

Shared Leadership and Management Effectiveness in Locally Funded Higher Education Institutions: The Empowered Program

Dennis Coton Camatog^{1, 2, *}

¹Office of the Vice-President for Research, Innovation, Extension, and Development, Paranaque City College, Parañaque City, Philippines camatog.dennis@paranaquecitycollege.edu.ph

²Graduate School, Emilio Aguinaldo College, Manila, Philippines dennis.camatog@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT:

This study investigates the relationship between shared leadership and management effectiveness in a locally funded higher education institution (LFHEI) in the Philippines. Although shared leadership has been widely examined in corporate and Western academic contexts, empirical evidence remains limited in politically governed public higher education institutions, particularly in developing countries. This study addresses this gap by examining shared leadership practices within a politically embedded governance structure. A quantitative descriptive research design was employed using a validated Shared Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) administered to 75 employees of Parañaque City College. Descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Pearson correlation were used to examine the relationships between shared leadership dimensions, namely social support, employee motivation, employee commitment, and employee innovation, and indicators of management effectiveness, including communication skills, adaptability, strategic thinking, and ethical behavior. Results indicate that shared leadership practices are evident, with social support and employee commitment rated highest. Management effectiveness was perceived as above average, particularly in strategic thinking and ethical behavior. A strong and statistically significant positive correlation was found between shared leadership and management effectiveness ($r = 0.812, p < 0.01$). The findings provide empirical support for the viability of shared leadership in politically governed LFHEIs, extending shared leadership theory beyond corporate and Western academic settings. The study contributes context-specific evidence to leadership research in public higher education and proposes the EmpowerEd Program as an evidence-based framework for institutionalizing collaborative decision-making, ethical governance, and leadership capacity-building in locally funded higher education institutions.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Leadership Challenges in Politically Governed Higher Education

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping the quality of governance, institutional performance, and organizational sustainability in higher education. Increasing complexity in academic environments, driven by accountability demands, resource constraints, and stakeholder expectations, has exposed limitations in traditional hierarchical leadership models. As a result, scholars have increasingly turned to participatory and distributed leadership approaches as potential alternatives to centralized authority.

Despite this shift, leadership effectiveness in public higher education institutions remains uneven. Empirical findings on participatory leadership models are not entirely consistent, with outcomes varying across organizational contexts. While some studies report positive effects on engagement, innovation, and ethical governance, others suggest that leadership effectiveness is highly contingent on institutional structure, power distribution, and governance arrangements. These inconsistencies indicate that leadership models cannot be assumed to operate uniformly across all higher education systems. In public higher education systems, governance arrangements and political oversight further complicate leadership effectiveness by constraining institutional autonomy and shaping decision-making priorities, reinforcing the need for leadership models that balance accountability with collaboration (Marginson, 2016).

Prior research has demonstrated that the effectiveness of shared and distributed leadership is highly context dependent, with outcomes varying across organizational structures, governance arrangements, and institutional environments (Bolden, 2011; O'Toole et al., 2002). In public and politically governed institutions, leadership practices are further shaped by external authority and bureaucratic constraints, limiting the transferability of findings from corporate and

Western academic contexts (Denis et al., 2012; Hallinger & Chen, 2015).

In politically governed institutions, leadership is further complicated by external authority, administrative turnover, and policy-driven decision-making. These conditions may constrain institutional autonomy while simultaneously increasing the need for collaborative leadership practices that promote continuity, trust, and shared accountability. However, empirical research examining leadership models under such political conditions remains limited.

1.2 Shared Leadership as a Multidimensional Construct

Shared leadership has emerged as a prominent framework emphasizing collective influence and distributed responsibility among organizational members. Rather than positioning leadership as the sole function of formal authority, shared leadership conceptualizes influence as a dynamic and interactive process enacted among individuals and groups. This approach is particularly relevant in academic institutions, where professional autonomy, collaboration, and peer-based decision-making are integral to organizational functioning.

