

Four Generations, One Mission: A Descriptive Analysis of Leadership Styles, Employee Engagement, and Organizational Effectiveness in a Philippine Public Welfare Agency

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ABSTRACT

Public welfare institutions in the Philippines now operate with one of the youngest and most generationally diverse workforces in government, yet baseline evidence describing how these employees perceive their leaders, experience their work, and assess their organization remains scarce. This study provided a descriptive profile of leadership styles, generational cohort composition, employee engagement, and organizational effectiveness among employees of the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office 10 (DSWD-10), Northern Mindanao, Philippines. Using a descriptive quantitative design, data were gathered from 350 employees selected through stratified random sampling and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Findings revealed a predominantly young workforce, with Millennials and Generation Z jointly constituting the overwhelming majority of employees while Baby Boomers have nearly exited the agency. All four leadership styles were rated High, with transformational leadership obtaining the highest dimensional mean and the four styles tightly clustered, indicating a versatile, multi-style supervisory repertoire. Employee engagement was High overall, with dedication uniquely rated Very High and the perceived importance of one's work emerging as the strongest single element of the engagement profile. Organizational effectiveness was likewise High across job satisfaction, workplace productivity, and service quality, with team collaboration the only sub-dimension rated Very High; however, recognition, compensation and benefits, and end-of-day energy emerged as the lowest-rated areas, a pattern consistent with the predominantly non-regular employment arrangements covering most respondents. The study concludes that DSWD-10 possesses a mission-driven, high-performing, and highly dedicated workforce whose well-being infrastructure has not kept pace with its performance, and offers an evidence-based workforce profile that public welfare agencies can use for leadership development, engagement programming, and human resource policy; the inferential questions arising from this profile are examined in separate companion papers.

Keywords: multigenerational workforce, leadership styles, employee engagement, organizational effectiveness, public sector, descriptive study, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

For the first time in the history of the Philippine bureaucracy, four generations are delivering public services side by side. Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z bring to government work distinct values, communication preferences, and expectations shaped by the historical periods in which they came of age. Globally, Millennials became the largest segment of the labor force in 2020, and Generation Z is projected to comprise more than one-fourth of the global workforce by the end of the decade; in the Philippines, nearly half of the labor force falls between the ages of fifteen and thirty-four (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023). Public agencies consequently operate in multigenerational environments where traditional norms of hierarchy and procedural compliance intersect with younger employees' expectations for recognition, growth, digital integration, and participation in decision-making.

Despite this demographic transformation, remarkably little is known about what this workforce actually looks like from the inside. Most Philippine research on leadership and engagement centers on private organizations such as business process outsourcing firms, hospitals, and schools, leaving limited empirical evidence on the state of leadership practice, engagement, and organizational effectiveness in government agencies. Much of the multigenerational workforce literature, moreover, relies on cohort stereotypes rather than measured data from actual public-sector workforces (Yusof et al., 2025; Sansa et al., 2024). Before agencies can design generationally responsive leadership programs or engagement interventions, they first need an accurate, measured baseline: how employees perceive their supervisors' leadership, how the workforce is generationally composed, how engaged employees actually are, and how effective the organization is across its human and service outcomes. This descriptive gap is the specific problem the present study addresses.

The study is anchored on four complementary theoretical lenses. Bass and Avolio's Full Range Leadership Theory frames transformational and transactional leadership as influential behavioral repertoires shaping employee outcomes, a proposition supported by meta-analytic evidence in the public sector (Backhaus & Vogel, 2022; Fischer & Sitkin, 2023), while Greenleaf's Servant Leadership Theory and Gastil's Democratic Leadership Perspective emphasize people-centered stewardship and shared decision-making. Generational diversity is explained through Mannheim's Theory of Generational Cohorts, which posits that groups born within the same historical period develop shared values and workplace orientations (Pietrantonio et al., 2025). Employee engagement draws on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, whose dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption continue to demonstrate strong explanatory power for workplace behavior (Bakker et al., 2023; Tang et al., 2024), complemented by Social Exchange Theory's account of commitment as reciprocity for favorable organizational treatment (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Saks, 2019). Organizational effectiveness, expressed through job satisfaction, workplace productivity, and service quality, rests on Goal-Setting Theory's enduring propositions on goal specificity, challenge, and feedback (Locke & Latham, 2019).

The Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office 10 (DSWD-10) offers a compelling setting for such a baseline study. As the lead implementer of social protection programs across the five provinces of Northern Mindanao, the agency combines long-tenured personnel holding deep institutional memory with a rapidly growing contingent of young workers, many engaged under non-regular arrangements. The quality of the agency's services to vulnerable communities depends directly on the leadership climate its supervisors create and the engagement its employees sustain. Profiling these conditions supports Sustainable Development Goal 8 on decent work and Goal 16 on effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions, and equips agency leadership, human resource practitioners, and civil service policy-makers with the evidence needed for workforce planning and development.

This article reports the descriptive component of a larger dissertation study on leading across a multigenerational workforce. It profiles four aspects of the DSWD-10 workforce: the perceived level of leadership styles, the distribution of generational cohorts, the level of employee engagement, and the level of organizational effectiveness. The inferential questions arising from this profile, including the relationships among these variables, their predictive influence, and the structural model that best fits organizational effectiveness, are examined in separate companion papers.

Statement of the Problem

This study described the levels of leadership styles, employee engagement, and organizational effectiveness, and the distribution of generational cohorts, among employees of DSWD-10. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of leadership styles as perceived by employees of DSWD-10 in terms of transformational, transactional, servant, and democratic leadership?
2. What is the distribution of generational cohorts among employees, namely Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials/Generation Y, and Generation Z?
3. What is the level of employee engagement in terms of vigor and energy at work, dedication, absorption in tasks, and commitment to organizational goals?
4. What is the level of organizational effectiveness in terms of job satisfaction, workplace productivity, and service quality?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to establish the levels of leadership styles, employee engagement, and organizational effectiveness, and the distribution of generational cohorts among DSWD-10 employees. Descriptive designs are appropriate for systematically portraying the characteristics of a population and the status of variables as they naturally occur, providing the empirical baseline upon which subsequent inferential analyses can be built. The data reported here were gathered as part of a larger predictive-correlational study.

Research Setting

The study was conducted at the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office 10, with its main office in Cagayan de Oro City, covering employees stationed in field and satellite offices across the five provinces of Northern Mindanao: Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental, Camiguin, Lanao del Norte, and Bukidnon. This setting ensured representation of a diverse public welfare workforce across varying organizational units and geographic locations.

Participants and Sampling Procedure

From a total population of 2,784 employees across the regional, satellite, and operations offices of DSWD-10, a sample of 350 employees was determined using Slovin's formula at a 5% margin of error. Stratified random sampling was employed, with strata based on office assignment and respondents randomly selected in proportion to the size of each stratum (Taherdoost, 2016). Generational membership was allowed to emerge naturally within each office-based sample, preserving the actual generational distribution of the workforce.

Research Instruments, Validity, and Reliability

Data were collected using structured questionnaires adapted from validated instruments. Leadership styles were measured through an adapted Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) for transformational and transactional leadership (Garzón-Lasso et al., 2024), the Servant Leadership Scale (Grobler & Flotman, 2020), and an adapted democratic leadership scale (Pažur, 2020). Employee engagement was measured using an expanded Utrecht Work Engagement Scale capturing vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2019), with additional items on commitment to organizational goals adapted from the Affective Commitment Scale of Meyer and Allen. Organizational effectiveness was assessed through an adapted Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire-Short Form for job satisfaction, an adapted Individual Work Performance Questionnaire for workplace productivity (Koopmans et al., 2014; van der Vaart & Linde, 2021), and an adapted SERVQUAL-based public-sector service quality instrument (Zahri et al., 2023). Generational cohort was determined from year of birth using widely accepted classifications: Baby Boomers (1946–1964), Generation X (1965–1980), Millennials/Generation Y (1981–1996), and Generation Z (1997–2012).

