POLARIS GLOBAL JOURNAL OF SCHOLARLY RESEARCH AND TRENDS

Assessing presidential vulnerability in a partisan landscape: A mediation analysis of leadership among local universities and colleges in the Philippines

DOI: https://doi.org/10.58429/pgjsrt.v2n4a154

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ARTICLEINFO

ABSTRACT

This study examined the vulnerability of leadership within Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs), significantly influenced by political factors during local elections. Utilizing a Generalized Linear Model (GLM) mediation analysis, the research investigated the intricate interplay among leadership characteristics, political beliefs, and the vulnerability of the LUCs presidency. The study revealed no significant influence of leadership characteristics and political beliefs on perceived vulnerability (Indirect Effect: $\beta = 0.00503$, $p = 0.846$; Leadership Characteristics ⇒ Political Beliefs: $\beta = -0.18697$, $p = 0.257$; Political Beliefs ⇒ Presidential Vulnerability: $\beta = -0.02689$, $p = 0.788$; Direct Effect: $\beta = -0.13358$, $p = 0.367$; Total Effect: $\beta = -0.12855$, $p = 0.367$). The findings suggest that leadership at LUCs exhibited vulnerability, particularly after the loss of an incumbent local official, irrespective of their leadership characteristics or political views. These results challenge prevailing assumptions and emphasize the necessity of using broader criteria for assessing leadership risk. The research holds significant implications for policy formulation and decision-making in higher education. Recommendations include implementing collaborative leadership development programs, promoting ethical leadership, maintaining non-partisanship, actively involving stakeholders, establishing succession planning, and utilizing effective conflict resolution processes. A comprehensive exploration of the legal framework governing the relationships between LUCs and local government entities is viewed as imperative for a deeper contextual understanding.

E-ISSN: 2961-3809

Keywords: Leadership characteristics, leadership stability, political beliefs, presidential vulnerability, partisan landscape

How to cite:
Asirit, L.B.L. & Hua, J.H. (2023). Assessing presidential vulnerability in a partisan landscape: A mediation analysis of leadership among local universities and colleges in the Philippines. *Polaris Global Journal of Scholarly Research and Trends*, 2(4), 1-42. https://doi.org/10.58429/pgjsrt.v2n4a154

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) across various Local Government Units (LGUs) in the Philippines (CMO. No. 09, 2018) signifies a significant milestone in the country's educational framework (Chao, 2012). This development was a direct outcome of the enactment of the Local Government Code of 1991, which granted LGUs greater authority and autonomy (Republic Act No. 7160, 1991). With this newfound authority, LGUs proactively took steps to address the pressing need for more accessible higher education options within their respective jurisdictions.

LUCs emerged as a response to the educational aspirations of socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals who, over generations, were unable to pursue higher education due to financial constraints. These institutions have become symbols of hope for those who previously thought higher education was beyond their reach. Through LUCs, students have the opportunity to pursue various educational paths, including short-term certification programs, two-year associate degrees, and four-year bachelor's degrees, often with minimal or no tuition fees. The significance of LUCs extends beyond mere educational access. They represent a shift in local governance dynamics, as LGUs assumed the responsibility of providing education tailored to the specific needs of their communities. Empowered by this autonomy, local leaders collaborated with their constituents to identify and prioritize educational requirements, leveraging local resources to address these challenges (MOED No. 137, s. 2023).

In the broader context of the educational landscape, this study primarily focuses on assessing the vulnerability of leadership positions within LUCs in a partisan environment. It explores how leadership traits and political beliefs impact leadership within LUCs and investigates potential challenges faced by LUC presidents in effectively fulfilling their roles (Pernia, 2017). The research dilemma centers on understanding the dynamics within LUCs and their interactions with local government units (LGUs). This examination seeks to shed light on the intricate interplay between leadership, political beliefs, and the stability of leadership positions within these educational institutions. The purpose of this study was to comprehensively investigate and analyze the factors influencing the vulnerability of leadership positions within local universities and colleges (LUCs) in the context of a partisan environment.

This study is anchored to the Transformational Leadership Theory by Burns (1978) and the Political Leadership Theory by Tucker (1995). The Transformational Leadership Theory can form the basis for understanding leadership characteristics. It emphasizes visionary leadership, effective communication, and adaptability as essential components of leadership. It is used to explain how leadership characteristics influence leadership outcomes (Burns, 1978). On the other hand, the Political Leadership Theory helps understand the role of political affiliation, loyalty, and engagement. The theories focus on the relationship between leaders and political contexts, which is relevant in a partisan landscape. Finally, the utilization of a mediation analysis framework explores how the mediating variable (political beliefs) influences the relationship between the independent variable (leadership characteristics) and the dependent variable (perceived presidential vulnerability). Figure 1 displays the conceptual framework of this study. In examining the dynamics within Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) leadership, this study focuses on three key components: Leadership Characteristics, Political Beliefs, and Perceived Presidential Vulnerability. Leadership Characteristics, identified as the independent variable, encompass visionary leadership, effective communication skills, the ability to make tough decisions, transparency in decision-making, and adaptability to changing circumstances. These attributes are conceptually tied to Transformational Leadership Theory. The mediating variable, Political Beliefs, encompasses factors such as political stance, loyalty, engagement, support, alignment, and the perceived political climate among LUCs leaders. These elements are conceptually linked to Political Leadership Theory. The dependent variable, Perceived Presidential Vulnerability, measures how LUCs leaders perceive their vulnerability during local elections in their presidential roles, serving as a central concept in this study. The conceptual framework highlights a mediation relationship, emphasizing how political affiliation mediates the impact of leadership characteristics on the perceived presidential vulnerability of LUCs leaders, providing a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between these crucial variables.

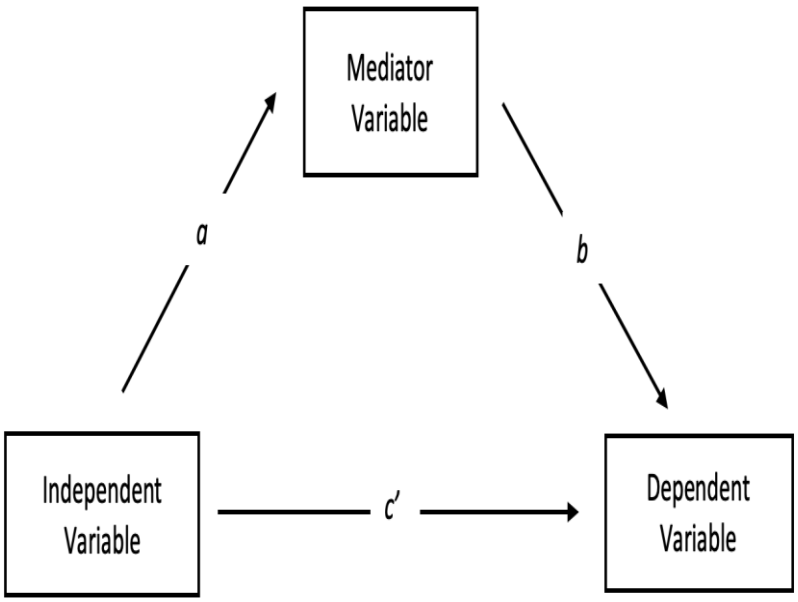


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Objectives

This research aimed to examine the intricate interplay between leadership characteristics and political beliefs within the realm of LUCs leadership. This also assessed the extent to which these factors mediate the vulnerability of LUCs presidents in their leadership roles. Moreover, the study also aimed to generate empirical insights that can inform strategic decision-making and policy formulation related to LUCs leadership stability and effectiveness. By pursuing these objectives, this study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by LUCs presidents or administrators, ultimately contributing to the development of strategies and policies that can enhance leadership resilience and performance in this unique educational landscape.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do LUCs leaders self-assess their leadership characteristics?
2. How do LUCs leaders rate their political beliefs?
3. How do LUCs leaders gauge their vulnerability in their leadership role during local elections?
4. What is the nature and strength of the correlation between leadership characteristics, political beliefs, and the perceived vulnerability of leaders in local universities and colleges during local elections?
5. What role do political beliefs play in influencing the perceived vulnerability of LUCs leaders during local elections, mediating the relationship between their leadership characteristics and their vulnerability?

METHODS

Design

This study made use of a quantitative research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The study employs structured surveys or questionnaires as the principal data collection method to evaluate

leadership characteristics, political beliefs, and the perceived presidential vulnerability of leaders within the Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) in the Philippines. Specifically, the study's analytical framework relies on a Generalized Linear Model (GLM) for mediation analysis (Lindsey, 2007). This approach facilitated the exploration of how political beliefs act as a mediating variable, shedding light on the intricate dynamics between leadership characteristics and the perceived vulnerability of LUCs leaders during local elections.

Respondents

The respondents in this study consisted of the LUCs presidents or administrators. These individuals have been selected as they play pivotal leadership roles within the LUCs and are directly affected by the political dynamics in their respective locale. The study employed a purposive sampling technique, carefully chosen to ensure representation across various LUCs (Nikolopoulou, 2023). This technique involves the deliberate selection of participants based on specific criteria that are relevant to the research objectives.

A total of 100 participants were included in this study. This sample size has been determined to provide sufficient data for robust statistical analysis while ensuring the feasibility of data collection and analysis (Lakens, 2022). In order to qualify for participation in this study, respondents are required to fulfill specific criteria ensuring the relevance and depth of their contributions. First and foremost, individuals must possess a minimum of three years of experience in their respective Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs), demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of their institutions' operations and dynamics. This criterion aims to include respondents with a substantial background that can enrich the study's insights. Additionally, participants should have encountered or been exposed to political tensions within the context of their roles, as this exposure is deemed essential for providing valuable perspectives on the study's focus on political affiliation and its impact. Lastly, respondents must hold plantilla positions within their LUCs, indicating that they occupy formal and significant roles in institutional leadership. This criterion ensures that the participants' positions are integral to the organizational structure, contributing to a more comprehensive and nuanced exploration of the study's themes.

Instrument

The primary data collection method for this study involved a structured survey questionnaire administered to the respondents via an online platform. This questionnaire, implemented with a 5-point Likert scale, served as the means to assess three crucial components of the research. Firstly, it captured data on the Independent Variable (IV), "Leadership Characteristics," by inquiring about respondents' self-assessments of their leadership attributes, including visionary leadership, communication skills, decision-making abilities, transparency, and adaptability. Secondly, the questionnaire gathered information on the Mediating Variable (MV), "Political Beliefs," encompassing political stance, loyalty, engagement, support, alignment, and perceived political climate among participants. Lastly, the Dependent Variable (DV), "Perceived Presidential Vulnerability," was explored through questions regarding how LUC leaders perceived their vulnerability during local elections.

This comprehensive survey instrument was designed to ensure validity and reliability in measuring these essential research components. To establish the validity of the research instrument, a comprehensive review of the questionnaire was conducted by a panel of subject matter experts. Their feedback and input were utilized to refine and improve the questionnaire, ensuring that it effectively measured the intended constructs. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. A target reliability threshold of 0.95 was set to ensure the internal consistency of the instrument. This coefficient measured the extent to which items in the questionnaire consistently measured the same underlying construct. A high alpha value indicated strong reliability, suggesting that the instrument produced consistent and dependable results.

Table 1. Parameter Limits for the 5-point Likert Scale of the Instrument

Weight	Mean Range	Adjective Rating	Interpretation
1	1.00-1.50	very low extent (VLE)	*Extremely limited extent of the assessed characteristic.*
2	1.51-2.50	low extent (LE)	*Indicate a limited extent of the assessed characteristic.*
3	2.51-3.50	moderately extent (ME)	*Suggest a reasonable extent of the assessed characteristic.*
4	3.51-4.50	great extent (GE)	*Indicate a substantial extent of the assessed characteristic.*
5	4.51-5.00	very great extent (VGE)	*Suggest an extremely significant extent of the assessed characteristic.*

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study involved a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to address the research questions (RQs) comprehensively. To measure the respondents' leadership characteristics, perceived presidential vulnerability, and political beliefs, descriptive statistics, such as mean scores and standard deviations, were calculated to provide an initial overview of respondents' self-assessments. In addressing the fourth research question, Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed. Finally, a Generalized Linear Model (GLM) mediation analysis was run to facilitate a detailed exploration of the multifaceted interactions of the variables. To further enhance the robustness of the findings, the study utilized the powerful bootstrapping method through Jamovi software. This combination of GLM mediation analysis and bootstrapping in Jamovi allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics at play in this research (The jamovi project, 2022; R Core Team, 2021; Gallucci, 2020; Soetaert, 2019; and Rosseel, 2019).

Data Collection

The data collection procedure for this study involved the administration of the survey through an online platform. Initially, potential respondents, who were local university and college (LUC) presidents and administrators meeting the inclusion criteria, were identified. Contact information was obtained, and invitations to participate in the survey were sent electronically, along with a brief explanation of the research's purpose and importance. Upon accessing the online platform, respondents were provided with informed consent information, ensuring their voluntary participation. Once consent was given, they proceeded to complete the structured survey questionnaire, which included items related to leadership characteristics, political beliefs, and perceived presidential vulnerability. The questionnaire utilized a 5-point Likert scale for responses, allowing participants to express their views effectively. To maintain data accuracy and reliability, respondents were encouraged to answer all items thoroughly and honestly. Data collection occurred over a designated time frame, and reminders were sent to non-responders to enhance participation rates. After the data collection period concluded, the responses were securely gathered and stored for subsequent analysis. Ethical considerations, including confidentiality and data protection, were rigorously upheld throughout the data collection process.