In educational settings, distributed and shared leadership perspectives emphasize the dispersion of leadership practice across formal and informal actors rather than reliance on positional authority alone, aligning leadership processes with the collaborative and professional nature of academic work (Spillane, 2006).

Scholars commonly conceptualize shared leadership as a multidimensional construct encompassing relational and behavioral components. Core dimensions frequently identified in the literature include social support, employee motivation, employee commitment, and employee innovation. These dimensions reflect how leadership is enacted through trust-building, goal alignment, engagement, and creative problem-solving.

Although these dimensions have been

empirically examined in corporate, nonprofit, and Western academic contexts, findings remain context-dependent. In particular, there is limited evidence on how these dimensions function collectively within politically governed public higher education institutions. The extent to which shared leadership can be sustained, and which dimensions are most influential under political oversight, remains insufficiently explored, contributing to inconsistent conclusions in the broader leadership literature.

1.3 Management Effectiveness in Public Higher Education Institutions

Management effectiveness is a critical indicator of leadership performance in higher education, particularly in institutions facing governance complexity and public accountability. In prior research, management effectiveness has been operationalized through competencies such as communication skills, adaptability, strategic thinking, and ethical behavior. These dimensions reflect leaders' ability to guide institutions through change, align organizational goals, and maintain integrity in decision-making processes.

In politically embedded academic institutions, these competencies become especially salient. Leaders must navigate competing stakeholder interests, policy directives, and administrative constraints while maintaining institutional coherence and employee trust. Despite their importance, management effectiveness indicators are often treated as generalized outcomes in leadership research, with limited attention to their distinct dimensions or to how participatory leadership practices shape them. Moreover, existing studies rarely examine management effectiveness in relation to shared leadership within locally funded public institutions. This gap limits understanding of how distributed leadership influences specific managerial competencies under political governance conditions.

1.4 Research Gap, Purpose, and Contribution of the Study

Although existing literature broadly supports the potential benefits of shared leadership, several critical gaps remain. First, prior findings are

inconsistent due to heavy reliance on corporate, team-based, or Western institutional contexts. Second, politically governed public higher education institutions, particularly locally funded institutions in developing countries, remain underrepresented in empirical research on leadership. Third, limited attention has been given to the interaction between specific shared leadership dimensions and distinct indicators of management effectiveness.

This study addresses these gaps by examining the implementation of shared leadership in a locally funded higher education institution in the Philippines. Anchored in Shared Leadership Theory, the research investigates how four dimensions of shared leadership - social support, employee motivation, employee commitment, and employee innovation relate to key indicators of management effectiveness, namely communication skills, adaptability, strategic thinking, and ethical behavior.

In addition, the study examines whether perceptions of shared leadership and management effectiveness differ across demographic and professional groups within the institution. By doing so, the research contributes context-specific empirical evidence to the leadership literature and extends understanding of shared leadership in politically governed academic environments. The study further advances practice by proposing the EmpowerEd Program, a leadership framework designed to institutionalize collaborative, ethical, and capacity-driven leadership practices tailored to the governance realities of locally funded higher education institutions.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Evolution of Shared Leadership Theory

Shared leadership emerged as a response to the limitations of hierarchical and leader-centric models, particularly in complex and knowledge-based organizations. Foundational work conceptualized shared leadership as a dynamic and interactive influence process in which leadership functions are distributed among organizational members rather than vested in a

single authority figure (Pearce & Conger, 2003). This theoretical shift reframed leadership as a collective process grounded in collaboration, mutual accountability, and shared responsibility.

Subsequent theoretical and empirical work extended this perspective by demonstrating that shared leadership can enhance collective learning, coordination, and adaptability (Pearce & Sims, 2002; Hoch et al., 2020). However, these developments largely reflect organizational contexts characterized by relative autonomy and stable governance structures. More recent syntheses acknowledge that leadership theory continues to evolve and that the effectiveness of shared leadership remains contingent on organizational context and structural support (Avolio et al., 2021).

