

Governance and Leadership of the Palaw'an Tribe of Palawan, Philippines

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Abstract - *This study dealt with the governance and leadership of the Palaw'an Tribe of Palawan. The respondents of the study were the 115 tribal leaders who assumed leadership in their community. This study employed historical, descriptive, quantitative and qualitative research methods. The study revealed that almost all of the respondents are pure-blooded palaw'an, males, married, elementary level, farming as the basic source of living and ages 60 to 65 years old. They were selected foremost by means of hereditary attribute. The criteria in selecting leader include the knowledge of customary law, prove his worth, integrity and have strong sense of justice, professed the value of being equal and fair, respect for the deity and in showing pride to being a Palaw'an.*

The function of the Palaw'an Tribal Leaders along executive, legislative, judiciary and religious were to maintain traditional law, mediate, settle conflicts or problems, resolve and hear cases, resolve family problems, help community rites and practices, maintain customs and traditions and have high respect on their deity, god and elders.

Keywords: Palaw'an Tribal Leaders, Palaw'an, Leadership, Governance

I. INTRODUCTION

Indigenous People Rights Act (IPRA) posited that Palawan is an island province of the Philippines located in the MIMAROPA region. It is the largest province in the country in terms of total area of jurisdiction. The island of Palawan stretch from Mindoro in the Northeast to Borneo in the southwest. It lies between the South China Sea and that of Sulu Sea. The province is named after its largest island, Palawan Island, measuring 450 kilometers (280 mi) long and 50 kilometers (31 mi) wide. It is a home to a huge number of indigenous people. One of whom are the Palaw'an who mostly lived in the southern part of the province.

Candal (2003) pointed out further that the Palaw'an is one of the oldest tribes in the Philippine islands.

Anthropologists believe that Sabah, Malaysia and Palawan may have been connected by a large-bridge at some time in history. The theory is that the Palaw'an tribe walked across the bridge and became the first settlers of the Philippines. In ancient times, the Palaw'an tribe lived in caves.

As cited earlier, Palaw'an has leaders who assumed to have unique characteristics. They show leadership that guides the followers. What these characteristics are, how they become leaders, their kind of leadership, how they lead their members were variables that were looked into in this study.

If there are leaders there are also followers because not everyone can be captains. Some should be crews in as much as there are many things to be done. There are different roles to play, so members are also called for. In like manner, if the leaders have leadership, the members also possess followership. How followership is described was also considered in this research.

Both leaders and members are unique individuals who are products of their own culture, as such, they accumulate values and practices as they interact with people or with each other.

Based on the readings done by the researcher much has been written concerning the Bataks, Tagbanua, Muslim, and Tausog. There are very little things written concerning the Palaw'an in general and their leadership, governance and values in particular. It can therefore be deduced that facts about the Palaw'an are endangered of extinction.

In this vein the peculiarities of the Palaw'an which are worth knowing are supposed to be preserved as a part of their history so it was decided that this study was undertaken for information, posterity and record purposes. Hence, this work was embarked.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the conceptual framework of Durkheim Social System Theory as cited by Tabago. In support to Durkheims Social System Theory, Philippine Association for Inter-Cultural Development

stated that the leaders of Ikalahan who are the indigenous group of Mindanao were elected but their traditional leaders still revered council of elders.

Buendia (2005) declared another kind of leadership which is from the other ethnic groups in Northern Kankanaey, who are found in Cordillera have the Abong (Dap-ay) tribunal or ward took care of community decision making while in Southern portion, the Aman-an (Dakay in other communities) are the elders of the community (Mankayan).

Along the facts cited it is theorize that the Palaw'an has leaders in the different aspects of their ways of life. In terms of leadership, Peterson (1978) stated that similar to the indigenous groups like the Hanunuo Mangyan and Agta had no formal government. The influential, wise and experienced elders were powerful but young leaders were not hindered from emerging.

