

Optimising Administrative Efficacy: A Needs Assessment for Barangay Secretary Communication Training

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ABSTRACT Effective communication is essential in local governance, especially for barangay secretaries, whose roles involve drafting official documents and maintaining records. This study assesses the grammar skills of barangay secretaries in Naga City, to identify areas for improvement and propose a tailored training program. The research employs a descriptive design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods evaluating proficiency in grammatical areas of punctuation, verb tenses, sentence structure, and subject-verb agreement. The research was participated in by all the 27 barangay secretaries. Findings reveal that while barangay secretaries demonstrate basic grammar knowledge, significant gaps exist in punctuation and verb tenses, which can affect the clarity and professionalism of their written communication. Preferences for training indicate a strong inclination toward interactive workshops and monthly sessions, emphasising practical application and regular reinforcement. The study concludes with a proposal for a targeted grammar training program enhancing administrative efficiency and improving the quality of written communication in local governance.

INTRODUCTION

A key component of administration and governance is effective communication. Barangay secretaries, who are in charge of keeping records, writing letters, and recording official meetings, are essential to local government operations in the Philippines. High levels of written communication skills, especially in grammar, are necessary for these positions because mistakes can lead to misunderstandings or diminish the legitimacy of official documents (Flores 2019). Furthermore, it is impossible to overestimate the significance of precise and unambiguous communication in local administration since it promotes openness and confidence among stakeholders (Gabriel et al. 2019).

It has been determined that the ability to use grammar correctly is an essential skill for professionals, particularly those who work in positions that require them to document frequently. According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2019), grammar is the cornerstone of effective writing and is necessary for effectively communicating ideas to the in-

tended audience. As stated by Bleske-Rechek et al. (2019), grammatical errors in the workplace have the potential to negatively impact the perceived level of professionalism exhibited by both individuals and businesses. Not only does the mastery of language skills for barangay secretaries improve the efficiency of administrative tasks, but it also guarantees that official records are accurate and trustworthy.

There are many different training programs that have been designed to correct inadequacies in language competency. These programs were developed in recognition of the value of excellent grammar skills. Workshops, online courses, and one-on-one coaching are examples of training techniques that have been shown to be successful in enhancing grammar abilities in professional settings (Kollinski and Gilchrist 2024). The significance that ongoing education plays in bridging skill gaps and addressing the needs of modern governance is brought to light by these interventions.

A significant number of barangay secretaries in the Philippines do not have professional training in language skills, despite the fact that an understanding of grammar plays an essential role. There have been studies that have demonstrated that employees of local governments frequently struggle with basic grammatical principles, such as subject-verb agreement, punctuation, and sentence structure.

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This can result in misunderstandings and inaccuracies in official papers (Mohamed and Halik 2020). These difficulties are made even more difficult by the restricted availability of training programs that are specifically designed to meet their requirements (Teng-Calleja et al. 2017).

Barangay secretaries in Naga City encounter comparable challenges. Anecdotal evidence indicates significant variability in grammar skills, with some individuals facing challenges in fulfilling the requirements of their administrative positions. The absence of a structured program to evaluate and remedy language deficiencies has resulted in numerous secretaries feeling ill-equipped for their duties. Flores (2019) observed that public officials with insufficient training in communication skills may exhibit diminished job performance and lower confidence in their roles.

Considering these deficiencies, it is essential to assess the grammar competencies of barangay secretaries and pinpoint areas requiring enhancement. Previous studies have primarily concentrated on the overall language proficiency of government employees. However, there is a lack of research specifically addressing the grammar challenges encountered by barangay secretaries and the development of targeted solutions to mitigate these issues.

This study seeks to evaluate the grammar skills of barangay secretaries in Naga City and to identify their training requirements. The research aims to assess proficiency in key grammar areas, including punctuation, verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, and sentence structure, to elucidate strengths and weaknesses. The study will examine preferences regarding training methods and frequency, ensuring that proposed interventions are aligned with participants' needs and constraints.

This study's findings will inform a community extension program designed to enhance grammar proficiency among barangay secretaries. This program will enhance professional capabilities and contribute to the efficiency and transparency of local governance. Kalenius (2019) emphasised that targeted training initiatives are essential for empowering employees and ensuring organisational success.