Ethical Consideration

This research strictly followed ethical guidelines ensuring the well-being and rights of participants while upholding the validity and reliability of findings. The study prioritized voluntary participation, granting participants the freedom to join and withdraw at any point, a process communicated in the informed consent form. Rigorous anonymity measures, including a secure digital ID system, were implemented to protect participant identities. Confidentiality was maintained through secure data storage and third-party management, and a thorough ethical review, identified and mitigated potential harms (Asirit et. al., 2022). These considerations underscored the commitment to

responsible and ethical research conduct, respecting participants' rights and well-being while upholding research integrity.

RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Self-Assessment of Leadership Characteristics by LUCs Leaders. Leadership within the context of local universities and colleges (LUCs) plays a pivotal role in shaping educational institutions' dynamics and effectiveness (Zabala, 2021). This study explored how these LUCs leaders self-assess their leadership characteristics, shedding light on the practices and preferences that influence their decision-making processes. This investigation offers valuable insights into the leadership landscape of educational institutions and paves the way for a deeper understanding of leadership dynamics, which is highly relevant to the current research on presidential vulnerability and leadership characteristics in local universities and colleges. Table 2 presents the self-assessment of leadership characteristics by Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) leaders in relation to Visionary Leadership.

Effective Communication of Long-Term Vision: LUCs leaders, on average, perceive that they possess a substantial ability (M=3.84) to effectively communicate a long-term vision for their institution. This suggests that leaders generally believe they have a strong capacity in this aspect of visionary leadership (Liu et al., 2022). The standard deviation of 0.65 indicates some variability in leaders' self-assessments for this item. While the mean score is relatively high, the SD suggests that there is a range of responses, with some leaders rating themselves higher in this ability than others.

Inspiring a Sense of Purpose: On average, leaders at LUC demonstrate a notable degree of self-assurance (M= 3.84) in their capacity to motivate and guide their institution towards a clear sense of purpose and direction. This suggests that leaders often possess a favorable opinion about their capacity to inspire and guide others with a sense of direction (Bourke & Titus, 2021). The observed standard deviation of 0.47 suggests that there is a limited amount of variation in the replies provided by leaders about this particular issue. Put simply, leaders widely agree on their strong belief in their ability to motivate people by instilling a feeling of purpose.

Consistent and Clear Communication: On average, leaders at LUCs hold the belief that they effectively convey a coherent and motivating vision for the future, as shown by M= 4.15. This implies that leaders possess the perception that they are proficient in effectively conveying their vision via communication (Liu et al., 2022). There is a considerable amount of diversity in leaders' self-assessments for this question, with a standard deviation of 0.67. Although the majority of leaders tend to evaluate themselves in a good light, there are some discrepancies in their perception of the effectiveness of their communication in conveying a clear and motivating vision (Rousseau & Have, 2022).

Table 2. Self-Assessment of Leadership Characteristics by LUCs Leaders as to Visionary Leadership

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. To what extent do you believe you possess the ability to effectively communicate a long-term vision for your institution?	3.84	0.647	GE
2. How confident are you in your ability to inspire a sense of purpose and direction within your institution?	3.84	0.465	GE
3. To what degree do you think you consistently communicate a clear and inspiring vision for the future?	4.15	0.672	GE

4. How well do you believe your vision aligns with the aspirations of the college/university community?	4.72	0.494	VGE
5. To what extent do you perceive that you provide an innovative and forward-thinking vision?	3.86	0.829	GE
6. How capable do you think you are at encouraging and supporting initiatives that contribute to the institution's long-term vision?	3.87	0.677	GE
7. How well do you believe you communicate how individual contributions fit into the broader vision?	4.34	0.497	GE
8. To what degree do you think your vision has a positive impact on the institution's growth and development?	4.38	0.678	GE
Visionary Leadership (AWM)	4.13	0.215	GE

Alignment with Community Aspirations: In general, leaders of LUCs have a very favorable perspective (M= 4.72) about the extent to which their vision coincides with the objectives of the college/university community. This finding suggests that leaders possess a perception of significant congruence between their vision and the ambitions of the community (Canavesi & Minelli, 2021). The very small standard deviation of 0.49 indicates a strong consensus among leaders on the congruence of their vision with the desires of the society. The answers to this question exhibit a restricted range of variability.

Innovative Vision: Leaders at LUCs believe they have a significant amount of innovation and forward-thinking (M=3.86) in their organizations. This suggests that executives hold the belief that they integrate innovation and forward-thinking elements into their vision (Kwangmuang et al., 2021). There is a lot of variation in leaders' self-assessments on this issue, with a standard deviation of 0.83. Although the average score is favorable, the standard deviation indicates greater variability in replies, indicating that some leaders rate themselves better in terms of innovation and forward-thinking compared to others.

Support for Initiatives: A mean score of 3.87 indicates that leaders at LUCs believe they are competent of promoting and assisting efforts that advance the institution's long-term goals. This implies that leaders have the belief that they actively contribute to the promotion of projects that are by their vision (Cherry, 2023). Leaders' self-assessments on this question have a rather high standard deviation of 0.68. While the majority of leaders tend to evaluate themselves favorably, there are discrepancies in their perceptions of their competence in this domain.

Communication of Individual Contributions: LUCs leaders say they do a good job (M=4.34) of explaining how individual efforts fit into the bigger picture. This implies that leaders see themselves as proficient in establishing connections between particular endeavors and the overarching institutional objective (Bourke & Titus, 2021). The observed standard deviation of 0.50 suggests a notable consensus among leaders about their efficacy in this particular facet of communication. The replies exhibit a restricted range of variability, suggesting a high degree of unanimity.

Positive Impact on Growth: Leaders at LUCs think, on average (M= 4.38), that their vision significantly contributes to the institution's expansion and development. This suggests that leaders view their vision to have a significant impact on the development of institutions (Cherry, 2023).

There is some significant variation in their assessments of leaders for this question, with a standard deviation of 0.68. Although the majority of leaders tend to evaluate themselves favorably, there are discrepancies in their perceptions of the influence of their vision on the progress and advancement of their organization.

The overall perspective on LUC leaders' assessment of their visionary leadership qualities is obtained by calculating the average weighted mean, which takes into account all the relevant elements. The AWM=4.13 suggests that leaders at LUCs often exhibit a significant degree of confidence in their visionary leadership qualities. This suggests that these leaders hold the belief that they exhibit proficient abilities in effectively expressing and executing a distinct and motivating vision for their organizations (Kwangmuang et al., 2021). The presence of a low standard deviation of 0.22 indicates a high level of agreement among leaders with their visionary leadership capabilities. Leaders often reach a consensus on their abilities in this particular facet of leadership. The limited range of replies indicates that the leaders in question tend to possess a mostly favorable perception of their abilities in visionary leadership. As found in Taylor, Cornelius, and Colvin's (2014) study, LUCs leaders exhibit a high level of agreement regarding their visionary leadership abilities, as indicated by the low standard deviation. This signifies a significant consensus among leaders in their self-assessments, aligning with the study's findings. Table 3 exhibits the self-assessment of communication skills among leaders of Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs).

Table 3. Self-Assessment of Leadership Characteristics by LUCs Leaders as to Communication Skills

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. How well do you believe you possess effective communication skills when interacting with various stakeholder groups within the institution?	4.73	0.468	VGE
2. How confident are you in your ability to listen actively and attentively to the concerns and feedback of others?	4.57	0.555	VGE
3. To what extent do you think you effectively convey complex information in a clear and understandable manner?	4.38	0.678	GE
4. How well do you believe you encourage open and transparent communication within the institution?	4.51	0.502	VGE
5. How promptly do you respond to inquiries and requests for information?	4.64	0.704	VGE
6. How effectively do you think you foster a culture of effective communication among staff, faculty, and students?	4.79	0.409	VGE
Communication Skills (AWM)	4.60	0.223	VGE

Effective Communication with Stakeholders: When communicating with different stakeholder groups inside the organization, LUCs leaders often feel they have extremely effective communication skills (M= 4.73). This observation suggests a high level of self-assessed proficiency in the domain of proficient communication. The data indicates a low standard deviation of 0.468, which implies that there is a very limited variation in the replies. This suggests that there is a high level of consensus among leaders on their communication abilities within this particular setting.

Active Listening and Feedback: The typical LUCs leader gives M= 4.57, indicating that they have a high degree of trust in their capacity to listen actively and carefully to the problems and criticisms of others. This statement suggests that the individual has a self-assessed proficiency in the skill of active listening. The modest standard deviation of 0.555 for self-assessments for this item reveals some diversity in leaders' levels of confidence.

Conveying Complex Information: On average, leaders at LUCs hold the belief that they are effective at successfully communicating complicated information in a way that is both clear and intelligible to a considerable degree, as shown by M=4.38. This implies a high level of self-assurance in their capacity to articulate complex ideas with efficacy (Duchek, 2019). There is a noticeable variation in leaders' self-assessments on this issue, with a standard deviation of 0.678 being quite high. Certain leaders may possess a higher level of confidence in this particular area compared to their counterparts.

Encouraging Open Communication: The majority of LUCs leaders (M= 4.51) think that they do a good job of promoting open and honest communication inside the organization. This statement suggests a firm commitment to cultivating an environment characterized by transparency and inclusivity. There is a reasonably narrow range of answers with a low standard deviation of 0.502, which points to a high level of agreement among leaders about their role in fostering open communication.

Timely Responses: Leaders at LUCs believe they react to inquiries and requests for information quickly on the whole (M= 4.64). This demonstrates a dedication to prompt and effective communication. There is some variety in their own assessments for this question, with a modest standard deviation of 0.704, which may indicate changes in leaders' perceived responsiveness.

Fostering a Culture of Communication: A culture of good communication among staff, teachers, and students is something LUCs leaders, on the whole, think they successfully nurture (M= 4.79). This indicates a significant dedication to fostering an atmosphere that encourages effective communication. The data reveals a low standard deviation of 0.409, suggesting a limited variation in replies. This indicates a strong agreement among leaders on their success in promoting a culture of communication.

The average weighted Mean for communication skills, as determined by calculating the mean scores across all items shown in Table 3, is AWM=4.60. The assessed level of effective communication skills among university presidents and leaders implies that they rate themselves as possessing highly effective communication skills across various dimensions of communication. This assessment encompasses their interactions with diverse stakeholder groups, active listening abilities, clear conveyance of complex information, encouragement of open communication, prompt responsiveness to inquiries, and the cultivation of a culture of effective communication among staff, faculty, and students. The need for good communication skills for LUCs leaders is shown by the high AWM. The acquisition of these abilities is of utmost importance in effectively tackling significant obstacles in the realm of leadership within higher education. These problems include a wide range of areas such as fundraising, crisis management, government relations, and several others (McNaughtan & McNaughtan, 2019; Hodson, 2010; Gagliardi et al., 2017). Table 4 presents the self-assessment data about the ability of leaders from Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) to make tough decisions.

Ability to Make Difficult Decisions: Leaders at LUCs often feel they can make tough choices when required with great effectiveness (M= 4.56). This observation suggests a high level of self-assessed proficiency in decision-making in challenging circumstances. The presence of a moderate standard deviation of 0.743 indicates that there is a degree of variety in the self-assessments for this issue. This suggests that there are variances in the degrees of confidence among leaders.

Table 4. Self-Assessment of Leadership Characteristics by LUCs Leaders as to Ability to Make Tough Decisions

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. To what extent do you believe you possess the ability to make difficult decisions when necessary?	4.56	0.743	VGE
2. How confident are you in your ability to balance competing interests when making tough decisions?	4.55	0.520	VGE
3. To what degree do you think you show confidence in making decisions that may be unpopular but necessary for the institution's well-being?	4.41	0.740	GE
4. How well do you believe you consider the long-term impact of decisions on the institution?	4.48	0.674	GE
5. To what extent do you perceive that you are effective at resolving conflicts and addressing challenges?	4.67	0.473	VGE
6. How capable do you think you are at maintaining fairness and transparency in your decision-making process?	4.54	0.593	VGE
7. To what degree do you think you hold yourself accountable for the outcomes of tough decisions?	4.58	0.496	VGE
8. How much impact do you believe your decision-making skills have on the institution's stability and growth?	4.44	0.671	GE
Ability to Make Tough Decisions (AWM)	4.53	0.217	VGE

Balancing Competing Interests: On average, leaders at LUCs demonstrate a notable degree of self-assurance in their capacity to effectively manage conflicting interests when confronted with challenging choices, as shown by M=4.55. This implies a sense of self-assurance in one's ability to attain equilibrium (Duchek, 2019). The presence of a considerable standard deviation of 0.520 suggests that there is a notable degree of diversity in self-assessments for this particular item. This variability implies that there are differences in the confidence levels of leaders.

Confidence in Unpopular Decisions: To a large degree, LUCs leaders think they demonstrate confidence in making choices that may not be popular but are crucial to the institution's success (M= 4.41). There is significant variability in self-assessments for this question, with a somewhat high standard deviation of 0.740, pointing to disparities in leaders' levels of confidence.

Long-Term Impact Consideration: Leaders at LUCs often feel they give careful thought to how actions will affect the institution down the road (M= 4.48). This item's self-assessments have a modest standard deviation of 0.674, which indicates some diversity in leaders' levels of confidence.

Resolving Conflicts and Addressing Challenges: LUCs leaders believe they are quite competent at settling disputes and handling problems, on average (M= 4.67). This finding indicates a high level of self-perceived proficiency in the area of conflict resolution. There is little variation in self-assessments for this issue, with a standard deviation of 0.473 showing agreement among leaders evaluating their efficacy.

Maintaining Fairness and Transparency: The majority of LUCs leaders (M= 4.54) feel they are very competent in upholding justice and openness in their decision-making process. There is diversity in self-assessments for this matter, with a moderate standard deviation of 0.593, pointing to disparities in leaders' levels of confidence.