2.2 Empirical Evidence on Shared Leadership Outcomes and Inconsistencies

Empirical studies have generally reported positive associations between shared leadership and organizational outcomes, including performance, innovation, and employee engagement. Meta-analytic and large-scale studies confirm that shared leadership is particularly effective in team-based and knowledge-intensive environments (Hoch et al., 2020; Chun et al., 2020). These findings suggest that the distribution of leadership influence can enhance organizational agility and responsiveness.

Although empirical studies generally associate shared leadership with positive organizational outcomes, several scholars caution that its effectiveness depends on institutional structure, role clarity, and governance support. Reviews and empirical analyses indicate that shared leadership may yield mixed or conditional outcomes in highly formalized or politically constrained environments (Bolden, 2011; O'Toole et al., 2002; Carson et al., 2007).

However, the empirical literature also reveals important inconsistencies. Some studies report that shared leadership loses effectiveness in highly formalized or bureaucratic organizations, where authority structures restrict distributed influence (Pearce & Sims, 2002). Others argue

that without clear institutional mechanisms, shared leadership may remain symbolic rather than operational (Avolio et al., 2021).

These mixed findings indicate that leadership outcomes are shaped not only by leadership style but also by governance structures, authority arrangements, and institutional context - factors that remain insufficiently examined in existing research.

2.3 Shared Leadership in Educational and Public-Sector Contexts

Within higher education, shared leadership has been linked to collegial governance, ethical decision-making, and enhanced faculty engagement, particularly in Western academic systems (Hoch et al., 2020; Abdullah, 2019). These studies highlight the compatibility of shared leadership with academic norms such as professional autonomy and peer collaboration.

Studies on shared leadership in higher education highlight a persistent gap between participatory leadership rhetoric and actual governance practice, particularly in public institutions where authority remains centralized (Bolden et al., 2009; Kezar & Holcombe, 2017). These challenges are amplified in politically embedded institutions, where leadership continuity and decision-making autonomy are constrained.

In contrast, research focusing on public and politically governed higher education institutions is comparatively limited. Existing studies identify political interference, ambiguous authority boundaries, and administrative turnover as key barriers to participatory leadership in public institutions (Harrison et al., 2022). While these studies acknowledge governance constraints, they often stop short of empirically examining how shared leadership functions under sustained political oversight.

Moreover, leadership research in developing-country contexts remains underrepresented. Most empirical evidence originates from Western or high-income countries, raising concerns about contextual transferability (Gomez & Rivera, 2023). This geographic and institutional bias limits understanding of how

shared leadership operates in settings characterized by bureaucratic governance, political accountability, and resource constraints.

2.4 Dimensions of Shared Leadership: Analytical Gaps

Although shared leadership is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct, many empirical studies treat it as an aggregated variable, limiting analytical precision. Studies that do examine specific dimensions such as social support, motivation, commitment, and innovation tend to focus on isolated outcomes or team-level performance (Chun et al., 2020; Hoch et al., 2020).

While shared leadership is widely conceptualized as a multidimensional construct, many empirical studies operationalize it as an aggregated variable, limiting analytical precision. Scholars argue that examining leadership through distinct dimensions provides greater explanatory power, particularly in complex organizational environments (Carson et al., 2007).

In politically governed academic institutions, these dimensions may operate differently. Social support may mitigate hierarchical tensions, while employee commitment may enhance institutional stability amid political transitions.

Innovation, meanwhile, may be constrained by governance structures rather than individual initiative. However, existing research does not sufficiently examine these dimension-specific dynamics, particularly at the institutional level.

2.5 Management Effectiveness and Leadership in Higher Education

Management effectiveness is commonly used as an indicator of leadership performance in higher education and is typically operationalized through competencies such as communication, adaptability, strategic thinking, and ethical behavior (Yukl, 2013; Abdullah, 2019). These competencies are especially critical in public institutions, where leaders must balance organizational goals with political accountability and stakeholder expectations.