The instruments underwent content validation by a panel of four experts in leadership, organizational behavior, and public administration, all of whom affirmed the appropriateness, clarity, and contextual relevance of the items. A pilot test with thirty employees excluded from the main sample established the internal consistency of all scales, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.807 to 0.985, well above the 0.70 threshold.

Data Collection Procedure and Ethical Considerations

Formal approval was obtained from the Regional Director of DSWD Field Office 10, and coordination was undertaken with division heads to facilitate survey administration through both electronic and printed questionnaires. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was secured, and respondents were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. All data were reported in aggregate form, and data handling complied with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173) of the Philippines.

Data Analysis

Frequency counts and percentages summarized the distribution of generational cohorts, while means and standard deviations described the levels of leadership styles, employee engagement, and organizational effectiveness. Item and dimensional means were interpreted using the following scale: 4.51–5.00 = Very High; 3.51–4.50 = High; 2.51–3.50 = Moderately High; 1.51–2.50 = Low; and 1.00–1.50 = Very Low.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Leadership Styles

Table 1. *Summary of the Level of Leadership Styles as Perceived by Employees of DSWD-10 (n = 350)*

Leadership Style Dimension	Mean	SD	Descriptive Rating
Transformational Leadership	4.31	0.793	High
Transactional Leadership	4.24	0.812	High
Servant Leadership	4.26	0.814	High
Democratic Leadership	4.29	0.760	High
Grand Mean	4.28	0.795	High

Scale: 4.51–5.00 Very High; 3.51–4.50 High; 2.51–3.50 Moderately High; 1.51–2.50 Low; 1.00–1.50 Very Low.

As shown in Table 1, all four leadership styles were rated High, with a grand mean of 4.28 (SD = 0.795). Transformational Leadership recorded the highest dimensional mean (M = 4.31), followed closely by Democratic (M = 4.29) and Servant Leadership (M = 4.26), with Transactional Leadership lowest (M = 4.24), a tightly clustered profile spanning barely seven-hundredths of a scale point. Within transformational leadership, the highest-rated item was “My supervisor encourages continuous improvement” (M = 4.38), while “My supervisor treats employees as individuals rather than just group members” obtained the lowest mean (M = 4.21), suggesting that individualized consideration, though still High, is the dimension’s relative growth area. Within transactional leadership, focus on targets and deadlines scored highest (M = 4.44), while the two reward-related items were the lowest in the entire leadership instrument (M = 3.90–3.91), indicating that supervisors direct and monitor work effectively but operate within constrained formal reward structures. Servant leadership was distinguished by strong ethical modeling and encouragement of initiative (both M = 4.32), and democratic leadership by the promotion of mutual respect (M = 4.36) and open dialogue in meetings (M = 4.33), with the tightest score dispersion among the four styles (SD = 0.760).

The simultaneous elevation of all four styles indicates that DSWD-10 supervisors employ a versatile, multi-style leadership repertoire rather than a single fixed style, consistent with the Full Range Leadership Theory’s premise that effective leaders integrate behavioral strategies contextually (Backhaus & Vogel, 2022; Fischer & Sitkin, 2023). The strong servant and democratic ratings are especially meaningful in a social welfare institution, where program implementation inherently requires empathy, consultation, and cross-functional collaboration: servant leadership paired with a supportive culture has been shown to raise service quality in local government agencies (Saadah & Agustiyara, 2024), while participatory leadership improves productivity when combined with human capital development (Costa et al., 2023). The comparatively lower reward-related transactional items reflect civil service compensation schedules and budget regulations rather than supervisory neglect, a structural constraint consistent with the theoretical account of transactional leadership as contingent exchange (Aniebonam, 2023; AlAbri et al., 2022; Hutama et al., 2024).

