 36 Barangay Treasurers who voluntarily subjected themselves to the study.

Table 4. Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Position

Position	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Punong Barangay	37	9.6	9.6	9.6
Sangguniang Barangay Member/Kagawad	273	71.1	71.1	80.7
Barangay Secretary	38	9.9	9.9	90.6
Barangay Treasurer	36	9.4	9.4	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Since most respondents are Sangguniang Barangay Members, the study's overall findings may primarily reflect their views and levels of involvement in barangay governance.

Table 5. Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Years in Service

Position	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below 1 year	12	3.1	3.1	3.1
1 year to 5 years	207	53.9	53.9	57.0
6 years to 10 years	101	26.3	26.3	83.3
10 years to 20 years	58	15.1	15.1	98.4
20 years and above	6	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows the years of barangay officials in their barangay governance service. Out of 384 respondents, 207 or 53.9% have served from 1 year to 5 years, 101 officials or 26.3% are within 6 years to 10 years, and 58 or 15.1% are those within 10 years to 20 years in service. This indicates that the majority of the officials have been serving for several years in the barangay.

Meanwhile, 12 respondents, or 3.1%, are new to their positions, having been in the service for not more than a year, and only 6, or 1.6%, have been serving for 20 years and above. This result shows that the majority of the respondents are moderately experienced in barangay governance, with a relatively smaller proportion of highly experienced officials.

Having established the demographic profile of the respondents, the discussion proceeds to their level of understanding across governance areas using the following scale of interpretation:

Scale	Verbal Interpretation
3.26 - 4	Very Aware
2.51 - 3.25	Aware
1.76 - 2.5	Slightly Aware
1 - 1.75	Not Aware

3.2. Level of Understanding of Barangay Officials on the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria in terms of:

3.2.1. Core Governance Area - Financial Administration and Sustainability

The Financial Administration and Sustainability (FAS) core governance area reflects the level of barangays' outstanding exercise of accountability and transparency in the financial aspect of governance by adhering to accounting and auditing standards (DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2024-068). It includes compliances with the Barangay Full Disclosure Policy (BFDP), Revenue generation or exercise of corporate powers, Approval of the Barangay Budget on the Specified Timeframe, Allocation for Statutory Programs and Projects as Mandated by Laws and/or Other Issuances, Posting of the Barangay Citizens' Charter (CitCha), Release of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Funds by the Barangay, and Conduct of Barangay Assembly.

Table 6. Level of Understanding of Barangay Officials on the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria in terms of Financial Administration and Sustainability (FAS) Core Governance Area

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Barangay Full Disclosure Policy	3.27	0.53	Very Aware
2. Revenue generation or exercise of corporate powers	3.22	0.53	Aware
3. Approval of the Barangay Budget on the Specified Timeframe	3.28	0.52	Very Aware
4. Allocation for Statutory Programs and Projects as Mandated by Laws and/or Other Issuances	3.26	0.51	Very Aware
5. Posting of the Barangay Citizens' Charter	3.25	0.55	Very Aware
6. Release of the Sangguniang Kabataan Funds by the Barangay	3.26	0.54	Very Aware
7. Conduct of Barangay Assembly	3.35	0.53	Very Aware
Overall	3.27	0.49	Very Aware

Table 6 shows that barangays demonstrate a generally high level of understanding across all FAS indicators, with an overall mean of 3.27 (SD = 0.49), interpreted as “Very Aware”.

Among all the sub-indicators, the Conduct of Barangay Assembly obtained the highest mean (3.35), indicating that the barangay officials are highly aware of its regular conduct at least once every six (6) months. This is followed by the approval of the barangay budget within the specified timeframe (M=3.28) and compliance with the Barangay Full Disclosure Policy (M=3.27), both interpreted as “Very Aware.”

Although still within the acceptable range, revenue generation or the exercise of corporate powers registered the lowest mean (3.22) among the sub-indicators, interpreted as “Aware”. This finding aligns with Atienza et al. (2020) who emphasized that while decentralization reinforced local accountability, revenue generation remains structurally constrained at the barangay level.

Overall, the low standard deviation across sub-indicators indicates a consistent level of understanding among respondents, suggesting a generally uniform awareness of FAS-related governance functions.

3.2.2. Core Governance Area – Disaster Preparedness

Table 7 presents the respondents’ level of understanding of the second Core Governance Area, Disaster Preparedness, based on sub-indicators: Functionality of the Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee (BDRRMC); Risk Assessment and Early Warning System (EWS); and Preparedness for Effective Response and Recovery.