Despite their importance, management

effectiveness indicators are often examined independently of leadership models or treated as generalized outcomes. Few studies explicitly investigate how participatory or shared leadership practices influence specific managerial competencies, particularly within politically embedded governance systems (Avolio et al., 2021). This gap limits understanding of how leadership processes translate into concrete managerial effectiveness in public higher education.

2.6 Synthesis and Research Gap

Taken together, existing literature supports the potential benefits of shared leadership but reveals several unresolved gaps. First, empirical findings remain inconsistent due to heavy reliance on corporate, team-based, and Western institutional contexts. Second, politically governed public higher education institutions, particularly locally funded institutions in developing countries, remain significantly underexamined. Third, limited attention has been given to the multidimensional nature of shared leadership and its differential impact on specific indicators of management effectiveness.

Leadership in politically governed and complex organizations is increasingly understood as an adaptive and relational process shaped by institutional constraints, distributed influence, and dynamic interactions among actors, rather than as a function of hierarchical control alone (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

Leadership research in public-sector and politically governed organizations emphasizes the pluralistic and negotiated nature of leadership, where influence is distributed across formal and informal actors rather than vested in a single authority (Denis et al., 2012; Currie et al., 2009). However, empirical studies examining such leadership dynamics in locally funded higher education institutions remain limited.

This study addresses these gaps by empirically examining shared leadership within a locally funded higher education institution in the Philippines. By analyzing relationships between distinct shared leadership dimensions and specific management effectiveness indicators,

the research advances a more nuanced, context-sensitive understanding of leadership effectiveness in politically governed academic environments.

3. methodology

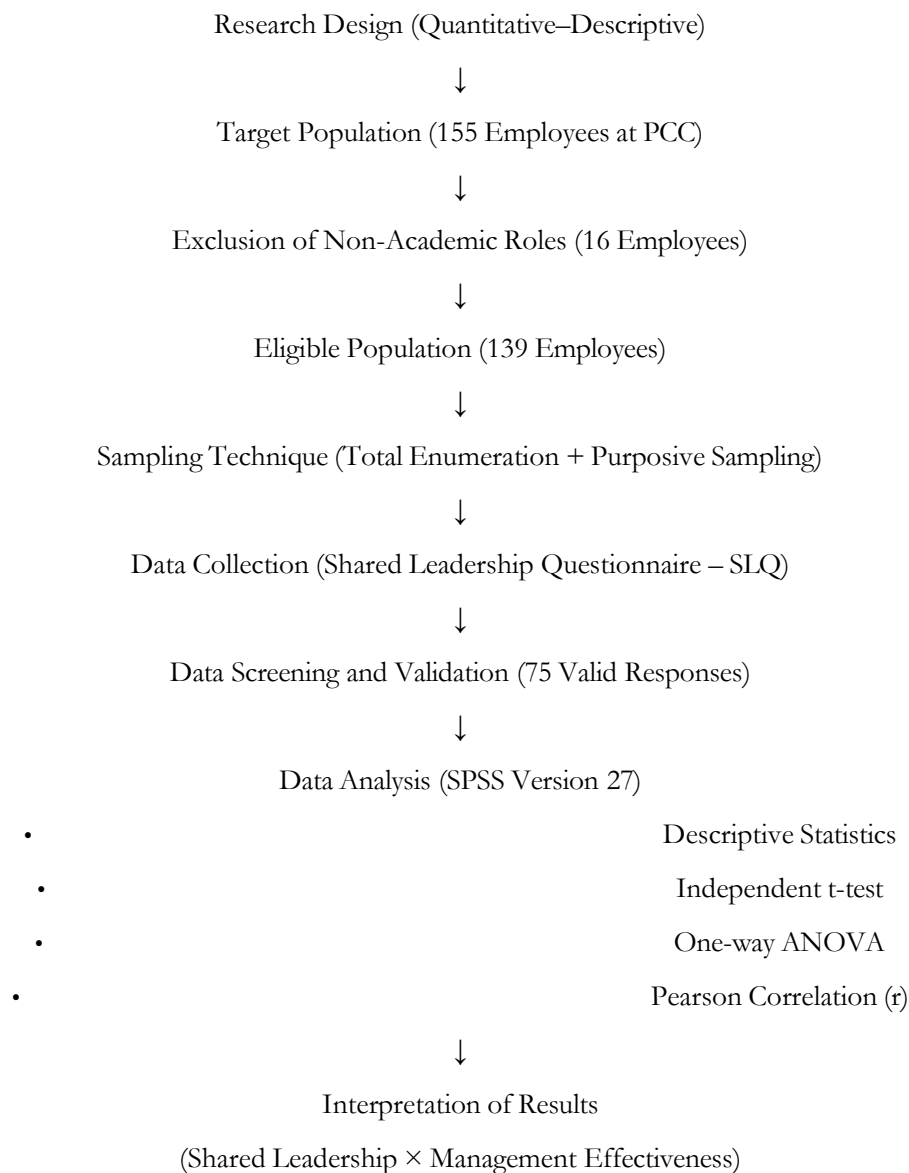
3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative–descriptive research design to examine the implementation of shared leadership and its relationship with