Accountability for Outcomes: A mean score of 4.58 indicates that, on average, LUCs leaders feel they hold themselves highly responsible for the results of difficult choices. There is little variation in self-assessments on this item, with a standard deviation of 0.496, showing that leaders agree on their accountability.

Impact on Institutional Stability and Growth: LUCs leaders appear, on average (mean score of 4.44), that their decision-making abilities have a significant influence on the institution's stability and progress. There is diversity in self-assessments for this topic, with a modest standard deviation of 0.671, pointing to disparities in leaders' levels of confidence.

There is a very high extent of self-perceived competence among LUCs leaders in this leadership component, as shown by AWM=4.53 across all items about the capacity to make difficult decisions. This implies that, on average, these leaders see themselves as possessing a high level of expertise and self-assurance in their ability to make tough decisions. LUCs leaders, as per their self-assessment, possess a high degree of confidence in their ability to make tough decisions. This confidence is essential for effective leadership in complex and dynamic higher education environments. In light of the issues outlined by Mrig and Sanaghan (2015) in their paper, which include financial constraints, altering political demography, and evolving expectations, leaders need to possess a strong sense of confidence in their decision-making abilities. To successfully traverse these problems, individuals must possess the readiness to make audacious judgments. As a whole, the research by Mrig and Sanaghan (2015) demonstrates that leaders in higher education institutions like the LUCs possess a strong sense of self-perceived competence when it comes to making difficult choices. This indicates that they are well-equipped to tackle the many issues and intricacies discussed in the study. However, this sense of self-assurance must be accompanied by proficient communication and a transparent leadership strategy to guarantee sustained success in the long run. Table 5 presents the self-assessment data of leadership characteristics related to transparency in decision-making among leaders in LUCs.

Transparency About Major Decisions: On average, leaders at LUCs consider themselves as exhibiting a high level of transparency about the rationales underlying significant choices, with a M= 4.55. This statement suggests a notable level of self-perceived dedication to maintaining openness in the process of making decisions. The presence of a moderate standard deviation of 0.557 indicates that there is a certain degree of diversity in the self-assessments for this particular issue. This suggests that there are differences in how leaders see their transparency. Moreover, they also believe they are generally open about the factors behind big choices (M= 4.31). This statement implies that there is a recognition of a personal dedication to openness, yet there is still potential for improvement. Self-reports on this item vary, with a modest standard deviation of 0.662, showing that leaders see transparency at varying degrees.

Involvement of Relevant Stakeholders: The majority of LUCs leaders (M=4.61) say they meaningfully consult important stakeholders in decision-making. This statement suggests a firm dedication to the implementation of inclusive decision-making procedures. With a standard deviation of 0.709, this item's self-assessments show a very high level of variability. There may be variations in the level of inclusivity shown by different leaders in their decision-making processes.

Communication of Decision Consequences: In general, LUCs leaders believe that they are quite successful at informing the institution about the possible outcomes of choices (M=4.76). This implies a self-assessed proficiency in effectively communicating the consequences of decisions. The data reveals a low standard deviation of 0.515, suggesting a limited dispersion of answers. This

indicates a strong level of agreement among leaders considering their performance in this particular item.

Openness to Criticism: Leaders at LUCs think, on average (M=4.68), that they are very receptive to criticism and ready to resolve issues with choices. This observation suggests a significant dedication to transparency and receptiveness. A high degree of agreement among leaders about how they respond to criticism and concerns is shown by the low standard deviation of 0.469 and the very limited range of replies.

Table 5. Self-Assessment of Leadership Characteristics by LUCs Leaders as to Transparency in Decision-Making

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. How transparent do you think you are about the reasons behind major decisions?	4.55	0.557	VGE
2. How transparent do you think you are about the reasons behind major decisions?	4.31	0.662	GE
3. To what degree do you think you involve relevant stakeholders in decision-making when appropriate?	4.61	0.709	VGE
4. How effectively do you believe you communicate the potential consequences of decisions to the institution?	4.76	0.515	VGE
5. How open do you think you are to criticism and willingness to address concerns about decisions?	4.68	0.469	VGE
6. To what degree do you believe your transparency fosters trust among staff, faculty, and students?	4.41	0.712	GE
7. How consistent and accountable do you think your decision-making process is?	4.47	0.611	GE
Transparency in Decision Making (AWM)	4.54	0.222	VGE

Trust Building: Leaders at LUCs think that openness significantly increases staff, teacher, and student confidence (M=4.41). This statement suggests that individuals believe transparency has a favorable influence on trust. There is significant variation in self-assessments for this question, with a standard deviation that is quite high at 0.712. Certain leaders may see a more pronounced impact on trust-building compared to their counterparts.

Consistency and Accountability: The majority of LUCs leaders (M=4.47) think their decision-making is relatively accountable and consistent. This statement implies an individual's own recognition of their dedication to enhancing uniformity and responsibility. Self-assessments for this matter had a modest standard deviation of 0.611, which indicates some variation in how leaders perceive consistency and accountability. The self-assessment results in Table 5 demonstrate that leaders in LUCs perceive themselves as highly transparent in their decision-making processes. This perception has several noteworthy implications for the field of higher education leadership. Firstly, these findings align with the principles of transparency discussed in Coates's work, "Leading Transparency to Enhance Higher Education" (2017). It emphasizes the importance of transparency in understanding and leading future higher education, which resonates with the self-assessed

transparency levels of LUCs leaders. Their commitment to involving stakeholders, communicating consequences, and fostering trust mirrors the principles highlighted by Coates. However, it's important to note that while leaders perceive themselves as transparent, they may encounter challenges in fully realizing transparency's potential within the higher education landscape, as suggested by Coates (2017). The alignment of transparency with existing political structures or dynamics may not always be straightforward. Nevertheless, the self-assessed transparency levels indicate a positive commitment to transparency principles, which can contribute to the ongoing growth and success of higher education institutions. The data in Table 6 provides a comprehensive overview of the self-assessment results of the leadership qualities associated with the flexibility of leaders in local universities and colleges (LUCs) when faced with changing circumstances.

Table 6. Self-Assessment of Leadership Characteristics by LUCs Leaders as to Adaptability to Changing Circumstances

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. How effectively do you believe you adapt to unexpected challenges and disruptions?	4.49	0.522	GE
2. How quickly do you think you respond to changing circumstances that affect the institution?	4.20	0.921	GE
3. How well do you perceive your adjustment of strategies and plans in response to new information?	4.19	0.720	GE
4. How proactive do you think you are in identifying and addressing emerging issues?	4.43	0.685	GE
5. How steady and effective do you believe your leadership remains during times of change?	3.62	0.736	GE
6. To what degree do you think your approach to change inspires confidence among the college/university community?	4.30	0.835	GE
Ability to Changing Circumstances (AWM)	4.21	0.284	GE

Adaptation to Unexpected Challenges and Disruptions: On average, leaders believe they are reasonably effective in adapting to unexpected challenges and disruptions, with M= 4.49; SD = 0.522, classified as a Great Extent (GE). This suggests a positive perception of their ability to handle unforeseen obstacles. However, there is some variability in their responses, with some leaders rating themselves higher or lower in adaptability than the mean score.

Response to Changing Circumstances: Leaders have an impression of being very responsive to dynamic situations that impact their organizations, as shown by M=4.20; SD = 0.921, which is classified as a Great Extent (GE). This signifies their preparedness to tackle dynamic circumstances. Certain leaders tend to rate themselves with a notable deviation from the average, hence leading to an increased dispersion of evaluations.

Adjustment of Strategies and Plans: Leaders see their capacity to adapt strategies and plans in light of new knowledge in a favorable manner, as shown by M= 4.19; SD = 0.720, which falls under the classification of "Great Extent" (GE). This observation underscores their propensity for adaptability in response to fresh facts. Some leaders regard themselves as possessing a high level of adaptability, while others evaluate themselves as having a lesser degree of adaptability.

Proactivity in Identifying Emerging Issues: Leaders find themselves being proactive in the identification and resolution of developing challenges, as shown by M=4.43 ; SD = 0.685), showing a high level of proactivity. This demonstrates their attentiveness in recognizing possible obstacles. Several leaders perceive themselves as very proactive, while others might see themselves as less proactive.

Leadership Stability During Change: Although leaders generally have a good self-perception of their leadership abilities, they tend to evaluate themselves somewhat worse in terms of stability and effectiveness when leading during periods of transition. The mean score for this evaluation is M=3.62, with a standard deviation of 0.736. This rating falls under the category of "Great Extent" (GE). Several leaders experience a high level of stability in their leadership roles, while others may perceive a lower degree of stability in their leadership positions.

Inspiring Confidence in the College/University Community: Leadership is seen by the college/university community as instilling a high level of confidence in their change strategies, as shown by a mean score of 4.30 (SD = 0.835), which is categorized as a Great Extent (GE). This highlights their ability to foster trust. A few leaders may have the belief that they possess a high level of effectiveness in this particular aspect, while others may evaluate themselves more modestly (Liu et al., 2022). According to the data shown, the average weighted mean of adaptation to changing circumstances among LUCs leaders within the higher education sector is M=4.21, with a standard deviation of 0.284. This suggests that these leaders regard themselves as moderately adaptable to changing circumstances. The concept of adaptability refers to the capacity of individuals to effectively face unforeseen problems and disruptions, modify strategies and plans based on new knowledge, proactively recognize and tackle developing concerns, and instil a sense of assurance within the college or university community throughout periods of transformation. In agreement with the findings of this study, Niemeyer-Rens (2022) emphasizes the significance of adaptability in higher education leadership. The leaders featured in this study recognize the importance of adaptation and adaptiveness in response to changing conditions. The aforementioned attributes are crucial for achieving sustainability and establishing a competitive advantage within the realm of higher education. It becomes apparent that the perceived ability is essential for effectively confronting the obstacles presented by a dynamic environment. This adaptability is instrumental in cultivating resilience and sustainability within LUCs. Table 7 provides a detailed overview of the self-assessment conducted by leaders of LUCs about their leadership characteristics.

Table 7. Self-Assessment of Leadership Characteristics by LUCs Leaders

Indicators	Mean	SD	AR
1. Visionary Leadership	4.13	0.215	GE
2. Communication Skills	4.60	0.223	VGE
3. Ability to Make Tough Decisions	4.53	0.218	VGE
4. Transparency in Decision-Making	4.54	0.222	VGE
5. Adaptability to Changing Circumstances	4.21	0.284	GE
Average Weighted Mean	4.40	0.093	GE

The results reveal that leaders of Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) rate their visionary leadership abilities as highly proficient. This finding suggests that, on average, these leaders possess a strong self-perceived capability to establish and communicate compelling visions for their respective organizations. They see themselves as capable of providing guidance and motivating others in the pursuit of a collective vision for the future (Steinmann et al., 2018). Furthermore, LUCs leaders exhibit even higher confidence in their communication skills. This implies that, on average, these

leaders have a robust perception of their proficiency in various communication facets, including engaging with stakeholders, attentive listening, articulating complex information, promoting transparent communication, providing timely responses, and fostering an environment conducive to effective communication. The capacity to make difficult judgments is also highly rated by leaders in LUCs, suggesting that, on average, they possess considerable self-confidence in making difficult and sometimes unpopular choices when required. Effective leadership in complex higher education contexts necessitates the integration of this element as a fundamental component (Sonmez Cakir & Adiguzel, 2020). Additionally, leaders of LUCs regard themselves as strong in the aspect of transparency in decision-making. They assert their proficiency in practicing transparency by elucidating the rationales behind significant actions, engaging pertinent stakeholders, conveying possible repercussions, embracing constructive feedback, upholding responsibility, and cultivating trust. Possession of these attributes is deemed necessary for the practice of ethical and responsible leadership. In terms of adapting to new situations, the typical LUCs leader gives themselves a somewhat lower rating, although still classified as a "Great Extent." This score indicates that individuals regard themselves as somewhat flexible in dynamic higher education situations, adapting to unforeseen obstacles, modifying approaches, taking initiative in resolving emerging concerns, and instilling a sense of assurance during periods of transition. Collectively, leaders in LUCs perceive themselves as highly competent in various leadership traits, such as visionary leadership, communication abilities, the capacity for difficult judgments, openness in decision-making, and flexibility in response to changing conditions. This positive self-evaluation has significant implications for their ability to navigate the intricate landscape of higher education institutions, aligning with the expectations outlined in the study conducted by Mrig and Sanaghan (2015) and underscoring the importance of adaptive leadership. In essence, the greater self-perceived proficiency of leaders in LUCs across many leadership domains not only signifies their assurance but also indicates their readiness to tackle the intricate and dynamic obstacles encountered in the realm of higher education. The presence of confident leadership holds promise for enhancing institutional performance, fostering interaction among stakeholders, and bolstering the overall adaptability of local universities and colleges within a dynamic and evolving environment. Table 8 presents the self-assessment data of LUCs leaders regarding their political beliefs and stances.

Political Beliefs Among LUCs Leaders. The political landscape at the local level often plays a crucial role in shaping the dynamics of higher education institutions. In a study by Pernia (2017), which examines the establishment of the Sibonga Community College by the local government of Sibonga in the Philippines, the intricate interplay between politics and higher education was explored. The investigation provides valuable insights into how local government initiatives can impact the creation and governance of higher education institutions. In this section, the study delves into the political dimensions of education at the local level, drawing from Pernia's study to illuminate the nuanced relationship between politics and higher education.

Strong Support for the Current Political Leadership: The political party or candidate that is presently in power or is ahead in municipal elections is supported strongly by LUCs leaders on average (M=4.76). This suggests a significant level of support for the present political leadership. The data indicates a small range of answers, as seen by the low standard deviation of 0.452. This suggests a high degree of unanimity among leaders in their support for the present political leadership.

