



Effectiveness of Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council in the new normal

Christine C. Prado & Antonia S. Escalona

Abstract

This study was anchored on the Republic Act No. 10844, the Department of Information and Communications Technology Act of 2015, assessing the effectiveness of the Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council in the new normal. The respondents of the study were members of the Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council from the different sectors such as academe, provincial government of Aklan employees, national government agencies, private business owners and stakeholders. The descriptive research design was employed using a researcher-formulated questionnaire-checklist. The study found that the Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council, characterized by a young, educated workforce, demonstrates positive consensus on program effectiveness and initiatives but faces challenges such as power issues and organizational shortcomings, as indicated by demographic analysis, project evaluation, and statistical correlation. This study was conducted from August 2023 to December 2023, and was limited only to the items in the instrument, giving emphasis on demographic profile of respondents in the effectiveness of Aklan ICT Council in the new normal, extent of the effectiveness of Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council in the new normal and problems encountered by Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council in the new normal. The study results recommend that the council should refine its strategies, focusing on resolving specific problems such as power rate concerns and organizational structure issues. Sustaining efforts such as the Visayas ICT Cluster Organization Conference and support for entrepreneurship will further strengthen the council's impact in addressing the challenges in the ICT sector.

Keywords: *information and communications technology, new normal, ICT Council, programs, projects, and activities*

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About the authors:

¹Corresponding author. Master in Public Administration, Contract of Service—Administrative Personnel, Provincial Governors Office – Aklan Tourism and Trade Investments Promotions Center. Email: castillochristinelabarosa@gmail.com

²Doctor of Education, Faculty-Graduate School, Northwestern Visayan Colleges.

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Introduction

In all aspects of modern society, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) plays an important role. The ICT have changed the way people talk to each other, how they search for essential information, work, conduct business, or engage in government agencies as well as dealing with societal life. As ICT affects the way we live, it also has an effect on economic growth, which is then passed on to society by enabling improvements in infrastructure and standard of living.

The Executive Order No.041 Series of 2016, An Executive Order Creating the Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council (AICTEC), Defining Its Functions, and for Other Purposes, was promulgated by the Province of Aklan in order to enhance the potential and capabilities of the province. This acts as a catalyst between the ICT sector, the government, and interested parties in the implementation of programs and projects that are necessary for the province's sustainable development. In addition, the council is in charge of attracting IT-BPM (Information Technology and Business Process Management) firms to Aklan for investment and managing the establishment of ICT-related businesses, and developing strategies to deal with issues and concerns that affect growth and development of the sector in the province.

After its creation, there has been no reports nor studies on its effectiveness. Hence, this study assessed the effectiveness of Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council in delivering its services during the new normal, with the goal of identifying strategies to enhance the council's capabilities and improve service delivery to its clientele. This assessment is grounded in the broader context of the Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016, which highlights the critical role of ICT in driving economic growth, improving quality of life, empowering marginalized communities, and fostering national cohesion through digital inclusion and connectivity.

Methodology

This study used the descriptive research design employed through the researcher-made questionnaire-checklist from among the selected council members' respondents. The goal of descriptive research was to precisely and methodically characterize a population, circumstance, or phenomena. The variables are merely observed and measured, no controls or manipulations are made.

The 72 respondents of the study were composed of the following sectors: the 33 personnel from SUCs/Colleges generally referred to as academe, 10 private stakeholders, 8 national government agencies, and 21 provincial government of Aklan employees who were an active member of the Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council. The sample was purposively chosen due to their first-hand experience and personal knowledge on the problems beings studied.

This study used a researcher-formulated questionnaire-checklist that was devised with the guidance of a thesis adviser, and using the work of Clark (2003) as reference. Part I of the instrument was designed to draw information on the demographic profile of respondents in terms of age, gender, education, position/designation, and length of service. Part II of the instrument was composed of a 12-item checklist under three variables, such as, programs, projects, and activities, which were all designed to draw information on the problems encountered by Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council in the new normal. Part III of the instrument was composed of a 12-item checklist under three variables, such as, programs, projects, and activities, which are all designed to draw information on the extent of the effectiveness of Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council in the new normal.

The researcher has first sought permission from the Executive Director of the Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council of allowing her to float the questionnaire checklist from among the target respondents, and case-to-case observations within Kalibo, Aklan as the setting of the study. Moreover, individual and personal approach was made by the researcher to facilitate the expeditious and early retrieval of the duly accomplished instrument. The data elicited was used as basis in the formulation of the proposed intervention plan as an outcome of the study.

The frequency and percentage distribution and the respective overall weighted means of the different variables were computed with the use of Microsoft Excel, and further presented, analyzed, and interpreted to evaluate significance of the responses in the conduct of the study. A Likert scale was also used as reference to evaluate the data. In testing the hypothesis of this study, measuring the strength of the linear relationship between two variables or the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) thru the SPSS v. 1.0.0.1406, Series of 2023. The level of significance was established at 0.05 level.

Findings

In this study, the problems encountered by Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council in the new normal as to programs, projects, and activities garnered an overall verbal description of moderately serious. The identified problems like high power rates and unstable power supply provided an actionable insight for the council to refine strategies and address specific areas of improvement. On the other hand, the positive agreement of the respondents on the effectiveness of the Aklan Information and Communications Technology Council in the new normal as to programs, projects, and activities emphasized a positive consensus on the council's multifaceted efforts in the delivery of its services to the ICT industry and sustainable development of the province with an overall verbal description of effective. This is particularly notable in promoting the Visayan Island especially, the Province of Aklan as location for ICT-enabled jobs, opportunities, and investments.

A Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was generated showing that the statistical analysis led to the acceptance of the hypothesis, indicating that there was no significant relationship between the extent of effectiveness and the problems encountered by the Aklan ICT Council in the new normal indicating by the following data: the Pearson r value was -0.067 , hence, the p -value was $.8361$ showing that the result was not significant at 0.05 level.

Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the Council's programs, projects, and activities, offering a foundation for analyzing and refining strategies for improved service delivery. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the council should focus on resolving specific problems such as power rate concerns, limited advocacy acceptance, and organizational structure issues. Additionally, efforts should be directed towards overcoming challenges in attracting local investors, enhancing career opportunities, raising awareness, and improving member engagement. Proactively addressing these identified problems will contribute to the council's ability to adapt and thrive in the dynamic landscape of the evolving ICT sector. Sustaining efforts such as the conduct of Visayas ICT Cluster Organization Conference, establishment of Aklan Tech4Ed Center Project, and support for entrepreneurship and talent pool expansion will further strengthen the council's impact in addressing the challenges in the ICT sector and ensure ongoing success in navigating the changing ICT landscape.

The statistical analysis implied that the challenges faced by the council do not have a statistically significant impact on its overall effectiveness. Regular assessments and strategic adaptations can help maintain a resilient and adaptive approach to challenges, ensuring sustained effectiveness. This study could be used as reference for future researchers.

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