management effectiveness in a locally funded higher education institution (LFHEI) in the Philippines. This design was appropriate for capturing employees’ perceptions of leadership practices and managerial competencies within a politically governed academic environment. Figure 1 presents an overview of the research design and data analysis process, illustrating the sequential flow from sampling and instrument administration to statistical analysis.

Figure 1. Research Design and Data Analysis Flow

A flow diagram illustrating the research design, participant selection, instrument administration, data collection, and statistical analysis procedures used in the study.



3.2 Research Locale and Participants

The study was conducted at Parañaque City College (PCC), a locally funded higher education institution administered by the City Government of Parañaque, where the city mayor serves as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. This governance structure provided an appropriate context for examining shared leadership within a politically embedded institutional environment.

At the time of the study, PCC employed 155

personnel, including academic, administrative, and support staff. Sixteen individuals assigned to non-academic roles (e.g., housekeeping and security) were excluded because their functions were not directly related to leadership or management processes. This resulted in an eligible population of 139 employees, from which 75 valid responses were collected and analyzed. Table 1 summarizes the participant selection and response rate.

Table 1. Summary of Participants and Sampling Process

Category	Number
Total Employees	155
Excluded (Non-academic roles)	16
Eligible Population	139
Valid Responses	75
Response Rate	54%

3.3 Sampling Technique

A combination of total enumeration and purposive sampling was employed. All eligible employees were invited to participate to ensure broad institutional representation. Purposive criteria were applied to ensure the inclusion of administrators, faculty members, and institutional support staff, allowing for diverse perspectives on shared leadership and management effectiveness. Time constraints influenced the final sample size, as data collection occurred near the end of the academic semester. Despite this limitation, the response rate was sufficient to support descriptive and correlational analysis.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled the Shared Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ), developed based on validated instruments and existing literature on shared leadership and management effectiveness. The instrument consisted of four sections:

Demographic profile

Shared leadership dimensions Management effectiveness dimensions Open-ended items for recommendations All items were measured using a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). To clarify construct operationalization, Table 2 presents the study variables, dimensions, and indicators.

3.4 Research Instrument

Table 2. Research Variables, Dimensions, and Indicators

Variable	Dimension	Indicators / Description
Shared Leadership (Independent Variable)	Social Support	Trust, peer assistance, collaboration
	Employee Motivation	Recognition, encouragement, goal alignment
	Employee Commitment	Loyalty, institutional attachment
	Employee Innovation	Creativity, idea generation, problem-solving
Management (Dependent Variable)	Effectiveness	Communication Skills
		Clarity, openness, feedback

Adaptability	Responsiveness to change
Strategic Thinking	Long-term planning, decision-making
Ethical Behavior	Integrity, fairness, accountability

3.5 Reliability Testing

Instrument reliability was established through a pilot test at PCC involving 20 employees, including both teaching and non-teaching

personnel. Internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha, yielding high reliability coefficients across all dimensions. Table 3 presents the reliability statistics.