This research addresses challenges that contribute to the enhancement of local governance in the Philippines. This highlights the significance of capacity-building initiatives that provide public officials with the necessary skills to perform their duties effectively. This study aims to enhance the un-

derstanding of language training in governance and offer practical solutions to real-world challenges.

Objectives of the Study

The research evaluates the grammatical competencies of barangay secretaries in Naga City and formulates a community extension program to improve their competence. The study aims to measure the current grammatical proficiency of barangay secretaries by self-evaluation and objective assessments. The study identifies the secretaries' preferences about grammar instruction methods and their frequency. The findings suggest a grammar training program customised for barangay secretaries.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research used a descriptive design integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies to evaluate the grammatical proficiency of barangay secretaries in Naga City, Philippines. This mixed-methods approach is appropriate for assessing quantifiable grammar skills and investigating respondents' experiences and training preferences (Creswell 2014). The participants comprise 27 barangay secretaries chosen via total enumeration sampling, guaranteeing inclusivity and representativeness of the target population (Raj 2020).

The majority of participants are aged 31 to 40 years (44%) and primarily female (63%). More than half (56%) possess a bachelor's degree, signifying a comparatively educated workforce. Nonetheless, hardly 15 percent possess postgraduate education. A majority of respondents (37%) possess 6-10 years of service, indicating a combination of experienced individuals and early-career professionals among the cohort. These demographic details are essential for customising interventions that correspond with the educational and experiential backgrounds of the secretaries.

Data gathering is organised into four principal methods of survey questionnaires, skills assessment tests, writing samples, and interviews. The survey questionnaire collects personal data, self-evaluations of grammatical proficiency, and preferences regarding training methodologies and frequency. It is constructed with explicit and succinct inquiries to promote precise answers (Foster et al. 2021). The skills assessment test objectively measures grammar proficiency with multiple-choice ques-

tions, fill-in-the-blank activities, and sentence correction assignments. These assessment tasks concentrate on fundamental grammatical aspects, including verb tenses, subject-verb concord, punctuation, and sentence construction. A writing sample further analyses the utilisation of grammar in practical circumstances by necessitating participants to compose a brief note regarding a community concern. This exercise emphasises prevalent grammatical mistakes in sentence structure, punctuation, and intelligibility (Brown and Abeywickrama 2019). Semi-structured interviews yield qualitative insights into the grammatical issues encountered by barangay secretaries and their prior training experiences, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of their particular requirements and settings (Patton 2015).

The study materials comprise paper or digital survey questionnaires, skills assessments, an interview guide for consistency in qualitative data gathering, and writing sample guidelines. Test and survey responses will be documented and evaluated with statistical methods to discern trends, while qualitative data from interviews will be subjected to thematic analysis to reveal repeating themes and issues (Nowell et al. 2017). The study complies with ethical standards by acquiring informed consent from participants, maintaining anonymity, and safeguarding acquired data in password-protected files, in accordance with research ethics principles (American Psychological Association 2020). The methodology and resources aim to thoroughly evaluate the grammatical proficiency of barangay secretaries and establish a foundation for a customised community extension program to meet their specific needs.

RESULTS

Grammar Skills of 27 Barangay Secretaries in Naga City

The study evaluates the grammar skills of 27 barangay secretaries in Naga City through self-assessment, objective tests, and writing samples, identifying specific areas of difficulty and training preferences.

The data in Table 1 indicates that the barangay secretaries possess a moderate level of confidence regarding their grammar skills. A total of 59 percent of respondents indicated confidence in their grammar skills, with 37 percent feeling confident and 22 percent feeling very confident, suggesting that most individuals are comfortable with their abilities. None-

theless, 19 percent maintained a neutral stance, neither expressing confidence nor lack thereof. This may indicate a lack of consistency or proficiency. In addition, 22 percent of respondents indicated low confidence levels, with 15 percent reporting a lack of confidence and 7 percent expressing no confidence at all. The data indicate a bifurcated perception of grammar skills, with a notable percentage necessitating assistance to enhance their confidence and proficiency.

