The Role of Transformational Leadership in Driving Organizational Sustainability:
Evidence from A Local Government Unit in the Philippines

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Abstract

Organizational sustainability in the public sector remains a critical challenge, particularly in environments characterized by leadership turnover, political transitions, and competing stakeholder demands. This study examines the role of transformational leadership in driving organizational sustainability within a Philippine local government unit. Using a qualitative case study design, the research explores how transformational leadership behaviors contribute to the continuity, institutionalization, and long-term viability of sustainability-oriented governance reforms. Data were gathered through key informant interviews with elected city officials and senior administrators directly involved in policy formulation and program implementation. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring leadership practices, values, and mechanisms that support sustainable governance outcomes. Findings reveal that transformational leadership manifests through visionary direction, ethical governance, participatory decision-making, and the embedding of sustainability principles into formal structures, policies, and organizational culture. Despite challenges such as political resistance, resource constraints, and administrative inertia, leaders who consistently model transformational behaviors were able to sustain reforms beyond electoral cycles. The study contributes to the leadership and sustainability literature by providing empirical evidence from a public sector context in a developing country. Practical implications for leadership development and institutional capacity-building in local governments are discussed.

Keywords: transformational leadership, organizational sustainability, public sector leadership, local government, qualitative study