The results show a high level of understanding, with an overall mean of 3.30 (SD = 0.50), interpreted as “Very Aware”. Among the indicators, the Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee (BDRRMC) had the highest mean (3.31), indicating strong awareness of its roles and functions. This is followed by preparedness for effective response and recovery (3.30), reflecting the respondents’ understanding of disaster response responsibilities. Meanwhile, risk assessment and early warning systems (3.27) received the lowest mean, although still interpreted as “Very Aware”.

Table 7. Level of Understanding of Barangay Officials on the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria in terms of Disaster Preparedness (DP) Core Governance Area

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Functionality of the Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee (BDRRMC)	3.31	0.51	Very Aware
2. Extent of Risk Assessment and Early Warning System (EWS)	3.27	0.51	Very Aware
3. Extent of Preparedness for Effective Response and Recovery	3.30	0.51	Very Aware
Overall	3.30	0.50	Very Aware

The low standard deviation suggests a consistent level of understanding across respondents. Overall, barangay officials demonstrate a high level of awareness of disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) activities. This supports Ocampo and Delos Reyes (2022), who emphasized that DRRM awareness in barangays is strengthened through mandatory trainings and institutionalization under the Philippine DRRM Act of 2010.

3.2.3. Core Governance Area - Safety, Peace and Order

The result for the third Core Governance Area: Safety, Peace and Order (SPO), is shown in Table 8,

with its sub-indicators: Functionality of the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC); Functionality of the Barangay Peace and Order Committee (BPOC); Functionality of the Lupong Tagapamayapa (LT); Organization and Strengthening Capacities of Barangay Tanod; Barangay Initiatives During Health Emergencies; and Conduct of Monthly Barangay Road Clearing Operations (BaRCO).

Table 8. Level of Understanding of Barangay Officials on the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria in terms of Safety, Peace and Order (SPO) Core Governance Area

	Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1.	Functionality of the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC)	3.29	0.52	Very Aware
2.	Functionality of the Barangay Peace and Order Committee	3.31	0.53	Very Aware
3.	Functionality of the Lupong Tagapamayapa (LT)	3.29	0.54	Very Aware
4.	Organization and Strengthening Capacities of Barangay Tanod	3.28	0.54	Very Aware
5.	Barangay Initiatives During Health Emergencies	3.29	0.53	Very Aware
6.	Conduct of Monthly Barangay Road Clearing Operations (BaRCO)	3.30	0.53	Very Aware
	Overall	3.29	0.51	Very Aware

The results indicate a high level of understanding, with an overall mean of 3.29 (SD = 0.51), interpreted as “Very Aware”. Among the indicators, the functionality of the Barangay Peace and Order Committee (BPOC) obtained the highest mean (3.31), followed by the conduct of monthly barangay road clearing operations (3.30). Meanwhile, the organization and strengthening capacities of barangay tanods recorded the lowest mean (3.28), although still interpreted as “Very Aware”. This may be attributed to limited direct exposure of some officials to barangay tanod capability-building programs.

The remaining indicators, including BADAC functionality, Lupong Tagapamayapa, and health emergency initiatives, all received consistently high means. Overall, the consistently high mean scores and low standard deviation indicate a uniform level of understanding among respondents regarding SPO-related governance functions.

Table 9. Summary of Barangay Officials' Understanding Level of the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria in terms of Core Governance Areas

	Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1.	Disaster Preparedness (DP)	3.30	0.50	Very Aware
2.	Safety, Peace, and Order (SPO)	3.29	0.51	Very Aware
3.	Financial Administration and Sustainability (FAS)	3.27	0.49	Very Aware

Table 9 shows the summary of the three (3) Core governance areas which reveals that Disaster Preparedness is the most understood, followed by Safety, Peace, and Order (SPO), while Financial Administration and Sustainability (FAS) is the least comprehended, specifically the Revenue generation sub-indicator.

Although FAS recorded the lowest mean, particularly in revenue generation, the differences among the three areas are minimal. This indicates that barangay officials generally demonstrate high, consistent level of understanding across all governance areas, all of which are interpreted as “Very Aware.”

Aside from the Core Governance Areas, the level of understanding of barangay officials on the Essential Governance Areas were also analyzed.

3.3. Essential Governance Areas

The essential core areas involve Social Protection and Sensitivity, Business-friendliness and Competitiveness, and Environmental Management. These areas cover the provision of basic social welfare services, promotion of business and income-generating activities, and the protection of the environment (DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2024-068).