Table 1: Confidence in grammar skills of Barangay Secretaries of Naga City

<i>Confidence level</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Very confident	22.0
Confident	37.0
Neutral	19.0
Not confident	15.0
Not at all confident	7.0

Table 2 displays the self-assessment outcomes of barangay secretaries in Naga City concerning their grammar proficiency across four domains of sentence structure, verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, and punctuation. The mean scores utilise a five-point Likert scale, with elevated scores signifying enhanced proficiency. Barangay secretaries self-assess their sentence structure proficiency as 'Good', with a mean score of 3.63, indicating a moderate level of confidence in their ability to construct grammatically correct sentences. Conversely, in the domain of verb tense grammar, barangay secretaries self-assess with a mean score of 3.41, suggesting a fair level of proficiency. This score reflects a lower level of proficiency, suggesting difficulties in the accurate use and identification of verb tenses. The area with the highest rating, subject-verb agreement, has a mean score of 3.81, indicating a robust understanding of this essential grammar rule. The mean score of 3.22 indicates that punctuation repre-

Table 2: Grammar proficiency self- assessment of Barangay Secretaries of Naga City

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Description</i>
a. Sentence Structure	3.63	Good
b. Verb Tenses	3.41	Fair
c. Subject-Verb Agreement	3.81	Good
d. Punctuation	3.22	Fair
Average	3.52	Good

Legend: Excellent 4.50 - 5.00; Good 3.51 - 4.50; Fair 2.51 - 3.50; Poor 1.51 - 2.50; Very Poor 1.00 - 1.50

sents a notable challenge, impacting the clarity and professionalism of written communication. The overall proficiency, with an average score of 3.52, is classified as 'Good', suggesting that barangay secretaries possess a basic understanding of grammar, yet there exists potential for enhancement across all domains.

Secretaries' Preferences for Grammar Training Program

Table 3 indicates a significant preference among barangay secretaries in Naga City for workshops as the preferred training type, with 74 percent of respondents choosing this option. Workshops offer a structured and interactive learning environment, appealing to secretaries through their practical emphasis and provision of real-time feedback opportunities.

Table 3: Preferred training types in mastering grammar skills of Barangay Secretaries in Naga City

<i>Training type</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Workshops	20	74
Online Courses	10	37
One-on-One Tutoring	7	26
Printed Materials	9	33
Other (for example, video tutorials)	3	11

Online courses were ranked second, with 37 percent expressing interest. This indicates an increasing acceptance of digital learning platforms, likely influenced by factors such as accessibility and convenience. The lower percentage in comparison to workshops indicates that online courses may not adequately meet the specific needs of barangay secretaries, particularly regarding hands-on practice. Printed materials accounted for 33 percent, while one-on-one tutoring represented 26 percent, highlighting the preference for supplementary resources and personalised learning methods. Additionally, 11 percent selected alternative formats, including video tutorials, reflecting a modest yet varied interest in different methods.

Table 4 presents the preferred frequency of training sessions among barangay secretaries in Naga City. Most respondents (44%) favour monthly training sessions, indicating a preference for regular yet infrequent skill development opportunities. This frequency optimally allocates time for learning along-

side time for practical application in their work. Thirty percent of respondents selected weekly sessions, indicating a preference among certain individuals for more intensive and consistent training. Nineteen percent chose quarterly sessions, likely due to constraints like workload or availability, suggesting a preference for less frequent yet concentrated learning opportunities. Only 7 percent of participants favoured training on an as-needed basis, indicating that the majority prefer structured and scheduled learning rather than sporadic or ad hoc interventions.

Table 4: Training frequency preferences in mastering grammar skills of Barangay Secretaries in Naga City

<i>Frequency preference</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Weekly	8	30
Monthly	12	44
Quarterly	5	19
As needed	2	7

The preference for monthly training sessions indicates that barangay secretaries acknowledge the significance of regular engagement in grammar skill development alongside their other duties. This frequency facilitates skill enhancement, reflection, and practical application while avoiding schedule overload.

The request for weekly training by approximately one-third of respondents indicates a group of participants who may require or seek additional support. The preferences for quarterly and as-needed options indicate a necessity for flexibility to meet the time constraints and differing urgency levels of participants in skill enhancement.