High Commitment to Political Stance: Despite public opinion or other forces, LUCs leaders, on average, have a strong degree of devotion to their political stances (M=4.52).This also signifies a high level of dedication. The response has a considerable standard deviation of 0.541, suggesting that there exists a certain degree of variability in self-assessments. This fluctuation indicates that leaders' commitment levels may vary.

Moderate Promotion of Political Stance: Leaders of LUCs report, on average, actively promoting their political viewpoint via a variety of channels at a moderate level (M=3.78). This implies a broad scope of active promotion. The item in concern exhibits a significant degree of variability in self-assessments, as shown by its unusually high standard deviation of 0.799. Certain

leaders may exhibit a higher degree of active promotion of their political viewpoint compared to their counterparts.

Strong Identification with Political Values: The average level of identification with the ideals and tenets of their political position reported by LUCs leaders is fairly high (M=4.27). This suggests a broad scope of identification. The item in question exhibits a notable degree of variability in self-assessments, as shown by its unusually high standard deviation of 1.090. Certain leaders may exhibit a greater degree of affiliation with their political viewpoint compared to others.

Table 8. Self-Assessment of Political Beliefs Among LUCs Leaders as to Political Stance

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. To what extent do you strongly support the political group or candidate currently in power or leading in your local elections?	4.76	0.452	VGE
2. How committed are you to your political stance, regardless of public opinion or external influences?	4.52	0.541	VGE
3. How often do you actively promote your political stance through conversations, social media, or other means?	3.78	0.799	GE
4. How strongly do you identify with the values and principles of your chosen political stance?	4.27	1.090	GE
5. How likely are you to vote for a candidate solely based on their alignment with your political stance?	4.69	0.662	VGE
6. How influential is your political stance in shaping your views on local policy decisions?	4.10	0.482	GE
Political Stance (AWM)	4.35	0.287	GE

Preference for Aligned Candidates: The average chance that LUCs leaders will support a candidate purely based on that candidate's political viewpoint is high (M=4.69). This suggests a high level of importance placed on political alignment while making voting choices. The presence of a considerable standard deviation of 0.662 indicates that there is a certain degree of diversity in the self-assessments related to this particular issue. This suggests that there are differences in the voting preferences across leaders.

Moderate Influence on Policy Views: Generally speaking, LUCs leaders believe their political perspective has a modest impact on how they evaluate local policy choices (M=4.10). The data shows that there is a small standard deviation of 0.482, suggesting that there is a limited variation in replies. This indicates a greater degree of agreement among leaders on the impact of their political beliefs on their policy perspectives. LUCs leaders often exhibit a high commitment to their political values and alignment with the present political leadership, according to the average of all the factors (M=4.35) linked to political beliefs and attitudes. The data reveals a limited range of replies, as shown by the comparatively low standard deviation of 0.287. This suggests a high degree of unanimity among leaders in terms of their political viewpoints. The strong commitment of LUCs leaders to their political values underscores the entwinement of politics and education at the local level (Pernia, 2017). As evident from the experience of SCC, the establishment and functioning of higher education institutions are susceptible to local political dynamics. This suggests that political considerations, alliances, and support for certain political leaders can significantly influence

decision-making processes related to local higher education. In summary, the strong dedication shown by leaders of Local University Colleges (LUCs) towards their political principles and their alignment with the local political leadership underscores the complex interplay between politics and higher education at the local level (Pernia, 2017). This statement underscores the need for educational initiatives that prioritize transparency and democratic principles, while also effectively addressing the educational requirements of communities and effectively negotiating the intricate dynamics of local politics. The longevity and efficacy of such efforts are contingent upon their capacity to respond to input, uphold educational standards, and provide equitable access to higher education opportunities. Table 9 presents self-assessment data of political beliefs and loyalty among leaders in local universities and colleges (LUCs).

Table 9. Self-Assessment of Political Beliefs Among LUCs Leaders as to Loyalty to Political Stance

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. How committed are you to maintaining your chosen political stance even when faced with opposition or criticism?	4.24	1.046	GE
2. How often do you openly express your loyalty to your political stance within your college/university community?	4.33	0.604	GE
3. How willing are you to actively support candidates or groups that align with your political stance, both publicly and privately?	3.82	1.114	GE
4. How resistant are you to changing your political stance, even when presented with new information or perspectives?	2.54	1.527	ME
5. How strongly do you believe your loyalty to your political stance reflects your core values and principles?	4.61	0.737	VGE
6. How influential is your loyalty to your political stance in your decision-making processes related to college/university matters?	4.26	0.872	GE
Loyalty to Political Stance (AWM)	3.97	0.410	GE

Commitment Despite Opposition or Criticism: The empirical findings indicate that the M= 4.24, with a standard deviation of 1.046, provides evidence that leaders of LUCs exhibit a substantial level of dedication to their political ideology, on average. However, it is important to note that there exists a discernible amount of heterogeneity in the extent of their commitment across individuals within this group. In the realm of leadership, it is not uncommon to observe a spectrum of commitment levels among individuals occupying such positions of authority. Indeed, certain leaders may exhibit an elevated degree of dedication and unwavering resolve, while others may demonstrate a comparatively diminished steadfastness when confronted with opposition or criticism (Steinmann et al., 2018).

Open Expression of Loyalty: Inside the college/university community, leaders exhibit a notable inclination towards openly expressing a robust loyalty to their political stance, as evidenced by M= 4.33 with a standard deviation of 0.604. The observation of a relatively low standard deviation

in the data suggests that there exists a reduced level of variability in individuals' propensity to openly manifest their loyalty.

Support for Aligned Candidates or Groups: The findings of this study indicate that M= 3.82, with a standard deviation of 1.114, provides evidence that leaders exhibit a certain level of inclination to endorse candidates or groups that align with their objectives. However, it is noteworthy that there exists a considerable amount of variability among leaders in terms of their willingness to extend such support. In the field of political leadership, it is not uncommon for individuals to exhibit varying degrees of enthusiasm or restraint when it comes to endorsing particular candidates or groups (Jiménez et al., 2021). While some leaders may wholeheartedly and actively rally behind such entities, others may adopt a more measured and cautious approach to expressing their support.

Resistance to Change: The empirical findings suggest that the M= 2.54, with a standard deviation of 1.527, provides evidence that leaders, as a collective, tend to demonstrate a notable level of resistance when confronted with the need to modify their political stance in light of novel information or alternative perspectives. The presence of a high standard deviation in the data serves to underscore the notable variability observed in the degree to which leaders exhibit resistance toward change. In the field of human cognition and belief systems, it is not uncommon to encounter individuals who exhibit varying degrees of resistance or openness when confronted with new ideas or perspectives (Ecker et al., 2022). This spectrum of receptiveness to reconsideration can be observed in diverse contexts, ranging from intellectual debates to personal convictions. While certain individuals may display a steadfast and unwavering resistance to alternative viewpoints, others may exhibit a greater propensity for embracing novel concepts and reevaluating their existing beliefs (Jiménez et al., 2021).

Alignment with Core Values: The findings of this study indicate that leaders, on average, possess M= 4.61, with a standard deviation of 0.737. These results suggest that leaders, as a group, hold a strong conviction that their loyalty to their political stance is closely aligned with their fundamental core values and principles. The observation of a relatively low standard deviation in the aforementioned data implies a notable degree of consistency in the perception held by the leaders under scrutiny, as evidenced by the reduced variability in their respective beliefs.

Influence on Decision-Making: The average score of 4.26 (SD = 0.872) reveals that leaders believe their political allegiance to have a considerable impact on their decision-making processes about college and university issues. The empirical analysis of the data reveals that the measure of dispersion known as the standard deviation provides valuable insights into the strength of the aforementioned influence on decision-making processes. It is evident that, on the whole, this influence exerts a considerable impact. However, it is important to note that there exists a certain degree of variability in the magnitude of this influence across different instances of decision-making. The average weighted mean for commitment to political stance is 3.97 (SD = 0.410), showing that LUCs leaders generally have moderate to high levels of dedication to their chosen political viewpoints. The result serves as a comprehensive metric that encompasses all pertinent factors on the manifestation of loyalty towards a particular political ideology or stance. The aforementioned mean value, which indicates a commendable degree of collective dedication, is accompanied by a standard deviation (SD) of 0.410, implying the existence of certain fluctuations in the extent of loyalty exhibited by leaders. The fact that leaders of the LUCs exhibit a level of commitment ranging from moderate to high to their political perspectives underscores the importance of political involvement within institutions of higher education. The aforementioned statement aligns with the notion that institutions of higher education, namely colleges and universities, do not exist in a vacuum devoid of political discourse. On the contrary, they actively engage in and contribute to the formulation of public policy and the cultivation of societal values (Mintz, 2022). In the realm of leadership, it is not uncommon to observe a spectrum of loyalty levels among individuals assuming positions of authority. Certain leaders may demonstrate an extraordinary degree of allegiance, surpassing societal expectations, while others may display a somewhat diminished level of dedication.

The diminishing faith among segments of the public in the transformative power of higher education, as mentioned by Mintz (2022), poses a political threat to universities. Leaders' dedication to their political stances can contribute to these challenges, as public perception of colleges and universities may be influenced by the perceived alignment of higher education with specific political ideologies. Leaders must work to rebuild public trust in the value and mission of higher education. In summary, it can be inferred that the unwavering commitment exhibited by the leaders of LUCs towards their respective political views serves as a manifestation of the intricate confluence between the spheres of higher education and politics. The significance of political engagement cannot be understated in the realm of academic leadership. However, it is imperative to approach this engagement with utmost caution, as it carries profound consequences for decision-making processes, the promotion of institutional diversity, and the public's perception of the mission and value of higher education. In the realm of higher education, it is imperative for leaders to diligently endeavor to achieve equilibrium between their political affiliations and the overarching objectives of cultivating a conducive environment for learning, promoting inclusivity, and advancing societal progress (Mintz, 2022). Table 10 shows the self-assessment data on politics among leaders in LUCs in terms of their involvement with their chosen political stance.

Table 10. Self-Assessment of Political Beliefs Among LUCs Leaders as to Engagement with Political Stance

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. How actively involved are you with your chosen political stance, including participating in related activities, campaigns, or supporting candidates?	2.93	1.217	ME
2. How often do you engage in discussions or debates to support your political stance within your college/university community?	2.66	0.879	ME
3. To what extent do you encourage others within your college/university to adopt or support your political stance?	3.27	0.815	ME
4. How frequently do you use social media or other online platforms to express your political stance and engage with others on related topics?	3.77	0.993	GE
5. How visible is your engagement with your political stance to the college/university community?	3.27	0.983	ME
6. How important is it for you to actively participate in activities that support your political stance within your college/university?	4.80	0.492	VGE
Engagement with Political Stance (AWM)	3.45	0.345	ME

Active Involvement in Political Activities: The average result among LUCs leaders who evaluate themselves is M= 2.93 (SD = 1.217), which indicates a Moderate Extent (ME) of engagement in political activities linked to their preferred political perspective. The aforementioned statement posits that although leaders may partake in political endeavors, their degree of engagement does not reach an extraordinary magnitude.

Frequency of Engaging in Discussions: This item's M= 2.66 (SD = 0.879), which likewise indicates a Moderate Extent (ME). The aforementioned statement posits that leaders, in the context

of their college or university community, partake in dialogues or deliberations to bolster their political position. However, it is important to note that the frequency of such engagements may exhibit variability among different individuals.

Encouraging Others to Adopt the Political Stance: Leaders give themselves M= 3.27 (SD = 0.815), which indicates that they encourage others at their institution or university to endorse or adopt their political perspective to a Moderate Extent (ME). The aforementioned statement suggests that leaders possess the capacity to partake in the act of persuasion; however, it is imperative to acknowledge that this particular endeavor is not consistently prevalent across all leaders.

Use of Social Media for Expression: The mean rating M=3.77 (SD = 0.993) indicates that more individuals than not use social media or other online platforms to express their political views and interact with others about connected issues. The aforementioned statement suggests that leaders exhibit a notable level of activity when it comes to employing digital platforms as a means of political expression and engagement.

Visibility of Engagement: In terms of their political participation and visibility to the college/university community, LUCs leaders evaluate themselves with M=3.27 (SD = 0.983), suggesting a Moderate Extent (ME). The aforementioned proposition asserts that although leaders partake in political endeavors, the nature of their actions may not invariably be characterized by conspicuousness.

Importance of Active Participation: The obtained mean score of M=4.80, with a standard deviation of 0.492, signifies a level of significance denoted as a Very Great Extent (VGE) in terms of the value attributed to engaging in activities that align with one's political beliefs within the context of their educational institution. The aforementioned statement serves to underscore the perspective held by leaders, who regard active engagement in political endeavors as a matter of paramount importance. The study results on how LUCs leaders connect with their political viewpoints provide insightful information about leadership and political participation. The average weighted mean for the indicator "Engagement with Political Stance" yields a value of 3.45. This value indicates a Moderate Extent (ME) of engagement among the aforementioned leaders. The aforementioned statement suggests that, in general, leaders in the realm of LUCs demonstrate a moderate level of engagement and commitment to their selected political stances. In light of the research conducted by Gabrielashvili and Mikadze (2021) about the examination of political neutrality within civil service, it becomes evident that the notion of upholding a harmonious equilibrium between political engagement and impartiality aligns with the discoveries made within LUCs leaders. The LUC leaders' moderate engagement suggests that they strike a balance between being actively involved in political matters and refraining from extreme or overly partisan behavior. This equilibrium is reflected in the remarkable consistency observed in their responses, as indicated by the relatively small standard deviation (SD). The analysis conducted in this study reveals significant implications for leadership, shedding light on the imperative for leaders to adeptly navigate a wide range of engagement. Leaders must acknowledge and comprehend that individuals may demonstrate diverse degrees of involvement with their political stances. The notion of effective leadership within the given context necessitates the upholding of a certain level of impartiality and the ability to be responsive to a wide range of perspectives. Table 10 shows the self-assessment data on the views of leaders in LUCs in terms of their support for the incumbent/ challenger with their chosen political stance.