The leaders served as advisers. Although this information was written in the 1970's they still hold true today. Based on this information it is theorized that the Palaw'an leaders became leaders because of some characteristics. Andres(2005) emphasized that the Gaddangs and the Nueva Vizcaino's categorized leadership in Nueva Vizcaya as formal and non formal. Formal referred to the usual selection either through appointment or election while non-formal was choosing leaders based on traditions. It was noticeable that the elders were revered and had influence even to the local leaders. Ibanags, Ivatans and the Gaddangs bestowed high regard to their elders. Andres affirmed that those who belonged to high echelons of society, propertied and learned were considered powerful.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to describe the demographic profile of the respondents; to determine how the Palaw'an leaders selected in terms of mode of selection, criteria, characteristics, and positions held; to determine the sources of power and authority of the Palaw'an Leaders; to determine Palaw'an Leaders perform in their various task along the executive, legislator, judiciary, and religious.

III. METHOD

This study employed historical and descriptive and Historical. Five instruments were employed to generate the needed data; they were the research made questionnaire, camera, tape recorders. A researcher made questionnaire was used in gathering data concerning the demographic profile of the Palaw'an

leaders, positions being held, how they were elected or how they acquired their positions their functions.

Frequency and percentages were used to describe the profile of the respondents, the mode of selecting Palaw'an leaders including the criteria used in the selection processed, characteristics possessed by the tribal leaders and positions held in the organization. Likewise, frequency and percentages were applied to describe the source of power and authority of the leaders, values, functions and extent coverage or scope of the leaders' power.

Ranking was employed to determine the positional importance of some data in the profile mode of selecting leaders' criteria for selection, characteristics of tribal leaders, positions held, and source of power, performance of functions and extent coverage of the leaders' power.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n=115)

Variables	f	%
Age		
76 - Above	6	5.22
71-75	7	6.09
66-70	15	13.04
61-65	34	29.57
56-60	30	26.09
51-55	9	7.83
46-50	2	1.74
41-45	6	5.22
36-40	4	3.48
31-35	0	
25-30	2	3.48
Gender		
Male	114	99.13
Female	1	0.87
Ethnicity		
Pure Palaw'an	115	100
Civil Status		
Marriage	115	100
Source of Living		
Farming	114	99.13
Government employee	1	0.87
Educational Attainment		
Elementary Level	105	91.30
Elementary Graduate	4	3.48
College Graduate	1	0.87
Non-formal Education	1	0.87
No formal Education	4	3.48

Table 1 reveals that there are six or 5.22 percent of the respondents who are 76 years old and above. They compose the oldest group of the respondents in terms of age. Only two or 1.74 percent indicates that they are 25 – 30 years old. They are the youngest group of respondents in terms of age.

The table further reveals that the higher numbers of the respondents are ages 61 – 65 years old with 34 or 29.57 percent affirming this. The respondents have mean age of 60.17 which falls within the age bracket of 56-60 years old. Based on the mean age, it appears that the higher number of the respondents have their ages above the mean. Considering the frequencies, there are 62 or 53.91 percent.

This suggests that the respondents are composed of older persons in terms of age. With their ages, they are in a better position to share information about the Palaw'an's governance and values as leader of their tribe.

This is confirmed by Eder (1993) when he wrote that the Bataks viewed their elder as influential to indigenous tribe so they surfaced as their leader. Likewise, Guardados posited that age is the first requisite for a leader. Limikid (2002) sustained the concept concerning the age when he wrote that age is the requisite for leaders. He should be 35 years old at the time of assumption of responsibility.

Majority of the respondents are males. These are affirmed by 114 or 99.13 percent. Only one or 0.87 percent of the respondent is a female.

This means that leadership is usually lodged on the responsibilities of the male.

Limikid (2002) supported the data when he wrote that among the Teduray the father is the head of the family as the basic unit of government. The data is further supported when the writers and researchers used the pronoun he in their work.

As to ethnicity, the respondents are composed of 115 or 100 percent pure-blooded Palaw'an leaders. This signifies that the Palaw'an community is dominated by pure-blooded Palaw'an. This also suggests that the migrants or persons who are classified as "low landers" or members of the other ethnic group have not fully penetrated the Palaw'an or the Palaw'an themselves did not live together with the other ethnic group in the locality.

As to ethnicity, all related literatures and studies that were presented posited that Indigenous People have their own ethnic group as their leader. Although, it is not explicitly written by them. It is understood, because there are no ethnic groups with Christians as leaders.

