



Manuscript Title:	Participatory Leadership among Agricultural Extension Workers: A Mixed-Method Case Study of Farmer Training Program Implementation within Research, Development, and Extension (RDE) Systems in Zamboanga Sibugay, Philippines
Type of Article:	Original Article

FIRST ROUND

Editor

General Comments and Recommendations

The manuscript presents a meaningful contribution to the field; however, several revisions are necessary to further strengthen its clarity, organization, and overall scholarly quality. The authors are encouraged to carefully consider and address all reviewer comments in preparing the revised manuscript. In addition, please ensure that all sources cited within the text are fully and accurately reflected in the References section. A careful verification of all in-text citations and reference entries is highly recommended to ensure consistency and completeness.

Reviewer 1

General Comments and Recommendations

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. The paper touches on a very relevant topic, especially for our agricultural sector here in the Philippines. Looking into how agricultural extension workers (AEWs) lead and implement programs under the decentralized RDE system is crucial for rural development and aligns well with our current national food security goals.

Specific Comments and Recommendations

1. The study relies entirely on data collected from 30 AEWs assessing their own leadership and implementation effectiveness. Unsurprisingly, the results yielded very high means for both participatory leadership ($M=4.67$) and program implementation ($M=4.66$). While the methodology briefly acknowledges self-reported bias as a limitation, it is a critical flaw that compromises the validity of the conclusion. Of course, extension workers will rate their own performance highly. For a true measure of participatory leadership, the study should have triangulated these claims by interviewing or surveying the farmers themselves. You need to critically address this bias in the discussion rather than taking the high mean scores at face value.
2. You utilized a purposive sample of 30 AEWs for a quantitative correlation analysis. In quantitative research, $n=30$ is generally considered the bare minimum to satisfy the central limit theorem, and it is quite weak for establishing a robust Pearson correlation ($r = 0.78$). Given that this is a case study, you should frame the quantitative results as descriptive or exploratory



rather than making strong correlational claims. You must temper your conclusions and explicitly state that this sample size cannot be generalized.

3. The study claims to be a mixed-method design employing thematic analysis for the qualitative data. However, the qualitative results are almost invisible in the Results and Discussion section. Table 2 merely lists frequencies and percentages of challenges, which is still quantitative treating. Later on, you only briefly mentioned qualitative themes that support these challenges include the Implementation Constraints. Where are the actual themes? Where are the interview excerpts, quotes, or narratives from the AEWs that give life to the data? A true mixed-method study must deeply integrate the qualitative findings to explain the why behind the numbers.

4. The title and introduction specify that this is a case study of the RDE system in Zamboanga Sibugay. Yet, reading through the results and discussion, the findings could belong to any province in the country. What are the specific geographical, socio-economic, or political factors in Zamboanga Sibugay that affect the AEWs? Are there specific post-conflict realities, budget constraints from the local LGU, or terrain difficulties that hinder their programs? You need to anchor your discussion on the specific local context to justify why this was framed as a case study in the first place.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accept the manuscript for publication.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

Reviewer 2

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
This paper has a relevant topic and the study has practical value, especially because participatory leadership in agricultural extension is important but still not much discussed in local setting. The paper also shows effort to combine quantitative and qualitative data, which is a good direction.

<u>Specific Comments and Recommendations</u>
I suggest the authors focus first on strengthening the mixed-method core of the study. They need to explain more clearly how the qualitative findings were generated, how many participants were interviewed, what themes emerged, and how these themes actually helped explain or deepen the quantitative results. Right now, the paper reports means and correlation clearly, but the qualitative evidence is mostly mentioned in general statements only, so the mixed-method case study design feels incomplete. Also, with only 30 respondents and self-reported ratings that are all very high, the discussion should be more careful in claiming effectiveness and impact.



Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
	Accept the manuscript for publication.
/	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

SECOND ROUND

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Editor</u>	<u>Reviewer 1</u>	<u>Reviewer 2</u>
Accept the manuscript for publication.	/	/	/
Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.			
Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.			