3.3.1. Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS)

To assess the level of understanding of the respondents in terms of Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS), the following sub-indicators were used: Functionality of Barangay Violence Against Women (VAW) Desk; Health and Social Welfare Services in the Barangay; Functionality of the Barangay Development Council (BDC); Implementation of the Kasambahay Law; Functionality of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC); Mechanism for Gender and Development (GAD); Maintenance of Updated Record of Barangay Inhabitants (RBIs); and, Functionality of the Barangay Nutrition Committee (BNC).

Table 10 shows a generally high level of understanding among respondents on the Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS) Essential Governance Area sub-indicators, with an overall mean of 3.25 (SD = 0.54), interpreted as “Very Aware”. Among the sub-indicators, Health and Social Welfare Services in the Barangay (M = 3.29, SD = 0.55) had the highest mean score, followed by the Functionality of Barangay Violence Against Women (VAW) Desk (M = 3.28, SD = 0.56).

Table 10. Level of Barangay Officials' Understanding of the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria in terms of Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS) Essential Governance Area

	Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1.	Functionality of Barangay Violence Against Women (VAW) Desk	3.28	0.56	Very Aware
2.	Health and Social Welfare Services in the Barangay	3.29	0.55	Very Aware
3.	Functionality of the Barangay Development Council (BDC)	3.26	0.56	Very Aware
4.	Implementation of the Kasambahay Law	3.16	0.60	Aware
5.	Functionality of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC)	3.27	0.56	Very Aware
6.	Mechanism for Gender and Development (GAD)	3.27	0.55	Very Aware
7.	Maintenance of Updated Record of Barangay Inhabitants (RBIs)	3.23	0.57	Aware
8.	Functionality of the Barangay Nutrition Committee (BNC)	3.26	0.58	Very Aware
Overall		3.25	0.54	Very Aware

Meanwhile, the lowest mean score was recorded for Implementation of the Kasambahay Law (M = 3.16, SD = 0.60), indicating “Aware”. This suggests that while respondents are generally knowledgeable of social protection programs, they have relatively limited familiarity with this specific labor-related law and the barangay’s role in its implementation.

The relatively low standard deviations (ranging from 0.55 to 0.60) indicate that responses were fairly consistent, reflecting a shared level of understanding among the respondents. This aligns with Ocampo and Delos Reyes (2022), who explained that barangay social welfare programs are generally well understood due to DILG training programs.

3.3.2. Business-friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC)

To assess the level of understanding of barangay officials on the Business-friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC) Essential Governance Area, the following sub-indicators were used: Power to Levy Other Taxes, Fees, or Charges; Compliance to Section 11 of RA 11032 of the Ease of Doing Business Law; and, Issuance of Barangay Certifications not covered by DILG MC No. 2019-177 such as: residency, indigency, etc.

Table 11 indicates that respondents demonstrate a moderately high level of understanding across all sub-indicators, as shown by an overall mean of 3.23 (SD = 0.52), interpreted as “Aware”.

Table 11. Level of Barangay Officials' Understanding of the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria in terms of Business-friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC) Essential Governance Area

	Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1.	Power to Levy Other Taxes, Fees, or Charges	3.21	0.56	Aware
2.	Compliance with Section 11 of RA 11032 of the Ease of Doing Business Law	3.21	0.57	Aware
3.	Issuance of Barangay Certifications not covered by DILG MC No. 2019-177, such as: residency, indigency, etc.	3.28	0.53	Very Aware
Overall		3.24	0.52	Aware

Among these sub-indicators, the Issuance of Barangay Certifications had the highest mean ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.53$), suggesting that this basic frontline service, which facilitates business transactions, was the most familiar to them. Meanwhile, both the Power to Levy Other Taxes, Fees, or Charges ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.56$) and Compliance with Section 11 of RA 11032 (Ease of Doing Business Law) ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.57$) garnered a slightly lower mean, interpreted as “Aware”.

This may be associated with the higher level of technical expertise required to implement these sub-indicators at the barangay level, as supported by Atienza et al. (2020), who emphasize that barangays have limited financial independence, resulting in a weak understanding of their taxation powers.

3.3.3. Environmental Management (EM)

In terms of the Environmental Management (EM) Essential Governance Area, the Functionality of the Barangay Ecological Solid Waste Management Committee (BESWMC), Existence of a Solid Waste Management Facility Pursuant to R.A. 9003, and Support Mechanisms for Segregated Collection were used as sub-indicators.