Support for Incumbent Candidate: The leaders of LUCs give the incumbent candidate an average rating of M=4.89 (SD = 0.314), which indicates a Very Great Extent (VGE) of support. The aforementioned statement posits that leaders exhibit a robust inclination towards endorsing the candidate currently holding office in the context of their respective local elections, should such a circumstance be applicable. The prevailing sentiment among leaders is one of resolute endorsement for the incumbent candidate, thereby implying a profound sense of assurance in the present officeholder's competencies and congruence with their ideological convictions.

Likelihood to Campaign for Incumbent: Indicating a Moderate Extent (ME) of inclination to actively campaign for the incumbent candidate, the mean score for this item is M= 3.17 (SD = 0.473). The aforementioned statement suggests that within the realm of leadership, there exists a dynamic

wherein individuals in positions of authority exhibit varying degrees of support and dedication towards a given campaign or cause. The prevailing inclination among leaders is to lend their support to the incumbent (Sonmez Cakir & Adiguzel, 2020), yet the extent of their dedication to actively engage in campaigning for said incumbent candidate exhibits considerable variation. The participation of individuals in campaign activities can vary, with some individuals actively engaging in such activities, while others assume a more passive role.

Alignment with Incumbent: Leaders give the incumbent candidate and their political position M= 4.84 (SD = 0.368), which indicates a Very Great Extent (VGE) of alignment. The aforementioned statement posits that leaders possess a discernible perception of a solid alignment existing between their political views and the stances adopted by that particular officeholder. The perception of leaders regarding the congruence between their political views and the stances adopted by the current officeholders is of paramount importance. The aforementioned alignment is highly likely to contribute significantly to the substantial backing exhibited by the individuals in the matter.

Support for Leading Challenger Candidate: The average score for endorsing the primary challenger candidate is M=2.76 (standard deviation = 0.866), suggesting a moderate level of support. Leaders exhibit a diminished level of endorsement towards the primary contender in contrast to the current officeholder. Leaders exhibit diminished levels of endorsement for the primary contender candidate. This trend may be ascribed to the level of contentment individuals have with the current officeholder's accomplishments or their view that the challenger's stances are incongruent with their own, particularly when taking into account the possibility that the incumbent may have designated them as the president or administrator of the LUCs.

Table 11. Self-Assessment of Political Beliefs Among LUCs Leaders as to Support for Incumbent/Challenger

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. How strongly do you support the incumbent candidate (if applicable) in your local election?	4.89	0.314	VGE
2. How likely are you to actively campaign for the incumbent candidate (if applicable) in your local election?	3.17	0.473	ME
3. To what extent do you believe the incumbent candidate (if applicable) aligns with your political stance?	4.84	0.368	VGE
4. How strongly do you support the leading challenger candidate in your local election?	2.76	0.866	ME
5. How likely are you to actively campaign for the leading challenger candidate in your local election?	1.95	0.957	LE
6. To what extent do you believe the leading challenger candidate aligns with your political stance?	2.33	0.865	LE
Engagement with Political Stance (AWM)	3.32	0.274	ME

Likelihood to Campaign for Challenger: Based on the obtained mean score of M=1.95 (SD = 0.957), it can be inferred that there is a low extent (LE) of probability for individuals to engage in active campaigning for the leading challenger candidate. This suggests a diminished level of

dedication to advocate for the other candidate. Leaders have a lesser tendency to engage in active campaigning on behalf of the primary challenger candidate, thus suggesting an affinity for the incumbent.

Alignment with Challenger: The alignment between the top challenger candidate and the political stance of leaders is rated with M= 2.33 (SD = 0.865), indicating a low degree of alignment. Leaders tend to see a lower level of agreement between their political views and the ones held by the main challenger. The absence of alignment between some factors may have an impact on the level of assistance provided. It could be gleaned from the results that the AWM=3.32 (ME) is an indicator of the prevailing level of support demonstrated by leaders in local universities and colleges (LUCs) towards both incumbent and challenger candidates. The observed value, falling within the moderate range, suggests that the leaders in LUCs tend to display a balanced and impartial stance, exhibiting a fair degree of support for both the incumbent and challenger candidates. This finding underscores the nuanced nature of their political affiliations, highlighting a willingness to consider and endorse candidates from diverse backgrounds. The aforementioned statement is per the scholarly work conducted by Gabrielashvili and Mikadze (2021), emphasizing the significance of maintaining a harmonious equilibrium in assisting, as well as the necessity of a meticulously calibrated and efficient civil service. The study of Pernia (2017) aligns with the aforementioned findings by underscoring the paramount importance of political engagement within the realm of the civil service. In the discourse, a compelling argument is put forth regarding the rationality and necessity of political involvement in the context of a well-functioning democracy. The author posits that a certain degree of engagement in political affairs is not only justified but also imperative for the optimal functioning of democratic systems. By delving into the intricacies of this subject matter, it seeks to shed light on the significance of active citizen participation in the political realm. The aforementioned justification is congruent with the moderate level of endorsement demonstrated by leaders of Local Union Chapters (LUCs) towards both the current officeholders and those vying for their positions. This alignment signifies their inclination to actively participate in the realm of political procedures. Table 12 displays self-assessment data on political beliefs among leaders at LUCs in terms of alignment with the values and principles of their chosen political stance.

Table 12. Self-Assessment of Political Beliefs Among LUCs Leaders as to Alignment with Political Stance Values

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. How closely do your personal values align with the core values and principles of your chosen political stance?	4.150	1.019	GE
2. How consistent are your actions and decisions with the values and principles of your chosen political stance?	4.200	0.841	GE
3. To what extent do you believe your chosen political stance reflects your personal moral values?	4.360	0.772	GE
4. How likely are you to reconsider your political stance if you encounter conflicting information or values?	4.230	0.886	GE
5. How influential are the values and principles of your chosen political stance in your overall decision-making, both personally and professionally?	4.160	1.089	GE

Alignment with Political Stance Values(AWM)	4.220	0.438	GE

Alignment with Personal Values: The leaders of LUCs, in their rating, assign themselves M= 4.150 (SD = 1.019), which signifies a great extent (GE) of congruence between their values and the fundamental values and principles associated with their selected political beliefs. The aforementioned statement suggests that, in general, leaders possess a profound perception of alignment between their values and their political ideologies.

Consistency in Actions and Decisions: This item also qualifies as a great extent (GE) with M= 4.200 (SD = 0.841). The aforementioned statement claims that leaders, in their capacity as individuals occupying positions of authority and influence, perceive their actions and decisions to be intrinsically aligned with the values and principles that underpin their chosen political viewpoint. The observed conduct of the individual in question exhibits a remarkable coherence with their political beliefs.

Reflection of Personal Moral Values: The rating of leaders regarding their alignment with their chosen political stance by their moral values is quantitatively measured through M= 4.360, with a standard deviation of 0.772. This statistical analysis suggests that leaders, on average, perceive a greater extent of belief, denoted as great extent (GE), in the congruence between their political position and their moral principles. The aforementioned statement asserts that leaders, in their capacity as individuals entrusted with the responsibility of guiding and governing, hold the perception that their political beliefs are firmly entrenched within the very core of their moral convictions.

Openness to Reconsideration: The mean score of M=4.230 (SD = 0.886) indicates a great extent (GE) of openness to revising their political perspective if confronted with contradictory evidence or ideals. Leaders demonstrate a readiness to reassess their political convictions in light of fresh facts.

Influence on Decision-Making: LUCs leaders give themselves an M= 4.160 (SD = 1.089), suggesting a great extent (GE) of influence of the ideals and principles of their preferred political viewpoint in their general decision-making, both personally and professionally. This suggests that their views on politics have a significant influence on the formation of their choices. The average weighted mean has a noteworthy magnitude of AWM=4.220, indicating a robust and persistent alignment between the personal values of these leaders and the values linked to their selected political positions. Leaders within LUCs have a strong inclination to see a significant alignment between their values and the political views that they espouse. In addition, it is noteworthy to mention the use of a standard deviation (SD) value of 0.438, which serves as a quantitative measure to evaluate the extent of variability or dispersion observed within the collected responses. The assertion made by the AWM regarding the alignment of greater extent (GE) is further reinforced by the relatively diminutive dimensions of this SD. The remarks offered by leaders are closely clustered around the mean value, indicating a notable consensus in their assessment of alignment. The strong alignment observed among these leaders holds significant implications for understanding their relationship with their political stances. It suggests a profound connection between their values, moral convictions, and the political beliefs they endorse. Their political ideologies are deeply rooted and integrated into their identities, influencing their decision-making and actions. This alignment underscores the depth of commitment these leaders have to their chosen political stances (Young, 2018). Table 13 serves as an in-depth representation of the intricate nature of leaders' perceptions about the political climate prevalent within their respective educational institutions.

Alignment with Political Stance: On average, leaders rate the alignment of the current political climate within their educational institution with their chosen political stance as M=2.24 (SD = 0.986), indicating a low extent (LE) of alignment. The relatively high SD suggests that there is

significant variation among leaders in their perceptions of alignment. Some may perceive stronger alignment, while others may perceive even less alignment.

Community Awareness and Responsiveness: Leaders believe that their university or college community is aware of and sensitive to their political viewpoint to a lesser level, as seen by their rating of M=2.19 (SD = 0.907), which indicates a low extent level (LE). The aforementioned statement contends that the notable standard deviation (SD) manifests a diverse array of perspectives within the collective. In matters of leadership, divergent perspectives may arise regarding the level of awareness and responsiveness exhibited by a given community. It is not uncommon for certain leaders to perceive their community as possessing a heightened sense of awareness and an affinity for responsiveness, while others may hold a contrasting viewpoint, perceiving an absence thereof.

Comfort in Expression: The level of comfort that leaders experience when expressing their political stance within the community, has been determined and quantified as M=2.94, with a standard deviation of 0.814. This numerical representation suggests that the extent to which leaders feel at ease in expressing their political beliefs falls within the category of moderate extent (ME). The present study proposes that within the domain of leadership, there exists a discernible pattern wherein individuals, on the whole, tend to experience a moderate level of comfort. However, it is important to note that this level of comfort is not uniform across all leaders, as there exists a notable degree of variation in the extent to which individuals feel at ease in their leadership roles. In the field of personal experiences, it is not uncommon for individuals to exhibit varying degrees of comfort or unease in response to a given situation (Sonmez Cakir & Adiguzel, 2020). While certain individuals may find themselves at ease, others may harbor reservations or concerns.

Influence on Political Climate: Leaders believe that their political viewpoint has a great extent (GE) on the political atmosphere at their institution or university (M = 3.84, SD = 0.918). The observation of a relatively high standard deviation (SD) within the dataset suggests the presence of discernible variability in the perceptions held by leaders regarding the extent of their influence. The perception of influence varies among individuals, with some individuals experiencing a heightened sense of influence while others may perceive a diminished level of influence.

Table 13. Self-Assessment of Political Beliefs Among LUCs Leaders as to Perceived Political Climate

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. How strongly does the current political climate within your college/university align with your chosen political stance?	2.24	0.986	LE
2. To what extent do you believe your college/university community is aware of and responsive to your political stance?	2.19	0.907	LE
3. How comfortable are you expressing your political stance within your college/university community?	2.94	0.814	ME
4. How influential do you believe your political stance is in shaping the political climate within your college/university?	3.84	0.918	GE

5. To what extent do you believe your college/university leadership is aware of and responsive to the political stances of its members?	2.70	1.040	ME
6. How likely are you to actively engage in activities that promote your political stance within your college/university community?	2.98	1.025	ME
Perceived Political Climate (AWM)	2.81	0.368	ME

Leadership Awareness and Responsiveness: In relation to the awareness and adaptation of college/university leadership towards the political positions held by its constituents, the leaders have been assigned a rating of M=2.70 (SD = 1.040), indicating a state of moderate extent (ME). The presence of a high standard deviation in the data indicates that leaders possess varying degrees of perception when it comes to their awareness and responsiveness in leadership. This implies that certain individuals perceive a greater extent of engagement from their leaders, while others perceive a lesser extent.

Engagement in Promoting Stance: Indicating a moderate extent (ME) of readiness to participate in political activities, the chance of actively participating in activities that promote their political perspective within the community is assessed as M=2.98 (SD = 1.025). The empirical evidence presented herein posits that there exists a noteworthy standard deviation (SD) in the proclivity of leaders to partake in engagement activities. This observation implies that leaders exhibit a range of dispositions, with certain individuals displaying a greater inclination towards engagement while others manifest a lesser inclination. The perceived political environment is estimated to have a Moderate Extent (ME) with AWM= 2.81 and SD =0.368. The AWM result indicates that leaders in LUCs perceive a moderate level of alignment between the current political climate in their institutions and their chosen political stances. This suggests that there is room for improvement in fostering a more cohesive political environment. The relatively small extent of the standard deviation (SD) implies a certain level of uniformity in the perceptions of leaders. This indicates that a significant proportion of leaders belonging to this particular group hold comparable perspectives concerning their perception of the political climate. The aforementioned consistency in the perception of the subject has significance at hand and shows that, although the overall perception may be characterized as moderate, there exists a prevailing consensus among leaders regarding the current state of political alignment, community awareness, and comfort. The moderate perception of comfort in expressing political stances and the willingness to engage in political activities (items 3 and 6) suggests that leaders may be open to participating in activities that promote their political beliefs within their college/university community. This presents an opportunity for institutions to encourage constructive political discourse and engagement. In summary, the analysis of the Perceived Political Climate reveals a modest level of perceived alignment, awareness, and comfort among leaders in LUCs. Although there is a prevailing agreement about these beliefs, it is important to acknowledge the diversity of individual perspectives. In order to cultivate a politically engaged and inclusive atmosphere, institutions have the opportunity to use this moderate sentiment by actively addressing problems, facilitating conversation, and raising awareness among leaders and their respective communities. The self-assessment data in Table 14 offers valuable insights into the party support and political opinions of leaders within LUCs.