Table 3. Reliability Coefficients of the Research Instrument

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Support	0.88
Employee Motivation	0.84
Employee Commitment	0.86
Employee Innovation	0.83
Overall Instrument	0.925

These results indicate strong internal consistency and confirm the instrument's suitability for data collection.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

All 139 eligible employees were invited to participate in the study. The questionnaire was administered using both printed and digital formats to increase accessibility. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study's purpose and confidentiality safeguards.

Data collection lasted approximately three weeks, during which reminders were issued to encourage participation. After the data collection period ended, 75 fully completed questionnaires were retrieved and included in the final analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 27. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were used to summarize participants' profiles and responses to variables. Inferential analyses, including independent t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), were conducted to examine differences across demographic groups. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was

employed to assess the relationship between shared leadership dimensions and management effectiveness indicators. All tests were conducted at a 0.05 level of significance.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards for educational research. Participants provided informed consent and were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Participation was voluntary, and all data were used exclusively for academic purposes. Ethical safeguards related to data security and respondent privacy were strictly observed.

4. Discussion

This section discusses the study's findings in relation to existing literature on shared leadership and management effectiveness, with particular attention to the political and institutional context of locally funded higher education institutions (LFHEIs). The discussion is organized around the study's main results and highlights both convergences and divergences with prior research.

4.1 Shared Leadership Practices in a Politically Governed LFHEI

The findings indicate that shared leadership

practices are evident at Parañaque City College, with social support and employee commitment emerging as the strongest dimensions. This suggests that leadership within the institution is characterized by interpersonal trust, collegial interaction, and alignment between individual and institutional goals. Such findings are consistent with prior studies emphasizing the central role of relational leadership behaviors in fostering collaborative work environments, particularly in educational settings.

However, while previous research has often examined shared leadership in relatively autonomous or team-based contexts, this study extends those findings to a politically governed public higher education institution. The prominence of social support in this context may reflect its function as a stabilizing mechanism that mitigates hierarchical and political pressures. This finding adds nuance to the literature by suggesting that certain dimensions of shared leadership may be more salient than others in politically embedded institutions.

Employee motivation and innovation, although rated as evident, received comparatively lower scores. This partially aligns with studies suggesting that innovation and motivational practices are more challenging to sustain in bureaucratic or politically constrained environments. Unlike corporate or privately governed institutions, where shared leadership often translates more directly into innovation, LFHEIs may face structural limitations that moderate these outcomes.

4.2 Management Effectiveness of Educational Leaders

Educational leaders at PCC were perceived as demonstrating above-average management effectiveness, particularly in strategic thinking and ethical behavior. This finding aligns with prior research indicating that ethical leadership and long-term strategic orientation are critical competencies in public and higher education institutions, where accountability and governance complexity are prominent.

The relatively high rating for ethical behavior is

especially significant given the political context of LFHEIs. Prior studies have suggested that political governance can heighten ethical risks due to external influence and shifting authority. In contrast, the present findings indicate that shared leadership may support ethical standards by diffusing responsibility and promoting collective accountability.

Communication skills and adaptability, while still rated positively, received slightly lower scores. This mirrors earlier research indicating that adaptability and communication are among the most challenging leadership competencies in complex organizational environments. The finding suggests that while leadership effectiveness is generally strong, these areas warrant continued development, particularly as LFHEIs navigate evolving policy demands and institutional change.

4.3 Relationship Between Shared Leadership and Management Effectiveness

A key finding of the study is the very strong positive relationship between shared leadership and management effectiveness ($r = 0.812$, $p < 0.01$). This result confirms and extends existing evidence that participatory leadership models are associated with improved organizational outcomes. Importantly, this relationship was observed at the institutional level rather than solely within teams, addressing a limitation in much of the existing literature.

The strong relationship observed between shared leadership and management effectiveness supports the argument that distributed leadership may be particularly valuable in politically embedded institutions, where centralized authority alone is insufficient to sustain ethical governance and strategic coherence (Denis et al., 2012; Bolden et al., 2009).