Table 12 presents the level of understanding of barangay officials regarding Environmental Management (EM). The results indicate a high level of understanding, with an overall mean of 3.27 ($SD = 0.50$), interpreted as “Very Aware”.

All three (3) sub-indicators were rated “Very Aware,” demonstrating strong awareness of environmental governance practices among the respondents. The highest mean scores were observed in both the Functionality of the Barangay Ecological Solid Waste Management Committee (BESWMC) and Support Mechanisms for Segregated Collection ($M = 3.28$), indicating strong familiarity with solid waste management

implementation at the barangay level.

Similarly, the Existence of a Solid Waste Management Facility pursuant to R.A. 9003 (M = 3.27, SD = 0.51) received a “Very Aware” rating, reflecting respondents’ awareness of compliance with environmental laws, such as R.A. 9003.

Table 12. Level Barangay Officials' Understanding of the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria in terms of Environmental Management (EM) Essential Governance Area

	Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1.	Functionality of the Barangay Ecological Solid Waste Management Committee (BESWMC)	3.28	0.50	Very Aware
2.	Existence of a Solid Waste Management Facility Pursuant to R.A. 9003	3.27	0.51	Very Aware
3.	Support Mechanisms for Segregated Collection	3.28	0.51	Very Aware
	Overall	3.27	0.50	Very Aware

The relatively low standard deviations (ranging from 0.50 to 0.51) indicate that responses were mostly consistent, reflecting a shared level of understanding among the respondents.

Table 13 presents the summary of the three (3) essential governance areas. Results reveal that Environmental Management (EM) is the most comprehended, followed by Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS). At the same time, Business-friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC) is the least understood, specifically the Power to Levy Other Taxes, Fees, or Charges, and the sub-indicators under Compliance with Section 11 of RA 11032 (Ease of Doing Business Law).

Table 13. Summary of the level of Barangay Officials' Understanding of the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria in terms of Essential Governance Areas

	Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1.	Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS)	3.25	0.54	Very Aware
2.	Business-friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC)	3.24	0.52	Aware
3.	Environmental Management (EM)	3.27	0.50	Very Aware

Although BFC recorded the lowest mean, the differences among the three areas are minimal. This indicates that barangay officials generally demonstrate a consistently high level of understanding across all Essential Governance Areas, all of which are interpreted as “Very Aware” or “Aware.”

This analysis of the level of barangay officials' understanding of the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria was also compared with their respective barangays’ performance in the most recent SGLGB implementation in CY 2024.

Table 14 presents the relationship between barangay officials' level of understanding of the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment criteria and their actual FY 2024 SGLGB assessment results across the six governance areas, using Pearson's correlation analysis.

Table 14. Relationship between the level of Barangay Officials' Understanding of the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria and their CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Result

SGLGB Indicators		2024 SGLGB Result					
		FAS	DP	SPO	SPS	BFC	EM
Financial Administration and Sustainability (FAS)	Pearson Correlation	0.125	-0.209	-.318*	-0.232	-0.014	-0.199
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.448	0.201	0.048	0.155	0.933	0.226
	N	39	39	39	39	39	39
Disaster Preparedness (DP)	Pearson Correlation	0.095	-0.029	-0.085	-0.212	0.086	-0.019
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.565	0.860	0.606	0.195	0.603	0.909
	N	39	39	39	39	39	39
Safety, Peace and Order (SPO)	Pearson Correlation	0.095	-0.070	-0.125	-0.122	0.120	-0.061
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.564	0.671	0.447	0.460	0.468	0.714
	N	39	39	39	39	39	39
Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS)	Pearson Correlation	0.131	-0.127	-0.213	-0.231	0.068	-0.118
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.428	0.439	0.193	0.157	0.680	0.475
	N	39	39	39	39	39	39
Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC)	Pearson Correlation	0.130	-.385*	-.473**	-.393*	-0.174	-.377*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.429	0.015	0.002	0.013	0.289	0.018
	N	39	39	39	39	39	39
Environmental Management (EM)	Pearson Correlation	0.125	-0.245	-0.269	-.322*	-0.025	-0.234
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.447	0.133	0.098	0.046	0.881	0.152
	N	39	39	39	39	39	39

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Overall, the results reveal that most of the relationships are not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), indicating that the level of understanding of barangay officials is generally not associated with their actual

performance in the SGLGB assessment, particularly across most governance areas. This suggests that even if barangay officials demonstrate high awareness of the assessment criteria, such knowledge does not necessarily translate into higher performance outcomes.