Distribution of Generational Cohorts

Table 2. *Distribution of Generational Cohorts Among DSWD-10 Employees*

Generational Cohort	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Baby Boomers (1946–1964)	4	1.1
Generation X (1965–1980)	44	12.6
Millennials / Gen Y (1981–1996)	172	49.1
Generation Z / Others (1997–2012)	130	37.1
Total	350	100.0

Table 2 reveals a decisively young workforce. Millennials constituted the largest cohort (49.1%), followed by Generation Z (37.1%), Generation X (12.6%), and Baby Boomers (1.1%); Millennials and Generation Z together account for 86.2% of the sample. The predominance of Millennials mirrors national labor force patterns in which individuals aged 25–44 form the largest workforce segment (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023), while the substantial Generation Z presence reflects the accelerating entry of young workers into government service, particularly through job-order and contract-of-service arrangements. The near-absence of Baby Boomers registers the ongoing exit of older workers through retirement.

Interpreted through Mannheim’s Theory of Generational Cohorts, each group contributes distinct orientations: the few remaining Boomers carry institutional memory and procedural expertise formed in an era of institutional stability (Suomäki et al., 2019); Generation X bridges traditional and contemporary systems in operational and middle-management roles (McKenzie & Varney, 2018); Millennials evaluate their organization through opportunities for learning, participation, and value alignment (Heyns & Kerr, 2018); and Generation Z expects technology-enabled processes, transparency, and rapid feedback (Shinde & Surve, 2025). For a public welfare agency, this profile carries a dual implication: leadership approaches must be participatory, purpose-driven, and digitally integrated to resonate with the dominant young cohorts, while deliberate knowledge-transfer mechanisms are needed to capture the institutional memory of a vanishing senior generation. At the same time, contemporary reviews caution against stereotype-driven cohort programming and favor inclusive, person-centered approaches to managing age diversity (Yusof et al., 2025; Pietrantonio et al., 2025; Sansa et al., 2024).

Level of Employee Engagement

Table 3. *Summary of the Level of Employee Engagement Among DSWD-10 Employees*

Engagement Dimension	Mean	SD	Descriptive Rating
Vigor and Energy at Work	4.20	0.817	High
Dedication	4.62	0.669	Very High
Absorption in Tasks	4.07	0.862	High
Commitment to Organizational Goals	4.29	0.825	High
Grand Mean	4.30	0.793	High

Scale: 4.51–5.00 Very High; 3.51–4.50 High; 2.51–3.50 Moderately High; 1.51–2.50 Low; 1.00–1.50 Very Low.

Employee engagement was High overall (grand mean = 4.30, SD = 0.793), but the profile across dimensions is strikingly uneven in an instructive way. Dedication stood alone at the Very High level (M = 4.62), with all eight of its items exceeding the Very High threshold and the item “I consider my work important” recording the highest single score in the entire study (M = 4.77). Items on pride in one’s work (M = 4.66), sense of purpose (M = 4.65), and inspiration to give one’s best (M = 4.63) confirm that DSWD-10 employees derive

profound meaning from serving vulnerable communities. Commitment to organizational goals followed ($M = 4.29$), led by motivation to contribute to organizational performance ($M = 4.50$) and willingness to exert extra effort ($M = 4.48$), though “I really feel as if this organization’s problems are my own” was comparatively lowest ($M = 3.90$), a moderation plausibly linked to the employment precarity experienced by the predominantly non-regular workforce.

Vigor was High ($M = 4.20$), anchored by perseverance and motivation to invest effort (both $M = 4.39$); notably, “I feel energized at the end of the working day” was the only engagement item to fall below 4.00 ($M = 3.97$), marking end-of-day fatigue as a recognizable occupational experience in emotionally demanding frontline welfare work (Rokhim et al., 2025). Absorption was the lowest dimension ($M = 4.07$), with items on losing track of time ($M = 3.75$) and difficulty detaching from work ($M = 3.55$) rated lowest, a pattern indicating that employees concentrate deeply during work hours while maintaining healthy work-life boundaries rather than sliding toward workaholism, a psychologically sustainable profile for emotionally intensive service roles (Albrecht et al., 2023). Taken together, the engagement profile aligns squarely with the JD-R Model’s proposition that engagement flourishes when work is experienced as meaningful and resources are adequate (Bakker et al., 2023; Tang et al., 2024), with the Very High dedication corroborating evidence that meaningful work operates as a core organizational asset in public-serving institutions (Varshney & Goel, 2025) and Social Exchange Theory’s account of engagement as reciprocation (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Saks, 2019; Akingbola et al., 2022).