The data disclose also that 115 or 100 percent of the respondents are married. This means that the Palaw'an assume leadership role in their family.

The data is supported by Candal (2003) and all the authors and researchers when they used the pronoun he in their respective work.

The data is further substantiated by Guardados and Tabago (1997) when they used the term family.

Majority of the Palaw'an have their source of living derived from farming. This is attested by 114 or 99.13 percent. One or 0.87 percent signified that she is employed by the government as the coordinator of all the IP leaders.

This affirms that the Palaw'an are mostly farmers. Also the data suggest that the place where the Palaw'an resides is suited for agricultural purposes.

No one among the respondents divulge to be engaged in fishing, hunting, and rattan gathering or engaged in self-employment activities.

There are 105 or 91.30 percent who have elementary level of education. Four or 3.48 percent have no formal education. One or 0.87 percent has no formal education. One or 0.87 percent is a college graduate. To sum up majority of the respondents are literate or semi literate.

The findings reflect that the Palaw'an have gone schooling. Also, the data indicate that elementary education is the most availed of level of education among the Palaw'ans.

This finding is supported by Andres when he expounded that educational status was another source of power among the Gaddangs.

Table 2. Mode of selecting Palaw'an leaders

Indicators	F	%	Rank
Election	5	4.35	2
Appointment	4	3.48	3
Hereditary	104	90.43	1
Total	115	100	

The Palaw'an leaders are selected in several ways. The higher number of the respondents disclosed that the Palaw'an leaders are selected foremost by means of hereditary attribute. This is affirmed by 104 or 90.43 percent. No one among the respondents claim that their leaders are selected by means of consensus among the council members, status in the organization and dynasty.

The finding implies that the Palaw'an leader inherit the leadership role of their parents.

Table 3. Criteria for Selecting Palaw'an Leaders

Indicators	F	%	Rank
Educational Attainment	19	16.52	8
Wealth	3	2.61	10
Skill and Charisma	74	64.35	5.6
Knowledge of customary law	115	100	1
Intelligence	69	60	7
Family Influence	10	8.70	
Good Speaker	74	64.35	5.6
Seniority and Experience	94	81.74	2
Hereditary	76	66.09	4
Good Behavior	91	79.13	3

*multiple responses

As to the criteria for selecting Palaw'an Leaders, the first in rank is the knowledge of customary law as ascertained by 115 or 100 percent of the respondents. Second in rank is seniority and experience with 94 or 81 percent attesting this criterion and third in rank is good behavior as revealed by 91 or 79.13 percent.

The least observed criteria in terms of rank are educational attainment with 19 or 16.52 percent claiming; family influence with 10 or 8.70 percent; and wealth with three or 2.61 percent affirming this. These are ranked eight, nine, and ten respectively.

The finding disclosed that for a Palaw'an to become a leader, he must be knowledgeable of their customary laws. This simply implies that a Palaw'an leader exercises or performs his leadership role based on their customs and traditions. Wealth, family influence and educational attainment are least considered by the Palaw'an. Rather, they stick on their tradition in any undertaking which a leader may have.

Table 4 Characteristics Possessed by Tribal Leaders

Indicators	F*	%	Rank
Quick witted	35	30.43	20.5
Adept at public speaking	81	70.43	10
Well-verse in customary laws	85	73.91	5.5
Able to chant prayers and legends	49	42.17	17
Has establish reputation as judge or mediator	83	72.17	7
Serve as center of unity, continuity and legitimacy	85	73.91	5.5
Proven worth of integrity and have strong sense of justice	101	87.83	1

Table 4 (cont.) Characteristics Possessed by Tribal Leaders

Indicators	F*	%	Rank
Industrious	82	71.30	8.5
Helpful	74	64.35	14
Concern	82	71.30	8.5
Well informed	91	79.13	3
Good Communication	76	66.09	13
Unselfish	71	61.74	15
Understand the masse	87	75.65	4
Develop sense of responsibility	66	57.39	16
Moral	79	68.70	11.5
Convincing	100	86.96	1.5
Stable economic stability	43	43	18
Intelligent	79	37.39	11.5
Flexible	42	36.52	19
Creative	35	30.43	20.5

*multiple responses

As shown in table 4, the Palaw'an believe that their tribal leaders must possess certain characteristics of being a real leader. Rankwise, the first is the Palaw'an leader must prove his worth, integrity and have strong sense of justice. This is revealed by 101 or 87.83 percent of the respondents. The second in rank is being convincing with 100 or 86.96 percent attesting this characteristics; third is well informed with 91 or 79.13 percent claiming this characteristic; and a shared rank of 5.5 for a leader who is well versed in customary law and legitimacy with 85 respondents 73.91 attesting to these characteristics.