Table 14. Self-Assessment of Political Beliefs Among LUCs Leaders

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. Political Stance	4.35	0.287	GE
2. Loyalty to Political Stance	3.97	0.410	GE

3. Engagement with Political Stance	3.45	0.345	ME
4. Support for Incumbent/Challenger	3.32	0.274	ME
5. Alignment with Political Stance Values	4.22	0.438	GE
6. Perceived Political Climate	2.81	0.368	ME
Political Beliefs (AWM)	3.69	0.145	GE

In general, the leaders demonstrate a notable degree of dedication to their political positions, as shown by their average scores of political stance (M=4.35) and loyalty to political stance (M=3.97). The aforementioned results indicate that leaders have a robust association with their selected political convictions and demonstrate loyalty toward these ideological orientations. Nevertheless, leaders demonstrate a rather modest degree of participation when it comes to actively participating in local elections by expressing their political opinions and supporting incumbent or challenger candidates. The level of involvement in political ideology (M=3.45) and the degree of endorsement for the current officeholder/opponent (M=3.32) together suggest a moderate level of engagement. This suggests that while leaders may possess firm political convictions, their level of engagement in political endeavors and electoral campaigns might differ across people. The variation in leaders' levels of engagement with their political stances and active participation in political activities indicates that there is no uniform approach to political involvement among academic leaders. This diversity reflects the complex nature of political engagement and the importance of recognizing individual preferences and comfort levels (Young, 2018). Leadership figures also exhibit a moderate correlation between the political atmosphere inside their educational institution and their own political position (M = 2.81). This implies that the individual perceives the political climate inside the institution or university to be somewhat aligned with their own ideological perspectives. Furthermore, it is evident that leaders exhibit a significant level of congruence between their personal beliefs and the principles associated with their selected political viewpoints, as shown by M=4.22. This connection suggests that their political ideas are firmly grounded in their own values and moral beliefs. The perception of a moderately aligned political climate within the college/university community highlights the need for academic leaders to assess and address any potential dissonance between their beliefs and the institutional environment. Leaders may need to consider strategies to promote greater alignment between their political stances and the overall climate of their institutions. In summary, leaders of LUCs express a strong level of dedication and alignment with their party support and political convictions, emphasizing the significance of these factors in relation to their personal values. Nonetheless, their participation in political endeavors and the perceived congruence between the political atmosphere of their educational institution and their own convictions tend to be more moderate in nature. The aforementioned discoveries provide insight into the intricate nature of leaders' political participation and the dynamic relationship between individual ideals, loyalty, and active activity within the political sphere.

Assessing Vulnerability During Local Elections. Local elections, though primarily associated with the selection of political representatives, often extend their reach into unexpected territories, including the leadership of educational institutions. This phenomenon has recently come to the forefront with the government-owned Jose Rizal Memorial State University (JRMSU) in Dapitan City, Philippines. The JRMSU's prolonged search for a new university president has been marred by allegations of political interference, leaving the institution grappling with an uncertain future. As we explore the intricate interplay between politics and academia, it becomes evident that leaders of local universities and colleges (LUCs) must contend with unique vulnerabilities during local elections. This article delves into the challenges faced by LUCs leaders in maintaining academic integrity and autonomy amidst the influence of political forces, drawing insights from the tumultuous experience of the JRMSU. In doing so, we shed light on the complexities of leadership in the academic sphere and the imperative for LUCs leaders, such as Laput (2023), to navigate these intricate dynamics

effectively. Table 15 presents the self-assessment of vulnerability during local elections among the LUCs leaders as to perceived vulnerability.

Table 15. Self-Assessment of Vulnerability During Local Elections Among LUCs Leaders as to Perceived Vulnerability

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. To what extent do you believe that your role as a college/university president is vulnerable during local elections?	4.68	0.618	VGE
2. How concerned are you about potential threats to your position as a college/university president during local elections?	4.84	0.395	VGE
3. To what extent does your perception of vulnerability affect your decision-making in your role as a college/university president during local elections?	4.62	0.488	VGE
4. How confident are you in your ability to navigate potential vulnerabilities as a college/university president during local elections?	4.19	0.775	GE
5. How likely do you believe it is that external factors could pose a threat to your position as a college/university president during local elections?	4.76	0.429	VGE
6. How often do you engage in strategies to mitigate potential vulnerabilities related to your role as a college/university president during local elections?	4.33	0.829	GE
Perceived Vulnerability (AWM)	4.57	0.239	VGE

Vulnerability During Local Elections: In the middle of local election campaigns, the presidents of Local University Colleges (LUCs) do a somber self-evaluation in which they reflect on how uncertain their positions are. A clear picture of their impression of vulnerability is painted by their average rating of M= 4.68 (SD = 0.618) from their collective assessment. The statistical measure effectively highlights their perception of vulnerability, which may be definitively categorized as reaching a Very Great Extent (VGE). This reflective examination highlights the tangible apprehensions that these leaders possess. College administrators find themselves confronted with the disconcerting possibility of being exposed to various risks and encountering possible obstacles that have the ability to compromise their secure and permanent jobs. Despite being employed in permanent jobs, their concerns stem from the realization that municipal elections might introduce an element of uncertainty, creating the possibility of being replaced or downgraded from their highly regarded positions. Essentially, these leaders possess a keen awareness of the many complex risks associated with their positions, as they navigate the difficult balance between overseeing academic affairs and managing the inherent uncertainties that arise from regional political processes.

Concerns About Threats: The item pertaining to concerns about potential threats yielded M=4.84, with SD= 0.395. This finding further supports the presence of a high level of concern. The aforementioned discovery is in accordance with the prevailing perception of heightened vulnerability,

thereby emphasizing that leaders of LUCs possess substantial concerns pertaining to potential threats to their positions amidst the occurrence of local elections.

Impact on Decision-Making: LUCs leaders give themselves M= 4.62 (SD = 0.488) when rating how much their feeling of vulnerability influences their choice-making during local elections, which indicates a VGE degree of impact. The aforementioned statement asserts that the cognitive framework of leaders, specifically their perceptions of vulnerability, exerts a significant influence on the intricate mechanisms underlying their decision-making processes within the context of their esteemed positions as college or university presidents.

Confidence in Mitigation: Leaders gave M= 4.19 (SD = 0.775) for their level of confidence in managing possible vulnerabilities, which indicates a Greater Extent (GE) of confidence. The assessment of leaders' confidence levels reveals a moderate degree of assurance. However, when compared with the perception of vulnerability and the associated concern, it becomes apparent that there exists an opportunity for enhancement in their capacity to effectively tackle vulnerabilities.

Perceived External Threats: The possibility of outside forces endangering their positions during local elections is rated by LUCs leaders with M=4.76 (SD = 0.429), once again suggesting a VGE level of perceived threat. The aforementioned statement serves as proof of the prevailing belief that these leaders possess a perception wherein external factors are regarded as substantial and consequential risks.

Mitigation Strategies: With a mean score of M=4.33 (SD = 0.829), leaders' involvement in initiatives to reduce possible vulnerabilities associated with their positions as college or university presidents during local elections is rated as being at the GE level of engagement. The current level of leader involvement in mitigation efforts can be described as moderate, indicating that there is a certain degree of engagement in addressing the issue at hand. However, it is worth noting that there exists ample opportunity for the implementation of more proactive strategies. The findings of the self-assessment show a startling trend in leaders of LUCs' assessments of their vulnerability and worries during local elections (AWM= 4.57, SD=0.239). The aforementioned leaders exhibit a prevailing perception of their roles as being exceedingly susceptible to external influences, thereby harboring significant apprehensions regarding the possibility of encountering various forms of jeopardy to their esteemed positions. Moreover, it is imperative to acknowledge that the individuals' perception of vulnerability plays a substantial role in shaping their decision-making mechanisms amidst the electoral context (Steinmann et al., 2018). The recognition of heightened vulnerability, as elucidated in Laput (2023), underscores the unique set of challenges confronting leaders of LUCs during local elections. These leaders navigate a complex landscape where the intricate interplay of political dynamics and external factors can wield significant sway over their roles and responsibilities. This observation underscores the imperative for LUCs leaders to adeptly maneuver within this intricate terrain. They must strike a delicate balance between their steadfast commitment to academic leadership and their acute awareness of the potential hazards that may emerge, all within the context of local electoral processes. Intriguingly, it is worth noting that leaders, despite their propensity to exhibit vulnerability and express concern, tend to possess a relatively diminished level of confidence when it comes to effectively navigating these vulnerabilities. The aforementioned statement posits that although the individuals in question demonstrate an awareness of the potential hazards, they may necessitate supplementary assistance, instruction, or methodologies to adequately confront and alleviate possible perils.

The aforementioned findings serve to underscore the significance of actively engaging in proactive strategies aimed at mitigating vulnerabilities. The analysis of leadership behavior during local elections reveals that, on average, leaders tend to exhibit a moderate level of engagement in their efforts. This finding suggests that there exists an opportunity for leaders to further enhance their preparedness and resilience in the context of local elections. In summary, it can be inferred that leaders within LUCs navigate a complex landscape characterized by heightened vulnerability perceptions, concerns, and the notable impact of external factors during local elections. The

aforementioned findings necessitate the implementation of a comprehensive approach that aims to provide support and empowerment to these leaders, enabling them to proficiently navigate the various challenges that are inherently linked to their roles. Such an approach is crucial to safeguard the ongoing integrity and autonomy of their respective institutions. Table 16 shows self-assessment data from leaders at Local University Colleges (LUCs) on their perceived institutional support in addressing possible vulnerabilities during local elections.

Table 16. Self-Assessment of Vulnerability During Local Elections Among LUCs Leaders as to Perceived Institutional Support

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. How supported do you feel by your college/university administration in addressing potential vulnerabilities during local elections?	2.44	1.266	LE
2. To what extent does your college/university provide resources and assistance to help you manage potential vulnerabilities during local elections?	2.26	0.836	LE
3. How confident are you that your college/university community would stand by you and support your role during local elections?	2.57	0.769	ME
4. How often do you collaborate with your college/university administration to address potential vulnerabilities during local elections?	2.83	1.181	ME
5. To what extent does your college/university provide training or guidance on handling vulnerabilities related to your role during local elections?	2.41	0.683	LE
6. How effective do you believe your college/university's support and resources are in mitigating potential vulnerabilities during local elections?	2.50	0.810	LE
Perceived Institutional Support (AWM)	2.50	0.366	LE

Support from College/University Administration: LUC leaders assess their college/university administration's support for them with M= 2.44 (SD = 1.266), suggesting a Low Extent (LE) of perceived support. This shows that leaders may not feel sufficiently supported by their institutions when dealing with vulnerabilities during local elections. Leaders in LUCs may feel under-supported by their college/university administrations when it comes to managing vulnerabilities during local elections. As a result, they may be exposed to dangers and problems in their leadership responsibilities.

Resources and Assistance: The mean score for the extent to which the college/university offers resources and help for vulnerability management is M=2.26 (SD = 0.836), suggesting a Low amount (LE). This shows that leaders perceive a lack of institutional support in dealing with possible risks. The notion of insufficient institutional resources and help emphasizes the difficulties that leaders may experience in controlling vulnerabilities. This might have an impact on their capacity to properly negotiate local election procedures.

Confidence in College/University Community Support: During local elections, LUCs leaders assess their trust in the support of the college/university community with M= 2.57 (SD = 0.769), indicating a Moderate Extent (ME) of confidence. This finding suggests that while leaders possess a certain level of trust in the support of their community, it does not reach a very high level. Leadership within college and university communities exhibits a modest level of confidence in the support they get from their respective communities. This implies that there is potential for enhancing the cultivation of more robust networks of support inside the organization.

Collaboration with College/University Administration: A moderate extent (ME) of participation with college/university administration to address vulnerabilities is indicated by the M= 2.83 (SD = 1.181). The aforementioned statement claims that leaders partake in a certain degree of collaborative endeavors, albeit not consistently. The present analysis suggests that the level of collaboration between the administration and relevant stakeholders is moderate. This finding implies that there exists a potential for further enhancement of cooperation between leaders and their respective institutions in effectively addressing vulnerabilities.

Training and Guidance: The level of guidance or assistance provided by the college/university in addressing vulnerabilities is rated M=2.41 (SD = 0.683), indicating a Low Extent (LE). This suggests that leaders have a perception of inadequate institutional support in terms of training and advice. The observation of the low availability of training and guiding opportunities underscores a possible avenue for improvement. Enhancing the resilience of leaders may be achieved by equipping them with the requisite knowledge and skills to effectively address vulnerabilities.