The analysis further revealed that specific shared leadership dimensions were most strongly associated with corresponding management competencies. For example, social support was most strongly linked to communication skills, while employee commitment showed the strongest association with ethical behavior.

These findings support theoretical arguments that shared leadership operates through relational and motivational mechanisms that directly influence managerial performance.

Compared with prior studies conducted in corporate or Western academic contexts, the strength of the observed relationship in this study suggests that shared leadership may be particularly valuable in politically governed institutions, where centralized authority alone may be insufficient to sustain effective governance. This finding contributes context-sensitive evidence to shared leadership theory and highlights its relevance beyond traditionally studied environments.

4.4 Implications for Leadership Practice in LFHEIs

The findings suggest that shared leadership can serve as an effective governance strategy in LFHEIs by enhancing both relational dynamics and managerial competence. However, the uneven strength across leadership dimensions indicates that shared leadership should not be implemented uniformly or informally. Instead, it requires intentional institutionalization, particularly in areas related to motivation, innovation, and adaptive capacity.

These results provide empirical justification for the proposed EmpowerEd Program, which seeks to formalize collaborative decision-making, ethical governance, and leadership capacity-building. By aligning leadership

development initiatives with empirically supported dimensions of shared leadership, LFHEIs can strengthen management effectiveness while navigating political and organizational constraints.

4.5 Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted in a single locally funded higher education institution, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other institutional or national contexts. Second, the study employed a quantitative-descriptive design, which restricts causal inference and relies on self-reported perceptions of leadership and management effectiveness. Third, data were collected from a limited sample size due to timing constraints, which may affect the robustness of subgroup analyses. Finally, the study did not incorporate qualitative data that could have provided deeper insight into how shared leadership is enacted in daily institutional practices.

Future research may address these limitations by employing mixed-methods designs, expanding the sample across multiple LFHEIs, and examining longitudinal effects of shared leadership interventions such as the EmpowerEd Program.

Figure 2 is presented to illustrate the proposed EmpowerEd Program model derived from the study's findings.

Figure 2. The EmpowerEd Program Model for Shared Leadership and Management Effectiveness

SHARED LEADERSHIP

(Independent Leadership Framework)

-
- Social Support
 - Employee Motivation
 - Employee Commitment
 - Employee Innovation
-

↓ EMPOWERED PROGRAM

(Institutional Leadership Intervention)

↓

MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

(Leadership Performance Outcomes)

-
- Communication Skills
 - Adaptability
 - Strategic Thinking
 - Ethical Behavior
-

Figure 2 presents the EmpowerEd Program as an integrative leadership intervention framework that links shared leadership dimensions—social support, employee motivation, employee commitment, and employee innovation—to key indicators of management effectiveness, including communication skills, adaptability, strategic thinking, and ethical behavior—in locally funded higher education institutions.

5. Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence that shared leadership is a viable and effective governance approach for Locally Funded Higher Education Institutions (LFHEIs) operating within politically embedded environments. Using Parañaque City College as a case example, the findings demonstrate that shared leadership, particularly through social support and employee commitment, is strongly and positively related to management effectiveness, including ethical behavior and strategic thinking. These results extend existing leadership research by validating shared leadership in a public, politically governed higher-education context, an area that remains underexplored in the literature.

Beyond confirming theoretical relationships, the study's primary contribution lies in the development of the EmpowerEd Program, an evidence-based leadership intervention framework derived directly from the study's findings. As illustrated in Figure 2, the EmpowerEd Program serves as an integrative

mechanism that translates shared leadership dimensions - social support, employee motivation, employee commitment, and employee innovation into improved management effectiveness, namely communication skills, adaptability, strategic thinking, and ethical behavior. The model clarifies how leadership inputs are systematically linked to managerial performance through structured institutional processes rather than informal or ad hoc practices.