However, several statistically significant relationships were observed in selected governance areas, particularly under the Financial Administration and Sustainability, Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC), and Environmental Management (EM).

Under the Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC) area, significant negative correlations were found with the following governance areas: 1) with Disaster Preparedness (DP) ($r = -0.385$, $p = 0.015$); 2) with Safety, Peace and Order (SPO) ($r = -0.473$, $p = 0.002$); 3) Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS) ($r = -0.393$, $p = 0.013$); and with Environmental Management (EM) ($r = -0.377$, $p = 0.018$). These results indicate moderate inverse relationships, suggesting that higher understanding of BFC is associated with lower performance outcomes in the other governance areas.

This may be attributed to the standardized and documentation-based nature of BFC indicators, which makes them easier to comprehend. At the same time, other governance areas, such as Disaster Preparedness, Social Protection and Sensitivity, and Environmental Management, require multi-sectoral coordination involving barangay officials, appointed personnel, volunteers, and civil society organizations. Thus, knowledge alone may not directly translate into effective implementation.

Similarly, Financial Administration and Sustainability (FAS) showed a significant negative relationship with Safety, Peace, and Order ($r = -0.318$, $p = 0.048$), indicating that higher understanding in FAS is associated with lower performance in SPO. In addition, Environmental Management (EM) showed a significant negative relationship with Social Protection and Sensitivity ($r = -0.322$, $p = 0.046$), suggesting an inverse relationship between these governance areas.

These findings imply that greater awareness or understanding of governance criteria does not necessarily guarantee improved performance outcomes. Instead, they suggest implementation gaps between knowledge and the actual execution of programs, projects, and services at the barangay level.

The absence of strong, positive, and significant relationships is supported by Atienza et al. (2020), who emphasized that knowledge and awareness of governance frameworks do not automatically translate into improved performance due to structural limitations, resource constraints, and implementation challenges at the local government level.

In the next section, the 2024 SGLGB assessment results was analyzed.

Table 15 presents the summary of the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment results across the six governance areas. The results reveal varying levels of compliance among barangays, with noticeable differences in passing rates per governance area.

Table 15. Summary of CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Results

Governance Area	Result	Frequency	Percent
Financial Administration and Sustainability (FAS)	Failed	38	97.4
	Passed	1	2.6
Disaster Preparedness (DP)	Failed	22	56.4
	Passed	17	43.6
Safety, Peace, and Order (SPO)	Failed	27	69.2
	Passed	12	30.8
Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS)	Failed	31	79.5
	Passed	8	20.5
Business-friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC)	Failed	15	38.5
	Passed	24	61.5
Environmental Management (EM)	Failed	22	56.4
	Passed	17	43.6

The most complied governance area is BFC, with 24 out of 39 subject barangays passing, equivalent to a 61.5% passing rate. This suggests that barangays perform better in business-related governance requirements compared to other areas. It is supported by Ocampo and Delos Reyes (2022), who explained that barangays' business-related services are standardized, making it easier to comply with, even with limited conceptual understanding.

The next most complied areas are Disaster Preparedness (DP) and Environmental Management (EM), both with 17 barangay passers and 43.6% passing rate. These stable compliance levels may have been influenced by the institutionalization of these governance areas through the passage of Republic Act Nos. 10121 and 9003, respectively. This is consistent with Torres (2023), who emphasized that legal institutionalization strengthens local compliance in governance implementation.

On the other hand, the least complied governance area is Financial Administration and Sustainability (FAS), with only 1 passer out of the 39 subject barangays, for a 2.6% passing rate. This finding contradicts Contingjo et al. (2025), who reported that barangay treasurers demonstrated a very effective level of financial management skills and are generally well-equipped and competent in their fiscal responsibilities.

This is followed by the Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS) governance area, with 8 passers and a 20.5% passing rate, and the Safety, Peace, and Order (SPO) with 12 passers and a 30.8% passing rate. The low SPS passing rate supports Lardera's (2024) claim that barangay-level social services often suffer from resource fragmentation and competing priorities.

Overall, the findings indicate a weak and inconsistent relationship between barangay officials' understanding of the SGLGB criteria and their actual SGLGB performance outcomes. In some cases, the relationship appears inverse. For example, while BFC was among the least comprehended governance areas, it recorded the highest passing rate among all indicators.

In summary, the results suggest that higher awareness or understanding does not necessarily translate into better performance outcomes. This underscores the need to align knowledge with implementation, noting that LGU capability development should go beyond raising leaders' awareness and focus more on actual execution and institutional support.