Effectiveness of Support and Resources: The mean score given by LUCs leaders to the help and resources provided by their college or university in minimizing vulnerabilities is M=2.50 (SD = 0.810), indicating a Low Extent (LE). This implies that leaders may see the current support structures as lacking in effectiveness. To enhance their ability to address possible risks during local elections, leaders may benefit from receiving more comprehensive assistance and resources from their respective institutions. The overall weighted mean for the self-assessment of vulnerability as to perceived institutional support during local elections among leaders of LUCs is calculated to be M=2.50, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.366, indicating a perception of vulnerability classified as of a low extent (LE). This AWM finding is a crucial measure that encapsulates the collective sentiment of LUCs leaders regarding their vulnerability in the context of local electoral processes. On average, leaders of LUCs possess a perception of institutional support that is rather restricted in scope, particularly concerning the mitigation of possible vulnerabilities encountered during local elections. This view suggests that individuals may have concerns about the extent of support and resources offered by their college or university administrations during such situations. Several factors may contribute to this perception of limited institutional support. It could be related to resource constraints within the institutions, a lack of comprehensive training or guidance on handling vulnerabilities during elections, or perhaps a historical context where such support has not been a prominent feature of the institutional landscape (Leroy, 2018). The data in Table 17 shows the self-assessment of leaders at LUCs about their view of political influence in the context of local elections.

External Political Actors' Influence: LUCs leaders present M= 4.05 for the amount of influence they feel local politicians and political parties have on their roles as college or university presidents during local elections. The aforementioned rating indicates a categorization of political influence that is characterized as being of a great extent (GE), accompanied by a moderate degree of variability (SD = 0.903). This finding suggests that while leaders, on average, sense a substantial level of influence, there exists a degree of diversity in their responses.

Table 17. Self-Assessment of Vulnerability During Local Elections Among LUCs Leaders as to Perception of Political Influence

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. How much political influence do you believe external political actors (e.g., local politicians, political parties) have on your role as a college/university president during local elections?	4.05	0.903	GE
2. To what extent do you perceive that your decisions as a college/university president are influenced by local political dynamics?	4.55	0.821	VGE
3. How likely do you think it is that local politicians or political parties would interfere in college/university matters due to your role during local elections?	4.87	0.338	VGE
4. To what extent do you believe that your professional decisions are influenced by your awareness of potential political influence during local elections?	4.74	0.441	VGE
5. How often do you take proactive steps to minimize potential political influence on your role as a college/university president during local elections?	2.85	0.857	ME
Perception of Political Influence (AWM)	4.21	0.288	GE

Perception of Personal Influence: The mean score for the extent to which college/university presidents consider their actions to be impacted by local political dynamics is M=4.55, indicating a categorization of very great extent (VGE) and a moderate amount of variability (SD = 0.821). This finding indicates that leaders, on average, recognize the considerable impact of local political dynamics on their decision-making processes, although with some variation in their judgments.

Likelihood of Interference: LUCs leaders believe it is highly likely that local politicians or political parties would interfere in college/university matters due to their roles during local elections, as reflected in the M=4.87 (SD = 0.338), indicating a VGE perception. The standard deviation is relatively low, indicating less variability in their perceptions of interference likelihood.

Professional Decision-Making and Political Influence: Leaders hold the belief that their professional decision-making is significantly impacted by their understanding of possible political influence during local elections. This belief is represented by M=4.74 (SD = 0.441), indicating a sense of vulnerability to political influence. The variability in this view is moderate, as shown by the standard deviation. This finding indicates that, on average, leaders possess a substantial perception of the impact they have on their decision-making processes, while there is considerable variation in their reactions.

Proactive Steps to Minimize Influence: On the item of taking proactive steps to minimize potential political influence on their roles as college/university presidents during local elections, the M= 2.85, categorized as a moderate extent (ME), with a moderate level of variability (SD = 0.857). This indicates that leaders, on average, are aware of the influence, but their actions to mitigate it may vary, with some variability in their responses.

The perception of political influence bared an AWM = 4.21, reveals a noteworthy finding—LUCs leaders generally perceive a significant level of political influence exerted by external political actors, such as local politicians and political parties, on their roles as college/university presidents during local elections. This perception is underpinned by their recognition of the intricate relationship between politics and academic leadership. The (SD = 0.288) indicates some variability in these perceptions, reflecting the diverse experiences and contexts within which these leaders operate. The high AWM value in this dimension signifies that LUCs leaders are attuned to the potential political dynamics that can impact their decision-making and roles. It suggests that these leaders acknowledge the need to navigate the complex landscape of local politics while fulfilling their academic responsibilities. The findings emphasize the importance of political acumen and awareness among leaders in LUCs. To effectively manage their roles during local elections, leaders must possess a keen understanding of local political dynamics and their potential implications on academic leadership (Tunney, 2019). Table 18 presents the self-assessment data of leaders in Local University Colleges (LUCs) regarding their concerns related to job security during local elections.

Table 18. Self-Assessment of Vulnerability During Local Elections Among LUCs Leaders as to Job Security Concerns

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. How concerned are you about job security and potential repercussions related to your role as a college/university president during local elections?	4.90	0.302	VGE
2. To what extent do you believe your job as a college/university president is at risk due to your political stance during local elections?	4.91	0.288	VGE
3. How often do you consider potential job security issues when making decisions related to your role as a college/university president during local elections?	4.90	0.302	VGE
4. How likely are you to seek legal or institutional protection to safeguard your job during local elections if you perceive it to be at risk?	4.63	0.506	VGE
5. How confident are you in your ability to navigate potential job security challenges related to your role as a college/university president during local elections?	4.30	0.577	GE
6. To what extent do you believe that your professional reputation could be negatively affected by your role as a college/university president during local elections?	4.86	0.349	VGE
Job Security Concerns (AWM)	4.75	0.180	VGE

Concerns About Job Security: On average, leaders in LUCs express a high level of concern about job security and potential repercussions related to their roles as college/university presidents during local elections, as indicated by M= 4.90 (SD = 0.302). This perception is categorized as of a Very Great Extent (VGE). The results suggest that leaders are acutely aware of the potential threats to their job security during local electoral processes.

Risk Due to Political Stance: The findings of this study reveal that leaders, as evidenced by M=4.91 with a standard deviation of 0.28. Moreover, these leaders also exhibit a substantial degree of concern regarding the potential risk to their professional positions as college or university presidents due to their political beliefs and affiliations during local electoral processes. The aforementioned statement serves to highlight the recognition exhibited by the individuals in question regarding the inherent interconnectedness that exists between their respective political ideologies and the crucial aspect of maintaining a stable and secure employment status.

Consideration of Job Security Issues: The mean score for the extent to which leaders consider potential job security issues when making decisions related to their roles as college/university presidents during local elections is M=4.90 (SD = 0.302), signifying a VGE level of consideration. This implies that job security concerns significantly influence their decision-making processes.

Seeking Legal or Institutional Protection: Leaders express a high likelihood of seeking legal or institutional protection to safeguard their jobs during local elections if they perceive them to be at risk, with M= 4.63 (SD = 0.506), indicating a VGE level of likelihood. This suggests their readiness to take proactive measures to protect their positions.

Confidence in Navigating Challenges: While leaders generally exhibit confidence in navigating potential job security challenges related to their roles as college/university presidents during local elections, with M= 4.30 (SD = 0.577), this confidence falls within a great extent (GE) range, indicating some variability in their perceptions.

Impact on Professional Reputation: Leaders believe to a very great extent (VGE) that their professional reputation could be negatively affected by their roles as college/university presidents during local elections, with M=4.86 (SD = 0.349). The study determined that the average score for job security concerns among leaders in LUCs is M=4.75, with a standard deviation of 0.180. This indicates that there is a perception of a very high level of job security concerns during local elections. In this context, the relatively low SD of 0.180 suggests that the responses of LUCs leaders to the job security concerns items are clustered closely around the mean score of 4.75. This means that there is a high level of agreement among the leaders in their perceptions of job security concerns during local elections. The low variability indicates that the majority of leaders share similar levels of concern, resulting in a tight distribution of responses. The finding suggests that leaders in LUCs possess a deep sense of concern and vigilance over the stability of their roles as presidents of colleges or universities during local elections. The finding is in accordance with the scores of individual items, which regularly fall within the range of a very great extent (VGE), thereby emphasizing the high level of job security worries experienced by individuals. The elevated AWM indicates that these leaders possess a perception of vulnerability in their positions during local elections when political issues have the potential to influence their job stability (Laput, 2023). The data clearly demonstrates the interrelationship among individuals' political viewpoints, decision-making processes, and the possible impact on their employment stability. The finding has noteworthy significance in terms of comprehending the experiences of leaders in local urban communities (LUCs) over the course of local elections. The aforementioned statement highlights the intricate nature of the responsibilities held by those in academic leadership positions, as they are required to effectively manage their dedication to academic guidance while simultaneously ensuring the protection of their own positions (Pernia, 2017). The data signifies a shared understanding among these leaders that political considerations might present significant risks to their employment stability. Table 19 presents a comprehensive overview of the self-assessment data regarding vulnerability during local elections among leaders in LUCs, along with their aggregated scores in the Presidential Vulnerability Assessment (AWM).

Table 19. Self-Assessment of Vulnerability During Local Elections Among LUCs Leaders

Items	Mean	SD	AR
1. Perceived Vulnerability	4.57	0.239	VGE
2. Perceived Institutional Support	2.50	0.366	LE
3. Perception of Political Influence	4.21	0.288	GE
4. Job Security Concerns	4.75	0.180	VGE
Presidential Vulnerability (AWM)	4.01	0.133	GE

Leaders of LUCs assess their perceived vulnerability with M=4.57 (SD = 0.239), suggesting a sense of vulnerability to a Very Great Extent (VGE). The aforementioned statement claims that the leaders in the issue exhibit significant apprehensions regarding their susceptibility in the context of local elections. Moreover, leaders in LUCs exhibit a heightened awareness of their vulnerability during local elections, as evidenced by their consistent ratings of VGE across various dimensions. This awareness underscores the challenges and risks they associate with their leadership roles. The mean score of M=2.50 (SD = 0.366) indicates a low extent (LE) of perceived support among leaders. This suggests that leaders do not perceive a high level of institutional support. Leaders often perceive that their respective schools and institutions provide insufficient aid and resources in addressing vulnerabilities that arise during municipal elections. Leaders' perception of political influence on their roles as college/university presidents during local elections yields M= 4.21 (SD = 0.288), indicating a perception of political influence to a great extent (GE). This suggests that leaders acknowledge the substantial impact of political factors on their positions. Job security concerns related to their roles receive M= 4.75 (SD = 0.180), signifying concerns about job security to a very great extent (VGE). Leaders express significant apprehensions about potential repercussions and threats to their positions during local elections. The average mean score for the presidential vulnerability AWM =4.01 (SD = 0.133), reflecting a perception of vulnerability to a great extent (GE). This overall assessment highlights that, when considering all aspects of vulnerability, leaders in LUCs perceive themselves as being vulnerable to a significant degree during local elections. To summarize, leaders in LUCs demonstrate a profound awareness of their vulnerability during local elections, as illuminated in the news article by Laput (2023). They feel significant concerns regarding institutional support, political influence, and job security, highlighting the multifaceted challenges they face in maintaining their positions of authority amidst the intricacies of local political dynamics. Consequently, these findings underscore the pressing need to address these concerns to facilitate and sustain successful leadership within educational institutions.

Exploring Leadership Characteristics, Political Beliefs, and Perceived Vulnerability. This subtopic delves into Research Question 4, which seeks to understand the nature and strength of the correlation between leadership characteristics, political beliefs, and the perceived vulnerability of leaders in local universities and colleges during local elections. Relevant insights are drawn from the study by Nielsen and Moynihan (2016), which sheds light on the complex interplay of partisan beliefs and leadership heuristics in the context of governance. This exploration aims to unearth valuable insights into the multifaceted dimensions of leadership within educational institutions during times of political transition. Table 20 presents the correlation between leadership characteristics and perceived vulnerability among leaders in LUCs during local elections. The analysis reveals that there is a negligible correlation (r = -0.090) between these variables. Additionally, the p-value of 0.373 suggests that this correlation is not statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis (HO) is accepted, signifying that there is no meaningful relationship between leadership characteristics and perceived vulnerability in this context.

Table 20. Correlation Between Leadership Characteristics and Perceived Vulnerability Among Leaders in LUCs During Local Elections

VARIABLES	r-value	Interpretation	p-value	Decision on HO	Relationship
A. Leadership Characteristics B. Presidential Vulnerability	-0.090	Negligible Correlation	0.373	Accept HO	Not Significant
Coefficient of Determination (r^2)				**0.0081**	

These findings indicate a negligible correlation, suggesting that leadership traits do not have a meaningful and direct impact on reducing leaders' perceived vulnerability during local elections within LUCs. Instead, it becomes evident that leaders' perceptions of vulnerability are shaped by a myriad of external and situational factors that transcend the confines of their individual leadership attributes (Laput, 2023; Pernia, 2017). Moreover, the coefficient of determination (r^2 =0.0081), represents the proportion of the variation in the dependent variable (Presidential Vulnerability) that can be explained by the independent variable (Leadership Characteristics). In this case, the coefficient of determination indicates that approximately 0.81% of the variability in leaders' perceived vulnerability during local elections in LUCs can be attributed to their leadership characteristics. In other words, the relationship between leadership characteristics and perceived vulnerability is extremely weak, with the majority of the variability in perceived vulnerability being attributed to factors beyond leadership characteristics. Therefore, although there is a correlation between these variables, the strength of this relationship is minimal, as supported by the low coefficient of determination. Table 21 presents the correlation between political beliefs and perceived vulnerability among leaders in Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) during local elections. The correlation coefficient (r) is -0.018 which is very close to zero, indicating an extremely weak or negligible correlation between political beliefs and perceived vulnerability. In other words, there is little to no linear relationship between a leader's political beliefs and their perception of vulnerability during local elections in LUCs. Further, this emphasizes that the relationship between political beliefs and perceived vulnerability is nearly non-existent. The r-value being so close to zero suggests that changes in political beliefs do not significantly predict changes in perceived vulnerability among leaders.