Table 5 identifies critical areas for enhancement in grammar among barangay secretaries in Naga City. Punctuation emerged as the predominant area for enhancement, noted by 15 respondents, representing 56 percent of the total sample. This indicates that over 50 percent of the participants experience difficulties with proper punctuation usage. One interviewee noted, "I often experience confusion regarding the appropriate use of commas, particularly in longer sentences." This corresponds with

Table 5: Specific areas for improvement in grammar

<i>Area for improvement</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Punctuation	15	56
Verb Tenses	12	44
Sentence Structure	10	37

prevalent issues in administrative writing, where appropriate punctuation is essential for clarity and professionalism in documents. Verb tenses, with a frequency of 12 and 44 percent, represent a significant area in which students need assistance. The appropriate application of verb tenses is crucial for ensuring consistency in communication. One participant remarked, “At times, I confuse past and present tenses when composing a narrative for the documentation of events in the barangay.”

Thirty-seven percent of respondents identified sentence structure as a concern, indicating difficulties in constructing coherent and effective sentences. A respondent indicated difficulty in integrating ideas into a single sentence without resulting in excessive length or confusion. Challenges in this domain may result in misinterpretations or insufficient clarity in written communication. The findings indicate that although the majority of barangay secretaries exhibit a degree of grammar proficiency, particular deficiencies may impede their capacity to generate clear and professional documents.

DISCUSSION

Grammar Skills of 27 Barangay Secretaries in Naga City

Table 1 demonstrates that although more than half of the respondents exhibit confidence in their grammar skills, a significant number of barangay secretaries may experience difficulties in effective written communication owing to diminished confidence. This directly affects their responsibilities, which frequently include composing official mail, reports, and other essential papers.

The results align with research highlighting the significance of confidence in the application of skills. Ganaden (2020) contends that confidence in writing abilities strongly influences performance, especially in administrative positions necessitating effective communication. Sarmiento and Ortega-Dela Cruz (2021) discovered that personnel possessing greater confidence in their grammatical skills generate more effective and precise texts, hence significantly impacting organisational outcomes.

Moreover, Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy (1997) emphasises that individuals’ confidence in their skills significantly influences their performance. Implementing focused training programs for barangay secretaries that enhance both skills and confi-

dence can result in improved administrative outcomes. Workshops and ongoing feedback systems can bolster the confidence of individuals lacking self-assurance, while advanced programs can enhance the skills of those already self-assured (FasterCapital 2025; Neuroba 2025).

Table 2 illustrates differing degrees of perceived competency among barangay secretaries. The ‘Good’ ratings in sentence structure and subject-verb agreement indicate fundamental grammatical proficiency, which corresponds with their everyday communication requirements. Nonetheless, the ‘Fair’ grades in verb tenses and punctuation indicate essential areas necessitating work. Punctuation problems, namely, can result in ambiguity and misinterpretations in official documents (Brown and Abeywickrama 2019).

The findings indicate that barangay secretaries may encounter difficulties with sophisticated grammatical applications, including the constant use of verb tense in lengthy compositions and the application of punctuation to improve sentence clarity. These deficiencies may hinder the precision and professionalism of their written outputs, aligning with da Cruz’s (2022) finding that local government personnel frequently lack formal training in language proficiency.

The ‘Fair’ average proficiency level in governance has tangible consequences on barangay operations. Erroneous grammar in official documents can lead to confusion, diminished confidence, and inefficiencies in governance (Bleske-Rechek et al. 2019). Consequently, rectifying these deficiencies is essential for enhancing administrative operations.

The results emphasise the necessity for specialised grammar instruction concentrating on punctuation and verb tenses. Workshops focusing on these areas could improve confidence and proficiency, resulting in clearer and more professional communication. The findings establish a foundation for subsequent research on grammatical proficiency in local governance. It encourages the examination of additional factors affecting grammatical proficiency, including educational background and availability of training tools. The findings align with Brown and Abeywickrama’s (2019) claim that grammatical proficiency underpins good communication. Punctuation errors and uneven verb tense usage, as emphasised in this study, are prevalent issues that compromise the quality of written communication. Moreover, da Cruz (2022) identified analogous prob-

lems among local government personnel, ascribing them to the absence of systematic language training.