The characteristics that are considered least by the respondents in terms of rank include able to chant prayers and legend with 49 or 42.61 percent affirming; stable economic stability with 43 or 37.39 percent claiming; flexible with 42 or 36.52 percent attesting; and quick-witted and creative with 35 or 30.43 percent attesting such characteristics.

The data imply that the Palaw'ans like their leaders to be fair in administering justice, image not tarnished by wrong doings, knowledgeable particularly of their customs and someone who understand the plight of their tribe. The Palaw'an do not look at economic standing of their leaders for as long as he can stand for them in any problem or issues that affect their lives and that of the community as a whole.

This is strengthened by TRICOM when it posited that datanship is characterized by a established reputation as a judge.

Table 5. Position in the Tribal Organization

Indicators	F	%	Rank
Chieftain	9	7.83	3
Panlima	104	90.43	2
Member of the Tribal Council	115	100	1
Barangay Captain	2	1.74	

4*multiple response

The respondents were composed of members of the tribal council with 115 or 100 percent attesting. This is followed by 104 or 90.43 percent of the respondents who claim that they are Panglima. Two or 1.74 percent claim that they are Barangay Captain. Nobody claim to be a Babaylan.

The findings connote that the respondents hold some leadership responsibility in their community. Some engage in political position which means that they win the approval of the people in their barangay.

The Panlima position is upheld by Roxas (2002) when he cited that Panglima is one of the positions held by a Yakan in Mindanao.

Table 6 presents the source of power and authority of Palaw'an leader.

Indicator	F*	%	Rank
Supreme being	66	57.39	5
Customary Laws	105	91.30	1
Traditions	101	87.83	2
Belief	74	64.35	4
Written laws of the Country	2	1.74	6
Ordinances	1	0.87	7
Hereditary	88	76.52	3

*Multiple Responses

All the respondent were members of the tribal council aside from their respective positions that they are holding.

As to source of power and authority of Palaw'an leaders, 105 or 91.30 percent reveal that their source of power is derived from customary laws. This is first in rank. There are 101 or 87.83 percent who claim that their power is based on traditions. This is second in rank. Hereditary as source of power is revealed by 88 or 76.52 percent. This is third in rank.

The least source of power among the Palaw'an leaders is ordinance as claimed by one or 0.89 percent and written laws of the country with two or 1.74 percent are affirming.

This implies that the source of power and authority of the Palaw'an is their customs and traditions but not the ordinances and written laws of the country.

This is supported by the National Commission on Indigenous People Records that one of the main duties of the T'boli leader is to explain customs and traditions

Table 7. Executive Functions of Palaw'an Leaders

Indicator	F*	%	Rank
Preside/chairs the meeting of the tribal council	105	91.30	2
Avenge any crime committed against his people	15	13.04	12
Leading in the preservation of the traditional values and customs	80	69.57	8
Give inspiration to constituents	86	74.78	7
Encourage constituents to study	92	80.00	5
Initiate Recreation	35	30.43	11
Provides guidance on good attitudes, Livelihood	99	86.09	3
Take up arms and defend his people	64	55.65	10
Perceived as political protector	88	76.52	6
Father figure	66	57.39	9
Who protect constituents	107	93.04	1
Empathy (understanding, compassion)	93	80.87	4

*Multiple Responses

As shown in the table, the Palaw'an leaders have several functions that are related to their being an executive. Rankwise, the first executive function is one who protects their constituents. This is disclosed by 107 or 93.04 percent of the respondents. The second function is to preside/ chair the meeting of the tribal council as claimed by 105 or 91.30 percent. Also, the other functions of the Palaw'an leaders as executive is to provide guidance on good attitudes and provide livelihood as disclosed by 99 or 86.09 percent, to show empathy as claimed by 93 or 8.87 percent and to encourage constituents to study as attested by 92 or 80 percent. These executive function are ranked three, four and five respectively.