The EmpowerEd Program is anchored in three interrelated processes - Engage, Empower, and Evolve which collectively operationalize shared leadership in LFHEIs. Engage emphasizes inclusive participation and collaborative decision-making; Empower focuses on capacity-building, trust, and shared accountability; and Evolve supports continuous adaptation, innovation, and ethical leadership development. By institutionalizing these processes, the program addresses gaps identified in the study, particularly in employee motivation, innovation, adaptability, and communication.

Notably, the EmpowerEd Program offers LFHEIs a scalable and context-sensitive governance model. In politically governed institutions where leadership continuity and autonomy may be constrained, the model reduces overreliance on centralized authority while strengthening ethical standards, strategic coherence, and stakeholder engagement. The

visual representation in Figure 2 reinforces the program's role as a bridge between leadership theory and institutional practice, positioning it as a practical tool for administrators and policymakers rather than a purely conceptual framework.

In conclusion, this study affirms that shared leadership, when systematically implemented through structured frameworks such as the EmpowerEd Program, can enhance both management effectiveness and governance resilience in locally funded higher education institutions. The EmpowerEd Program represents a substantive, practical contribution of this research, providing a clear pathway for operationalizing shared leadership in politically complex academic environments. Future research is encouraged to examine the longitudinal implementation of the EmpowerEd Program across multiple LFHEIs and to assess its sustained impact on leadership effectiveness, institutional performance, and governance outcomes.

6. Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and the proposed EmpowerEd Program, the following recommendations are advanced to strengthen leadership practices and governance in Locally Funded Higher Education Institutions (LFHEIs). These recommendations are grounded in empirical evidence and aligned with the shared leadership dimensions and management effectiveness indicators identified in this research.

6.1 Institutional Adoption of the EmpowerEd Program

It is recommended that LFHEIs formally adopt the EmpowerEd Program as an institutional leadership framework. As illustrated in Figure 2, the program provides a structured mechanism for translating shared leadership into improved management effectiveness through the processes of Engage, Empower, and Evolve. Formal adoption may include integrating the program into institutional policies, leadership development plans, and governance manuals to ensure sustainability beyond individual

leadership tenures.

6.2 Strengthening Collaborative Decision-Making Structures

LFHEIs should establish or reinforce collaborative decision-making mechanisms such as cross-functional committees, faculty–staff councils, and participatory planning teams. These structures support the Engage component of the EmpowerEd Program by enhancing social support, communication, and shared accountability, which were identified as strong predictors of management effectiveness in the study.

6.3 Leadership Capacity-Building and Peer Support

To address gaps in motivation, innovation, adaptability, and communication, institutions should implement continuous leadership capacity-building initiatives. These may include peer mentoring programs, leadership workshops, and professional development activities focused on ethical leadership, strategic thinking, and adaptive management. Such initiatives operationalize the Empower dimension of the EmpowerEd Program and reinforce employee commitment and leadership competence.

6.4 Encouraging Innovation and Recognition Mechanisms

Given that employee innovation and motivation were rated lower than other leadership dimensions, LFHEIs are encouraged to establish formal recognition and innovation-support mechanisms. These may include innovation hubs, project-based leadership opportunities, and performance recognition systems that reward collaborative problem-solving and creative contributions. These initiatives support the Evolve component of the EmpowerEd Program by fostering continuous improvement and institutional learning.

6.5 Governance Alignment and Ethical Safeguards

LFHEIs operating within politically governed environments should align shared leadership

practices with existing governance structures while safeguarding ethical standards. Clear role delineation, transparent decision-making processes, and accountability mechanisms are recommended to ensure that shared leadership enhances—rather than conflicts with—formal authority. Strengthening ethical governance reinforces trust and supports sustained management effectiveness.

6.6 Directions for Future Research

Future studies are encouraged to examine the longitudinal implementation of the EmpowerEd Program across multiple LFHEIs to assess its sustained impact on leadership effectiveness and institutional performance. Mixed- methods research designs and comparative studies across different governance contexts may further refine the program and contribute to the growing body of literature on shared leadership in public higher education.

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