Role-specific training programs, such as those suggested by the Institute of Data (2023), have demonstrated efficacy in closing skill gaps. This corresponds with the study's suggestion for a tailored training program focusing on verb tenses and punctuation. Furthermore, Matildo and Matildo (2022) underscored the necessity of equipping local government employees with vital skills to enhance public service delivery, hence highlighting the importance of grammar training as a capacity-building measure.

Secretaries' Preferences for Grammar Training Program

Table 3 illustrates the significance of developing grammar training programs that align with the preferences of secretaries. Workshops should be the primary mode of instruction, incorporating hands-on activities, collaborative exercises, and immediate feedback. Integrating components from online courses and printed materials can accommodate diverse learning styles. The inclination towards personalised learning, indicated by 26 percent favouring one-on-one tutoring, highlights the necessity to target individual learning deficiencies, especially for individuals facing challenges in particular areas of grammar. The incorporation of video tutorials or digital resources enhances engagement and flexibility, accommodating secretaries with varying schedules and levels of technological access.

The preference for workshops is consistent with van Assen's (2021) findings, which indicate that interactive training programs notably enhanced communication skills among local government employees. Ganaden (2020) emphasised that workshops integrating theoretical and practical elements are especially effective in bridging skill gaps in administrative positions. The growing interest in online courses aligns with the observations of Reyes et al. (2021), who indicated that digital platforms are increasingly acknowledged for their ability to offer accessible and cost-effective training, although their effectiveness is often enhanced when supplemented with in-person sessions. Additionally, digital learning platforms catalyse engagement by multimedia, gamification and real-time feedback to provide personalised, interactive learning experience (Olwan 2024; Bajaj 2020).

The results presented in Table 4 align with educational theories highlighting the significance of spaced learning in facilitating effective skill acquisition. Ganaden (2020) asserts that regular training intervals, such as monthly workshops, enable employees to reinforce and retain new skills, resulting in long-term competency enhancement.

Hasson et al. (2023) observed a correlation between frequency preferences, workload, and the perceived importance of training content. Monthly sessions were identified as effective in enhancing engagement while maintaining daily responsibilities, particularly for local government personnel. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory indicates that regular, organised training sessions can enhance participants' confidence in the effective application of acquired skills.

Table 5 shows the prevalence of punctuation errors underscores the necessity for specialised training aimed at instructing proper punctuation usage, especially in formal and technical writing environments. The focus on verb tenses and sentence structure highlights the necessity of a foundational review of grammar sound redundant and their practical applications.

The deficiencies in grammar skills can hinder barangay secretaries' effectiveness in performing administrative tasks, including the drafting of resolutions, minutes, and official correspondence. Improving these weaknesses can enhance the quality of written communication, thereby strengthening public service delivery and the credibility of barangay offices.

The findings are consistent with Ganaden (2020), who identified that prevalent errors in punctuation and verb tenses notably impact the professionalism of written communication among local government employees. Sarmiento and Ortega-Dela Cruz (2021) noted that proper sentence structure is essential for effective administrative writing, significantly influencing organisational efficiency and transparency.

Alshaalan (2021) highlighted the significance of targeted grammar training in enhancing employees' confidence and performance in positions that necessitate regular written communication. The research underscores the necessity for targeted, practical training interventions designed to mitigate particular grammatical deficiencies.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation of the grammatical abilities of barangay secretaries in Naga City reveals both strengths and limitations. Although there is a fundamental comprehension of grammar, certain areas require focus, particularly punctuation and verb tenses. All of these deficiencies impact the efficacy of written communication, a vital ability for individuals in administrative roles. The majority of secretaries prefer engaging and structured learning techniques, including workshops and monthly training sessions. Enhancing the clarity, professionalism, and accuracy of official documents necessitates addressing these requirements. Enhancing the grammatical proficiency of barangay secretaries is crucial for ensuring effective governance and maintaining clear communication within the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A comprehensive grammar training program is recommended for barangay secretaries in Naga City, emphasising punctuation, verb tenses, and sentence structure. This curriculum should incorporate monthly interactive workshops, augmented by online modules and printed materials for adaptability and reinforcement. Regular evaluations and feedback must be implemented to track progress and offer tailored assistance, especially for individuals with difficulties in particular domains. Practical application must be prioritised through pertinent writing assignments, and subsequent assessments are crucial to measure the enduring effects of the training on communication efficacy in local governance.

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