The data imply that the Palaw'an leaders are expected to protect thier people, direct meetings and provide guidance to his constituents.

Rankwise, the least that he has to perform is to act as father figure with 66 or 57.39 percent, take up arms and defend his people as affirmed by 64 or 55.65 percent and initiate recreation as indicated by 35 or 30.43 percent. These executive functions appear not much expected of the Palaw'an Leader.

Providing guidance, livelihood and instability is supported by Limikid (2002) when he wrote that in Mansaka, the tasked cited are to be done by an IP leader.

Table 8. Legislative Functions of Palawan Leaders

Indicators	F	%
A. Legislator		
Maintains traditional law	115	100
Gives information on indigenous laws	105	91.30

*Multiple responses

As legislator, the Palaw'an leaders maintains traditional law as asserted by 115 or 100 percent and gives information on indigenous laws as ascertained by 105 or 91.30 percent.

This connotes that the Palaw'an leaders must be knowledgeable of their traditional laws so that he can impose them anytime or whenever necessary.

As collector, the Palaw'an leader does not impose any collection to the people neither he expects the people to spend for certain feast which their tribe may celebrate.

The legislators task of the Palaw'an is sustained by Dunuan (2001), when she explained that the Indigenous People exhibited their customs and traditions. Likewise, the NCIP records that a wealthy cultured T'boli becomes a source of customs and traditions. Further, Eder posited that a Masikampo is recognized as a faction expert on customary laws.

Table 9. Judiciary Functions of Palaw'an Leaders

Indicator	F*	%	Rank
Mediates/settles conflicts or problems	115	100	2
Resolves and hears cases	115	100	2
Resolves family problems	115	100	2
Imposes sanctions	101	87.83	6
Administer Justice	111	96.52	5
Defends and helps constituents	99	86.26	8
Arbitrator on matter of dispute	113	98.26	4
Gives or works for justice of constituents	98	85.22	9
Mediates over personal and community problems			
That threaten the order of the community	100	86.96	7

*multiple responses

The Palaw'an Leaders along judiciary performs the following: mediates/settles conflicts or problems, resolves and hears cases and resolves family problems. These functions have shared rank of two. They are affirmed by 115 or 100 percent of the respondents as their leaders functions as judge. The table also reveals that Palaw'an leaders acts as arbitrator on matter of disputes as indicated by 113 or 98.26 percent. This is fourth in rank. The Palaw'an leader also administers justice as revealed by 111 or 96.52 percent. This is fifth in rank.

The function of the IP leaders as discussed in the table is strengthened by Hornedo (1982) when he posited that the Ivatan IP leaders administer justice, defend and help his people and ready to take arms when provoke. Biernatzki (1973) proved that the Datu of Bukidnon act as judge and arbitrator in matters of disputes. He likewise explains customary laws in as much as he is well-versed with it.

The data disclose that Palawan leaders resolve problems arising from the people. In other words, due process is also applied in settling any conflict that affect the community or even problems affecting family.

Table 10. Religious Functions of Palaw'an Leaders

Indicators	F	%	Rank
Lead in religious ceremony	95	82.61	3
Assist religious ceremonies	15	13.04	4
Perform ceremonial functions like wedding, and fiesta	105	91.30	2
Help facilitate community rites and practices	110	95.65	1

*Multiple responses

The table reveals the religious functions of the Palaw'an leaders. First in rank is to help community rites and practices as reveals by 110 or 95.65 percent; second is to perform ceremonial functions like weddings as claimed by 105 or 91.30 percent and third is to perform religious ceremony such as planting and harvesting ceremony as attested by 95 or 82.61 percent.

This implies that the leaders' religious functions are geared towards performing rituals. Likewise he is acting as priest or a person in authority to solemnize marriage among his constituents.

