The Attributes and Professional Ethics of Local Administrators Significantly Influence Their Work Behaviors, Particularly in Terms of Transparency, Effective Administration, and Building Public Trust in Maha Sarakham Province

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Abstract

This study examines how the attributes and professional ethics of local administrators influence their work behavior, particularly in transparency, administrative effectiveness, and public trust in Maha Sarakham Province. The objectives were: (1) to examine the attributes of local administrators that affect work behavior related to transparency, effectiveness, and trust-building, and (2) to analyze the influence of professional ethics on these aspects of work behavior. A quantitative research design was employed, with a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The sample comprised 334 local administrators in Maha Sarakham Province, selected using appropriate sampling procedures. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics—frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation and multiple regression analysis. The findings reveal that both administrator attributes and professional ethics have statistically significant effects on work behavior concerning transparency, administrative effectiveness, and public trust. These results underscore the need to strengthen administrator qualifications and ethical standards to enhance organizational performance and reinforce confidence in local government institutions.

Keywords: Local administrator attributes; Professional ethics; Work behavior; Transparency; Administrative effectiveness; Public trust; Maha Sarakham Province

Introduction

Local administration is a key driver of socioeconomic development at the community level, serving as the primary mechanism for delivering public services, implementing local policies, and implementing development programs (Chinwe & Chukwuemeka, 2025). In Thailand, this role is especially critical in Maha Sarakham Province, where local government organizations are responsible for enhancing the quality of life and promoting sustainable development in rural and semi-urban communities (Worapongpat et al., 2025). Local administrators, as frontline decision-makers, are therefore expected to uphold transparency, ensure the efficient use of public resources, and build public trust in local governance (Chompotjananan & Vichit-Vadakan, 2022).

Despite this expectation, concerns persist regarding work behaviors among some local administrators in the province. These concerns include limited transparency in administrative processes, ineffective resource management, and declining public confidence in local institutions (Worapongpat, 2025a; 2025b). Such problems are often linked to administrator qualifications such as knowledge of relevant laws, policy competencies, and managerial capabilities, as well as the strength of their professional ethics, including integrity, fairness, and accountability (Thirawan, 2025; Chantarasombat, 2021).

Key constructs in this study reflect widely recognized theoretical perspectives. Transparency refers to the openness and clarity of administrative actions, enabling public scrutiny and reducing opportunities for corruption, consistent with principles of Ethical Leadership. (Worapongpat, 2025d). Administrative efficiency denotes the ability to manage resources, processes, and personnel effectively, aligning with Participative Management and competency-based administration. Public trust involves citizens' confidence in the integrity and performance of local authorities, which is shaped by both ethical conduct and consistent public service delivery (Gqamane & Taylor, 2013). Work behavior, in this context, encompasses administrators' observable actions and decisions that reflect their competencies and values in performing public duties. (Worapongpat, 2025e).

While research has examined public administration challenges in Thailand more broadly, there remains limited empirical evidence on how administrator qualifications and professional ethics jointly influence work behavior in the Northeastern provinces. Maha Sarakham presents a particularly relevant case due to ongoing administrative reforms, public complaints regarding governance practices, and demands for more accountable local management (Sratthakrang et al., 2024; Kitanant et al., 2025). This contextual distinctiveness highlights a critical research gap.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze how the attributes and professional ethics of local administrators influence their work behavior, particularly transparency, administrative efficiency, and public trust within Maha Sarakham Province. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of competency standards, inform ethical training programs, and support reforms that promote more transparent and equitable local governance.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the qualifications of local administrators that affect their work behavior in terms of transparency, administrative efficiency, and trust-building among citizens in Maha Sarakham Province.

2. To investigate the professional ethics of local administrators that influence their work behavior in terms of transparency, administrative efficiency, and trust-building among citizens in Maha Sarakham Province.

3. To analyze the combined influence of administrator qualifications and professional ethics on work behavior related to transparency, administrative efficiency, and trust-building among citizens in Maha Sarakham Province.

Hypotheses

H1: Administrator qualifications significantly influence work behavior related to transparency.

H2: Administrator qualifications significantly influence work behavior related to administrative efficiency.