Level of Organizational Effectiveness

Table 4. *Summary of the Level of Organizational Effectiveness Among DSWD-10 Employees*

Organizational Effectiveness Dimension	Mean	SD	Descriptive Rating
Job Satisfaction	4.11	0.634	High
Workplace Productivity	4.45	0.609	High
Service Quality	4.45	0.600	High

Organizational effectiveness was consistently High, but with a telling internal asymmetry: workplace productivity ($M = 4.45$) and service quality ($M = 4.45$) clearly exceeded job satisfaction ($M = 4.11$). The sub-dimensional breakdown of each component, presented in Tables 5 and 6, locates the sources of this gap.

Table 5. *Sub-dimensions of Job Satisfaction and Workplace Productivity Among DSWD-10 Employees*

Sub-dimension	Mean	SD	Descriptive Rating
Job Satisfaction	4.11	0.634	High
Work Conditions	4.05	0.712	High
Compensation and Benefits	3.97	0.870	High
Recognition	3.96	0.773	High
Career Development	4.07	0.753	High
Relationship with Supervisors	4.33	0.741	High
Alignment with Organizational Values	4.31	0.676	High
Workplace Productivity	4.45	0.609	High
Task Completion Rate	4.42	0.716	High
Quality of Outputs	4.44	0.648	High
Achievement of Performance Targets	4.40	0.726	High
Efficiency in Resource Use	4.45	0.637	High

Within job satisfaction, the relational and values-based sub-dimensions were strongest: relationship with supervisors ($M = 4.33$), where supervisors were rated as respectful and approachable (both $M = 4.40$), and alignment with organizational values ($M = 4.31$), led by belief in the organization's mission ($M = 4.39$). By contrast, recognition ($M = 3.96$) and compensation and benefits ($M = 3.97$) were the two lowest sub-dimensions in the entire study. Within recognition, fairness of recognition, receipt of praise, and celebration of contributions were all rated lowest (each $M = 3.89$), while peer respect scored highest ($M = 4.08$), indicating that peer-level acknowledgment currently outpaces institutional recognition mechanisms. Within career development ($M = 4.07$), encouragement to learn new skills scored highest ($M = 4.29$) while access to mentoring or coaching ($M = 3.85$) and satisfaction with promotion opportunities ($M = 3.95$) lagged, consistent with the limited formal advancement pathways available to a predominantly non-regular workforce. These patterns fit the classical distinction between hygiene and motivational factors: adequate conditions prevent dissatisfaction, but recognition, reward, and advancement are required to lift satisfaction beyond its baseline (Alexopoulos & Skliopidou, 2024).

Workplace productivity, in contrast, was uniformly strong. Efficiency in resource use recorded the highest sub-dimensional mean ($M = 4.45$), with proper use of tools and technology and effective time use tied as the highest items (both $M = 4.48$); accuracy of outputs reached the Very High threshold at the item level ($M = 4.52$); and prioritization of work for completion approached it ($M = 4.51$). This results-oriented profile reflects the structured, deadline-aware culture also observed in the transactional leadership ratings and the performance accountability demands of civil service, and is theoretically consistent with Goal-Setting Theory's emphasis on clear, challenging, feedback-supported goals (Locke & Latham, 2019).