Table 21. Correlation Between Political Beliefs and Perceived Vulnerability Among Leaders in LUCs During Local Elections

VARIABLES	r-value	Interpretation	p-value	Decision on HO	Relationship
A. Political Beliefs B. Presidential Vulnerability	-0.018	Negligible Correlation	0.859	Accept HO	Not Significant
Coefficient of Determination (r^2)				**0.0003**	

The high p-value indicates that the correlation is not statistically significant. In practical terms, it means that any observed correlation between political beliefs and perceived vulnerability could likely be due to random chance rather than a meaningful relationship. On the other hand, the coefficient of determination (r^2 =0.0003) is extremely close to zero, indicating that only an

extremely tiny fraction (0.03%) of the variability in perceived vulnerability can be explained by variations in political beliefs. In essence, political beliefs have almost no influence on how leaders perceive their vulnerability during local elections in LUCs. The findings imply that LUCs leaders should be aware that their political beliefs may not be a significant determinant of how they perceive their vulnerability, and other contextual factors should be considered when addressing issues related to leadership and election dynamics in educational institutions.

The Mediating Role of Political Beliefs. In the intricate landscape of local universities and colleges (LUCs), leaders navigate not only the complexities of educational administration but also the dynamic realm of local politics. As they steer their institutions through the challenges of local elections, a multitude of factors come into play, influencing their perceptions of vulnerability. Among these factors, political beliefs emerge as a compelling force, capable of molding leaders' perspectives and responses. This subtopic delves into the critical role that political beliefs play in shaping how leaders within LUCs perceive their vulnerability during local elections. It investigates the intricate interplay between leadership characteristics, political beliefs, and presidential vulnerability, seeking to unravel the underlying mechanisms that drive these dynamics. By exploring the mediating role of political beliefs, we aim to gain deeper insights into how leaders' political orientations influence their perceptions, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of leadership in the context of local educational institutions. Figure 1 displays the interplay between leadership characteristics, political beliefs, and presidential vulnerability.

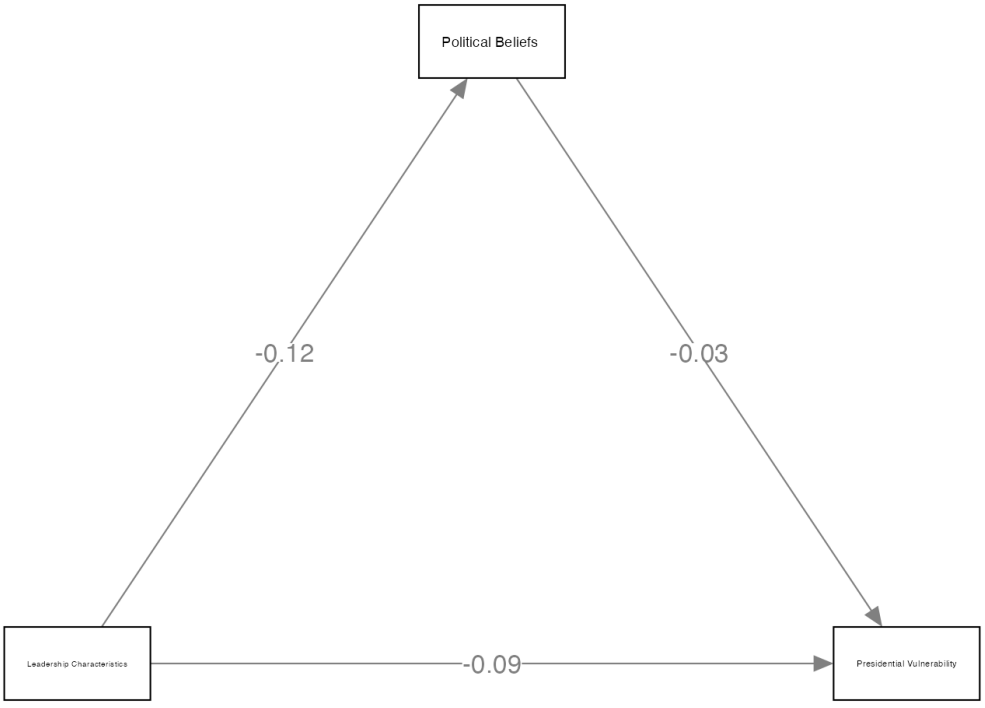


Fig. 2. Mediation Model

In the Mediator Model (m1), the investigation focused on understanding the relationship between "Leadership Characteristics" and "Political Beliefs." Surprisingly, the results indicated that "Leadership Characteristics" do not exert a statistically significant influence on an individual's "Political Beliefs." This suggests that, based on the data available for analysis, the presence or absence of particular leadership traits does not significantly explain or predict an individual's political beliefs. In essence, the data does not provide substantial evidence to support a strong and meaningful connection between these two variables.

Expanding the analysis to the Full Model, it is sought to explore the predictive power of "Political Beliefs" and "Leadership Characteristics" on "Presidential Vulnerability." However, the results were unexpected. Neither "Political Beliefs" nor "Leadership Characteristics" demonstrated a statistically significant ability to predict "Presidential Vulnerability." This implies that, within the scope of this analysis, these two variables alone do not provide a meaningful explanation for variations in an individual's vulnerability in a presidential context. Instead, the findings suggest that there are likely other unexamined factors that play a more substantial role in influencing an individual's level of "Presidential Vulnerability." In summary, these results indicate that, for the given variables and data, the relationships between "Leadership Characteristics" and "Political Beliefs" as well as their combined influence on "Presidential Vulnerability" are not statistically significant, highlighting the importance of considering additional factors in understanding these dynamics. Table 21 presents the statistical values of the Generalized Linear Model (GLM) mediation analysis, offering insights into the relationships among leadership characteristics, political beliefs, and presidential vulnerability within the context of Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) during local elections.

Table 21. Generalized Linear Model (GLM) Mediation Analysis

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	β	z	p
Indirect	Leadership Characteristics ⇒ Political Beliefs ⇒ Presidential Vulnerability	0.0050	0.0260	0.00352	0.194	0.846
Component	Leadership Characteristics ⇒ Political Beliefs	-0.186	0.1648	-0.12035	-1.135	0.257
	Political Beliefs ⇒ Presidential Vulnerability	-0.026	0.1001	-0.02927	-0.269	0.788
Direct	Leadership Characteristics ⇒ Presidential Vulnerability	-0.133	0.1481	-0.09357	-0.902	0.367
Total	Leadership Characteristics ⇒ Presidential Vulnerability	-0.128	0.1424	-0.09005	-0.903	0.367

Note. Confidence intervals computed with method: Parametric bootstrap

Note. Betas are completely standardized effect sizes

Indirect Effect. The indirect effect represents the influence of leadership characteristics on presidential vulnerability through the mediating role of political beliefs. The estimate for this indirect effect is 0.00503, with a standard error of 0.0260. The confidence interval for this effect ranges from -0.0461 to 0.0556, encompassing zero. This indicates that the indirect effect is not statistically significant (p = 0.846), suggesting that the path from leadership characteristics to presidential vulnerability through political beliefs does not have a meaningful impact.

Component Effects: Leadership Characteristics ⇒ Political Beliefs: This component effect is estimated at -0.18697, with a standard error of 0.1648. The confidence interval ranges from -0.5139 to 0.1321, and the p-value is 0.257. This component represents the relationship between leadership

characteristics and political beliefs. It appears that leadership characteristics have a negative but statistically non-significant impact on political beliefs.

Political Beliefs ⇒ Presidential Vulnerability: This component effect is estimated at -0.02689, with a standard error of 0.1001. The confidence interval ranges from -0.2207 to 0.1715, and the p-value is 0.788. This component represents the relationship between political beliefs and presidential vulnerability. It suggests that political beliefs have a negligible and statistically non-significant impact on presidential vulnerability.

Direct and Total Effects: Leadership Characteristics ⇒ Presidential Vulnerability: The direct effect of leadership characteristics on presidential vulnerability is estimated at -0.13358, with a standard error of 0.1481. The confidence interval ranges from -0.4224 to 0.1581, and the p-value is 0.367. This indicates that the direct relationship between leadership characteristics and presidential vulnerability is not statistically significant.

Total Effect: The total effect of leadership characteristics on presidential vulnerability, which combines both direct and indirect effects, is estimated at -0.12855, with a standard error of 0.1424. The confidence interval ranges from -0.4070 to 0.1513, and the p-value is 0.367. Like the direct effect, the total effect is not statistically significant. The GLM mediation analysis reveals that the relationships between leadership characteristics, political beliefs, and presidential vulnerability among LUCs leaders during local elections are not statistically significant. Specifically, the indirect effect, which represents the influence of leadership characteristics on presidential vulnerability through political beliefs, is negligible and lacks statistical significance. Additionally, the component effects and the direct effects do not show meaningful relationships. These findings suggest that in the context of this study, leadership characteristics do not significantly impact presidential vulnerability, whether directly or indirectly through political beliefs. It is essential to consider that this analysis does not establish a causal relationship but rather explores associations among the variables.

Based on the results of the GLM mediation analysis and the negligible effects observed, it can be implied that even if LUCs leaders possess high leadership characteristics and strong political beliefs, they may still be at risk or vulnerable in their positions during local elections. The statistical analysis suggests that these factors, in isolation or in combination, do not significantly influence or mitigate the perceived vulnerability of leaders in the context of local elections in LUCs. In practical terms, this would mean that other external and situational factors, which were not directly examined in this study, may play a more dominant role in determining the vulnerability of LUCs leaders during local elections. These factors could include local political dynamics, public opinion, institutional factors, and various contextual elements that might outweigh the influence of leadership traits and political beliefs (Leroy, 2018). Therefore, having strong leadership characteristics and aligned political beliefs may not provide sufficient protection against vulnerability or challenges that LUCs leaders could face during local elections. Leaders should be aware of the multifaceted nature of their vulnerability and consider a broader spectrum of factors when navigating the complexities of local electoral processes. Further research and examination of these external influences are warranted to better understand and address the specific sources of vulnerability in this context.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study underscores the intricate nature of leadership dynamics within LUCs during local elections, challenging preconceived notions about the relationships between leadership characteristics, political beliefs, and vulnerability. The comprehensive exploration of the intricate interplay among the variables using a Generalized Linear Model (GLM) mediation analysis delivered unexpected insights that challenge established assumptions. Contrary to prior beliefs, the analysis indicated that leadership characteristics do not significantly predict an individual's political beliefs. This finding not only reshapes the understanding but also highlights the complexity of these relationships.

As the investigation unfolded, another striking revelation emerged – neither leadership characteristics nor political beliefs emerged as substantial predictors of perceived vulnerability among leaders in Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) during local elections. This revelation, in essence, challenges the conventional wisdom that attributes vulnerability primarily to these factors alone. Instead, it raises fundamental questions about the primary determinants of vulnerability in the unique context of LUCs during local elections. It could be inferred that even when LUCs leaders possess high leadership characteristics and strong political beliefs, they remain susceptible to the dynamic landscape of local elections. This vulnerability becomes especially pronounced when factors beyond their control, such as electoral outcomes, come into play. For instance, the loss of an incumbent leader in the election can significantly impact the vulnerability of LUCs leaders, regardless of their leadership qualities and political convictions.

The following recommendations is suggested based on the findings of the study.

1. *Leadership Development Programs:* Government agencies can collaborate with LUCs to develop and implement leadership development programs. These programs should focus on enhancing leadership qualities that are adaptable and resilient in the face of dynamic political landscapes. Training programs can include crisis management, conflict resolution, and effective communication, which are crucial skills for leaders during local elections.
2. *Promoting Transparency and Ethical Leadership:* CHED can encourage LUCs leaders to adopt transparent and ethical leadership practices. This can be achieved through guidelines and training programs that emphasize the importance of transparent decision-making, responsible governance, and ethical conduct. Ethical leadership can help leaders navigate political challenges while maintaining public trust.
3. *Non-Partisan Approach:* LUCs leaders should practice non-partisanship during local elections, in accordance with Philippine laws. They should refrain from active involvement in political campaigns, endorsements, or partisan activities. Adhering to a non-partisan stance can help leaders maintain their impartiality and reduce perceived vulnerability.
4. *Engagement with Stakeholders*: LUCs leaders should actively engage with stakeholders within their institutions and local communities. Building strong relationships with faculty, staff, students, and local leaders can provide a support network that may mitigate vulnerability. Open channels of communication can also help leaders address concerns and maintain transparency.
5. *Succession Planning:* LUCs should invest in succession planning to ensure a smooth transition of leadership in case of electoral changes. Having a well-prepared successor can minimize disruptions and vulnerabilities when leadership changes occur due to local elections.
6. *Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:* LUCs should establish robust conflict resolution mechanisms. This ensures that any disputes or conflicts arising from political differences can be addressed promptly and fairly. These mechanisms can help maintain a conducive working environment even during politically charged periods.
7. *Further Studies*. Conduct in-depth case studies of individual LUCs or leaders who have faced unique challenges or have demonstrated exceptional resilience during local elections. These case studies can offer valuable insights into effective leadership strategies and the impact of political beliefs. It is also useful to explore instances of political interference in LUCs' internal affairs. Investigate cases where local politicians attempt to influence academic matters, appointments, or curricular decisions within LUCs and assess the consequences of such interference. Assess the impact of local government involvement on academic freedom within LUCs. Explore whether academic autonomy and freedom are compromised or upheld in the presence of political influence. Finally, investigate the legal framework governing the relationship between LUCs and local government in the Philippines. Analyze how existing laws and regulations define the roles and responsibilities of both parties and identify areas where legal reforms may be needed.

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