Based on the study's findings, particularly the high level of understanding among barangay officials and the weak or negative relationship between understanding and SGLGB performance, the researcher hereby presents her proposed action plan.

Table 16. Proposed Action Plan for the Improvement of the Seal of Good Local Governance for Barangays (SGLGB) Result

Through the implementation of these initiatives, the identified gaps in barangay governance may be effectively addressed and strengthened. The technical guidance and capacity-building support of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) play a crucial role in enhancing local governance performance. These interventions will not only strengthen the partnership between national government agencies and local government units but also improve the monitoring and evaluation systems of various performance assessment mechanisms, including the SGLGB.

From Awareness to Action: A Results-Driven SGLGB Performance Transformation Model				
ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICE/ AGENCY	TARGET PARTICIPANTS	EXPECTED OUTCOME	UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION
Issue: Lower level of awareness on Business Friendliness and Competitiveness, particularly on barangays' power to levy taxes, fees, or charges, and compliance with RA 11032				
Orientation on Corporate powers and Ease of Doing Business (EODB) Compliance	Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF), and Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)	Punong Barangays, and Sangguniang Barangay Members	Enhanced understanding of barangay corporate powers and regulatory compliance, leading to improved fiscal management and business-friendly service delivery	Defining Barangay Fiscal Powers through Practical, Compliance-Focused Learning
Issue: High level of awareness of barangay officials on SGLGB criteria but low assessment performance				
Hands-on training on effective program implementation and compliance	DILG	Barangay Officials	Improved ability to translate knowledge into actual program implementation and better SGLGB performance outcomes	Translating SGLGB Knowledge into Measurable Outputs
Issue: Gaps in program implementation at the barangay level				
Training on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Systems	DILG, and Partner Academe (Laguna State Polytechnic University)	Barangay Officials, and key barangay personnel and stakeholders	Established or improved M&E systems resulting in more efficient and accountable governance practices	Institutionalizing Real-Time Monitoring for Strengthened Barangay Accountability
Issue: Limited opportunities to learn from high-performing barangays (SGLGB passers)				
Peer Learning and Best Practices Sharing Session	DILG	Barangay Officials	Adoption of effective strategies and practices, leading to improved governance performance and higher likelihood of passing the SGLGB assessment	Replicate, Innovate, Elevate: Empowering Barangays with Tested Governance Solutions

4. Summary of Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This chapter presents the summary of findings, the conclusions drawn, and the researcher's proposed

recommendations.

4.1. Summary of Findings

Based on the data gathered, the following findings are revealed:

- In terms of age distribution, most (30.5%) of the respondents are within the age group 45-54 y/o. Very few are in the youngest or oldest age groups. More than half of the population belongs to the male gender group (56.5%), while women are also slightly balanced in barangay governance (42.2%).
In terms of educational attainment, the majority (58.1%) of incumbent barangay officials in the municipalities of Santa Cruz and Pakil, Laguna, have reached the Tertiary/College Level, despite their positions requiring only the ability to read and write. As expected, the total population of respondents was predominantly Sangguniang Barangay Members (71.1%); thus, the study's overall findings may primarily reflect their perspectives.
Lastly, 53.9% of the respondents have served for 1 to 5 years, indicating that the majority are slightly experienced in barangay governance and are serving their 1st to 2nd terms as officials.
- There is generally a high level of understanding among barangay officials on the CY 2024 SGLGB Assessment Criteria, specifically on the three (3) Core Governance Areas (Financial Administration and Sustainability; Disaster Preparedness; and Safety, Peace and Order), interpreted as "Very Aware". Among the sub-indicators, only the Revenue generation or exercise of corporate powers appear to have a slightly lower level of understanding among the barangay officials, interpreted as "Aware".
In the Essential Governance Areas, Environmental Management (EM) and Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS) garnered a high level of understanding among the respondents, interpreted as "Very Aware". However, the Implementation of the Kasambahay Law recorded a relatively lower mean score ($M=3.1641$, $SD=0.60170$), alongside the maintenance of updated records of barangay inhabitants (RBIs).
Only the Business-friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC) governance area achieved a slightly lower level of understanding, interpreted as "Aware", with two of its sub-indicators: Power to Levy Other Taxes, Fees, or Charges; and Compliance to Section 11 of RA 11032 of the Ease of Doing Business Law, with the same verbal interpretation.
- The overall findings of the study reveal that across the six governance areas, most of the relationships are not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), indicating that the level of understanding of barangay officials is generally not associated with their actual performance in the SGLGB assessment.
- The test of relationship between the Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC) area showed multiple significant negative correlations between Disaster Preparedness (DP) ($r = -0.385$, $p = 0.015$); Safety, Peace and Order (SPO) ($r = -0.473$, $p = 0.002$); Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS) ($r = -0.393$, $p = 0.013$); and Environmental Management (EM) ($r = -0.377$, $p = 0.018$).
- In the same manner, Financial Accountability and Sustainability (FAS) showed a significant negative relationship with Safety, Peace, and Order (SPO) ($r = -0.318$, $p = 0.048$).
- The test of the relationship between the Environmental Management and other governance areas revealed that it has a significant negative relationship with Social Protection and Sensitivity (SPS) ($r = -0.322$, $p = 0.046$).
- The least complied governance area of barangays during the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment is Financial Administration and Sustainability, with only one passer among the 39 subject barangays (2.6% passing rate), followed by Social Protection and Sensitivity, with only 8 passers (20.5% passing rate). These two areas have sub-indicators that revealed a slightly lower level of