Table 6. *Sub-dimensions of Service Quality Among DSWD-10 Employees*

Sub-dimension	Mean	SD	Descriptive Rating
Service Quality	4.45	0.600	High
Team Collaboration	4.56	0.628	Very High
Responsiveness	4.49	0.643	High
Reliability	4.40	0.665	High
Client Satisfaction	4.50	0.630	High
Effectiveness of Program Outcomes	4.42	0.673	High

Service quality was anchored by team collaboration, the only sub-dimension in the entire study rated Very High ($M = 4.56$), with valuing teamwork, maintaining positive working relationships, and supporting coworkers' efforts tied as its strongest items (each $M = 4.59$). Client satisfaction approached the Very High threshold ($M = 4.50$), led by clients feeling valued and respected ($M = 4.56$) and treated fairly ($M = 4.55$), attributes of person-centered service that are critical for an agency serving vulnerable and marginalized populations. Responsiveness ($M = 4.49$) reflected a willing, urgency-aware frontline culture, while reliability, though High, was the lowest service quality sub-dimension ($M = 4.40$), with error minimization ($M = 4.34$) and service dependability ($M = 4.36$) marking incremental improvement areas in service consistency. Effectiveness of program outcomes ($M = 4.42$) was strongest on perceived contribution to social welfare ($M = 4.46$), with outcome sustainability ($M = 4.39$) comparatively lower, pointing to the longer-term systemic investment needed to consolidate immediate service gains (Zahri et al., 2023).

Read as a whole, the organizational effectiveness profile describes a workforce that performs and serves at a higher level than it is satisfied, particularly in the material and acknowledgment dimensions of the employment relationship. The Very High team collaboration score is directly consonant with the elevated servant and democratic leadership ratings, since participatory, empathetic supervision naturally cultivates cooperative workplace behavior, while the compensation-recognition-career triad of lowest scores converges with the finding that over 92% of respondents are employed under non-regular arrangements. This decoupling of performance from well-being constitutes the single most actionable descriptive finding of the study.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn. First, DSWD-10 supervisors are perceived to exercise all four leadership styles at a High level with tightly clustered means, indicating an integrative, multi-style leadership repertoire rather than reliance on any single approach. Second, the agency operates with a decisively young workforce in which Millennials and Generation Z jointly comprise 86.2% of employees, while Baby Boomers have nearly exited, making knowledge transfer and youth-responsive management simultaneous imperatives. Third, employees are highly engaged overall and extraordinarily dedicated, with the meaningfulness of social welfare work emerging as the strongest single element of the engagement profile, alongside a psychologically healthy pattern of bounded absorption and a recognizable experience of end-of-day fatigue. Fourth, the organization is effective across all three outcome dimensions, with productivity and service quality outpacing job satisfaction; recognition, compensation and benefits, and career development are the weakest links in an otherwise strong profile, a pattern consistent with the structural constraints of predominantly non-regular employment. Collectively, the profile portrays a mission-driven, high-performing public welfare workforce whose well-being infrastructure has not kept pace with its performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of these conclusions, DSWD-10 and comparable public welfare agencies may consider the following. Management should institutionalize low-cost, high-visibility recognition mechanisms, such as structured commendation systems, service milestone awards inclusive of non-regular personnel, and public acknowledgment of exemplary frontline work, to address the lowest-rated satisfaction sub-dimension within existing budget rules. Human resource units should expand structured mentoring and coaching programs and clarify development pathways for non-regular employees, pairing these with advocacy for regularization opportunities where civil service rules permit. To sustain engagement, wellness and workload-management initiatives should target the documented end-of-day energy depletion of frontline workers, while knowledge-capture mechanisms should be established before the remaining senior personnel retire. Supervisory development should reinforce the agency's multi-style leadership repertoire, with particular attention to individualized consideration, the relative growth area within transformational leadership. Finally, researchers are encouraged to extend this baseline through the inferential questions it raises, namely whether and how these leadership styles, generational cohorts, and engagement dimensions relate to and predict organizational effectiveness, which the companion papers of this research program address, and to replicate the profile in other field offices and agencies to test its generalizability.

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