The finding is confirmed by Joshua Project when it mentioned that the Batak is considered as Tagbanua religious leader. He also mediates with great hierarchy of Diwata and with spirits who roam and inhabit the nearby environment. Biernatzki (1973) rationalize that the datu is the assistant of the shaman in religious ceremonies.

Table 11. Extent of Coverage of the Power of the Palaw'an Leaders

Indicator	F	%	Rank
Sanctioned by influential members of the clan	13	11.30	9
Approved by public opinion	22	19.13	8
Violation against customary law and tribal Practices	115	100	1.5
Commit adultery	99	86.09	3.5
Irreverence to customs and tradition	115	100	1.
Commit serious crimes	99	6.09	3.5
Power, authorities consistent with government Institution that impose laws	5	3.35	10
Lack of capacity to protects and defend the Rights and interests of the tribes	78	67.83	6
(lack leadership in) determines in finding Solutions	80	69.57	5

The leadership power of the Palaw'an covers violation against customary laws and tribal practices and irreverence to customs and tradition. This extent of powers is revealed by 115 or 100 percent of the respondents. These have shared rank of 1.5. there are 99 or 86.09 percent of the respondents who claimed that the extent of power of the Palaw'an leaders include commit grave abuses and commit serious crimes. These have shared rank of 3.5; the least of the coverage of the power is in terms of the being consistent with government institutions that impose laws with five or 4.35 percent. This is ranked five or 4.35 percent. This is ranked ten among the listed indicators. The findings unveil that Palaw'an leaders' power is very much imposed on violations against their customary laws and practices. It is of great offense if a Palaw'an is caught of being irreverent or disrespectful to their customs and traditions.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Palaw'an as an ethnic group prefers old folks to be their leaders. Leadership among the Palaw'an is bestowed as the responsibility of the male. The community of Palaw'an is dominated by the pure-blooded Palaw'an. It is further concluded that other ethnic group have not perforate the Palaw'an, or the Palaw'an themselves do not live together with other ethnic groups. Inasmuch as most Palaw'ans are farmers, the place where they live are suited for agricultural purposes. The Palaw'ans are literate, although their education is only in the elementary level. Leadership

can be inherited from the parents. The Palaw'an sticks on their customs and traditions in many activities which the leaders do. Customs and traditions are main sources of the power and authority of Palaw'an. The utmost criterion in selecting Palaw'an leaders is his knowledge of customary laws and traditions. They would their leaders to be fair managing cases and untarnished with negative doings. The Palaw'an leaders were mostly of the Tribal council or Panglima. The foremost function of the Palaw'an leaders are executive, legislative, judiciary, and religious. Although the Palaw'an don't have specific leader along religious functions, the Palaw'an leaders are person in authority to do religious activities, particularly solemnizing marriage.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Western Philippines University should spearhead researches concerning the Palaw'an along laws of the Palaw'an, Customs and traditions, courtship and marriage, birth to death, health practices, herbal medicines and literatures like legends and stories.

The government should assist the titling of the lots occupied by the Palaw'an. Training and seminars should be sponsored by the department in-charge of the indigenous people concerning leadership and traditions of the said ethnic group. Request the local government the possibility of putting up school near were most of the Palaw'an live. Government bureaus should preserve tribes as social museum exhibits with the aid of various private organizations, to be able to help the tribes adapt to modern society without completely losing their ethnic identity. Encouraged to re-establish their traditional authority structure. Leaders were chosen on the basis of their bravery and their ability to settle disputes they were the ones who remembered the ancient oral epics of their people. Strengthen Institutional Capability: Tribal leadership in itself is an institution. But it needs strengthening to cope up with social changes, development, environment, and structure. Leadership of tribal community needs to adjust with social development, system, and structure to be able to manage problems and challenges faced by the tribal community in protection of their rights, culture, tradition, and practices. Improve Palaw'an Education Responsive to their Needs. The economic problem of the Palaw'an community is tied up with their problem in education. Their children are not eager to attend classes even at the elementary level because they have different issues and concerns needed to be addressed. Increase Livelihood Opportunities. Traditionally, the Palaw'an are known to depend on hunting and gathering as their major source of living. But today, farming has

been also considered another main source of livelihood in addition to hunting, honey collection, rattan gathering and almacega.

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