understanding in the results. Surprisingly, the Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC) area, which has the lowest level of understanding among the respondents, has a 61.5% passing rate in the CY 2024 SGLGB assessment.

4.2. Conclusions

The following conclusions were made based on the findings:

- The respondents' demographic profile suggests that barangay officials are generally middle-aged, relatively educated, and moderately experienced. The majority of respondents belong to the 35–64 age group, have reached at least a college level of education, and have served between one (1) and ten (10) years. This reveals that most officials possess sufficient maturity, educational background, and experience to understand governance-related policies and programs.
- Barangay officials demonstrate a high level of understanding of the SGLGB assessment criteria across most governance areas. Both core governance areas (Financial Administration and Sustainability; Disaster Preparedness; and Safety, Peace and Order) and essential governance areas (Social Protection and Sensitivity; and Environmental Management) were rated as "Very Aware." This indicates that barangay officials are generally knowledgeable about the requirements and standards of the SGLGB, as reflected in their self-assessment.
- Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC) is the least comprehended governance area. Compared to other areas, BFC was only rated "Aware," particularly regarding the barangays' power to levy taxes, fees, or charges and compliance with RA 11032. This implies that barangay officials understand fewer technical aspects of governance, despite the presence of laws and standardized procedures.
- Specific governance sub-areas require further strengthening despite the overall high level of awareness. Certain indicators, such as revenue generation, implementation of the Kasambahay Law, and maintenance of updated barangay records (RBI), showed relatively lower mean scores or levels of understanding. This suggests gaps in familiarity with more specialized or technical functions.
- Most relationships are not statistically significant relationships between the level of understanding of barangay officials and their respective barangays' SGLGB assessment results. Most correlation results were not statistically significant, indicating that a higher level of awareness does not necessarily lead to better performance in the SGLGB assessment.
- Some significant relationships are negative, indicating a gap between knowledge and implementation. In selected governance areas, particularly Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC), Financial Administration and Sustainability (FAS), and Environmental Management (EM), significant negative correlations were observed. This implies that even with higher understanding, barangays may still perform poorly, possibly due to implementation challenges.
- The findings suggest that awareness may not be sufficient to ensure effective governance performance. The findings highlight that while barangay officials are knowledgeable about SGLGB criteria, this knowledge is not always translated into actual practice. Other pillars of capacity should still be given greater focus, as they may affect performance outcomes, i.e., the functional structure of the Sangguniang barangay and other barangay-based institutions, barangay officials' competency in implementing programs, the management systems used, the policies in place, and the type of leadership barangays have. This may mean that, aside from barangay officials, other stakeholders, such as members of barangay-based institutions, must also be capacitated and provided with appropriate capability interventions.
- Bridging the gap between knowledge and implementation is essential for improving SGLGB performance. The study concludes that capability development efforts should focus not only on increasing knowledge and awareness but also on enhancing practical skills, execution, and monitoring to achieve better governance outcomes.

4.3. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are advanced:

- Enhance the Barangay Newly Elected Officials (BNEO) Orientation Program to include components with higher level of technical expertise.

Given that the majority of barangay officials are moderately experienced and educated, the existing capacity development programs for barangay officials should be sustained and advanced to further enhance their competencies. The Capacity Development for Newly Elected Officials Program, which subjects participants to different types of training programs depending on their level of experience in local governance, may be adopted, offering distinct program components for newly minted, re-elected, and returning local officials.

For re-elected and coming back barangay officials, more advanced and technical topics may be covered in their first training modules to maximize their learning and effectiveness in local governance. The Business Friendliness and Competitiveness area should be prioritized for experienced officials.

On the other hand, newly minted barangay officials may be given a basic package of topics, with priority given to their introduction to their basic mandates and tasks. The succeeding parts of their training course may then include a higher level of technical expertise, such as BFC.

- Sustain the awareness campaign on the SGLGB assessment criteria.
In view of the already high level of understanding among barangay officials across different governance areas, the DILG should continue conducting regular orientations and information dissemination activities. Conducting orientations before assessment implementation, and the feedback mechanisms such as exit conferences, remain effective strategies to maintain a high level of understanding and appreciation of barangay officials of the assessment criteria. This can also ensure that future developments in SGLGB criteria are communicated effectively to all stakeholders, especially barangay officials. As SGLGB is a progressive assessment mechanism, there is a continuous need to sustain the program's awareness campaign.
- Develop a comprehensive capacity-building intervention on Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness (BFC)

Given the identified least comprehended governance area, targeted training programs should be conducted focusing on barangay corporate powers, local revenue generation, and compliance with RA 11032 to improve barangay officials' understanding of BFC concepts and their application. To ensure its appropriateness in barangay governance, the DILG, in coordination with the Bureau of Local Government Finance and the Local Government Academy, may work together to create a more simplified yet comprehensive BFC training program.

This will also help barangays maximize their potential as corporate entities capable of generating funds to achieve local autonomy and better support their development plans for their respective localities.

- Intensify the use of the Barangay Information Management System (BIMS), expand the orientation to all barangay officials, and add more report generation features to supplement the weak governance sub-areas: Kasambahay Law implementation, and maintenance of barangay inhabitants (RBI).

BIMS is a free digital platform designed to enhance the operations, governance, and service delivery of LGUs, specifically barangays. Currently, the rollout of its implementation only reaches Barangay Secretaries, the main custodians of all records of the sangguniang barangay. The existence of this system must also be known to other barangay officials, as its components include services that require their presence, and not of barangay secretaries alone.

It also provides a great opportunity to enhance record-keeping and report generation for barangays. For instance, the feature for kasambahay masterlist generation may be incorporated into the system to help barangays maintain or regularly update their lists, which will eventually help them pass this

sub-indicator. Advocating its use to digitalize the encoding and updating of the barangay inhabitants' registry will help increase barangay officials' awareness of this sub-indicator while bridging the implementation gap.

- Ensure adequate resource allocation and institutional support

The findings of this study reveal that knowledge alone does not guarantee effective policy or program implementation, as other factors, such as financial capacity, human resources, and institutional capabilities, also play an important role in local governance. National government agencies such as the DILG and the Local Government Academy should allocate more funds and resources to strengthen the pillars of capability development.

Their institutional support to barangays should also be strengthened in line with their resource needs. Higher LGUs, such as provinces, cities, and municipalities, may help address these resource gaps as part of their supervisory function over their component LGUs, specifically barangays. Aside from resource augmentation, the continuous provision of technical and administrative services to barangays will be helpful.

- Adoption of holistic capacity development strategies

To improve governance among LGUs, holistic capacity development strategies should be adopted that focus not only on awareness but also on practical skills, monitoring, and evaluation. Programs such as hands-on training, peer learning sessions, and performance monitoring systems should be incorporated into barangay capability development programs to bridge the gap between knowledge and implementation.

- Recommendations for future researchers:

- a. Expand the geographical scope of the study

Future researchers may examine more cities and municipalities to provide a broader lens on SGLGB implementation within the Province. The study may also be expanded to different provinces and regions to have variations in the level of understanding of the SGLGB and barangay performances.

- b. Examine other factors that may be influencing the SGLGB performance of barangays

Other capacity development pillars, such as organizational structures (different barangay-based institutions), skills of barangay officials and other barangay personnel, management systems for program implementation, presence of policies that support barangay initiatives, mechanisms for the decision-making process, and leadership style, may also be looked into since this study found that understanding is not significantly related to performance.

- c. Compare passer and non-passer barangays

Comparing barangays that passed the SGLGB with those that did not may provide valuable insights into success factors and common challenges in barangay governance.

- d. Examine SGLGB implementation gaps through a mixed-method research design

If time permits, the use of qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus group discussions, may yield a deeper understanding of why high awareness does not necessarily lead to better implementation or performance.

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