H3: Administrator qualifications significantly influence work behavior related to trust-building among citizens.

Influence of Professional Ethics

H4: Professional ethics significantly influence work behavior related to transparency.

H5: Professional ethics significantly influence work behavior related to administrative efficiency.

H6: Professional ethics significantly influence work behavior related to trust-building among citizens.

Combined Influence of Qualifications and Ethics

H7: Administrator qualifications and professional ethics jointly influence work behavior related to transparency and administrative efficiency.

H8: Administrator qualifications and professional ethics jointly influence work behavior related to trust-building.

Literature Review

Local administration research increasingly highlights the importance of administrator qualifications and professional ethics in shaping effective governance. International studies show that administrators' knowledge of public policy, management skills, and ethical judgment significantly influence organizational transparency, administrative efficiency, and citizens' trust (Gqamane & Taylor, 2013). Ethical leadership theory further suggests that leaders who demonstrate integrity, fairness, and accountability cultivate organizational cultures that promote transparent behavior and public confidence (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Likewise, competency-based public administration models emphasize that qualifications such as legal knowledge, policy competence, and managerial skills directly contribute to improved service delivery and administrative outcomes (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

In the Thai context, several studies have examined administrator characteristics and ethical practices within local government organizations. Research indicates that insufficient professional ethics can lead to misconduct, weak accountability, and policy corruption (Kitanant et al., 2025), while strong ethical standards contribute to improved governance and citizen satisfaction (Chantarasombat, 2021). Studies also show that administrator qualifications, including administrative skills and knowledge of local governance laws, are essential for effective resource management and responsiveness to public needs (Thirawan, 2025). However, much of this literature tends to examine qualifications or ethics separately, rather than analyzing their combined influence on administrators' observable work behaviors, particularly transparency, efficiency, and public trust.

Although several theoretical and conceptual discussions exist, empirical research systematically connecting qualifications, ethics, and work behavior remains limited.

(Nua-amnat et al., 2021) note that studies often address these variables conceptually but seldom demonstrate how they interact to shape practical administrative behavior. The gap is

especially pronounced in local Thai government contexts, where administrative structures, cultural expectations, and community relationships shape work practices. Scholars argue that local socio-cultural norms such as community expectations, patron-client relationships, and local participation traditions may shape administrators' ethical standards and performance in ways that differ from national patterns (Singhalert, 2017; Phimkoh et al., 2015). This underscores the need for empirical research situated specifically within local contexts such as Maha Sarakham Province.

Another notable limitation in the literature is the limited incorporation of citizen perspectives. Many studies rely heavily on administrators or internal officials as respondents, overlooking the experiences of citizens who directly interact with local government services. Recent research suggests that public trust, perceptions of transparency, and evaluations of administrative efficiency are strongly influenced by citizens' expectations and lived experiences (Syadiyah et al., 2024). Incorporating citizen perspectives, therefore, provides a more comprehensive understanding of work behavior outcomes and strengthens the validity of governance assessments. (Worapongpat, 2025f).

In summary, existing research highlights the importance of qualifications and ethics in local governance but lacks integrated, context-specific, and citizen-informed analyses. There remains a substantial gap in understanding how qualifications (knowledge and skills) and professional ethics (integrity and responsibility) jointly influence work behaviors related to transparency, administrative efficiency, and public trust in local Thai administrative contexts, particularly in Maha Sarakham Province. Addressing these gaps, this study proposes a conceptual framework that links administrator qualifications and professional ethics to three key dimensions of work behavior, providing empirical evidence to support theoretical and practical improvements in local governance (Sinjindawong et al., 2023; Sirisawat & Chaiya, 2025).

Research Methodology

Population and Sample

The study population comprised all local administrators working in local government organizations (LGOs) across Maha Sarakham Province. This includes municipal mayors, deputy mayors, subdistrict administrative organization (SAO) presidents, vice presidents, and other executive-level positions specified under the Ministry of Interior regulations. According to the Department of Local Administration, the total population of administrators is 6,879.

The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1973) formula at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, resulting in a required sample of 385 administrators. Using simple random sampling, 385 questionnaires were distributed. A total of 334 completed questionnaires were returned and verified as usable, representing a response rate of 86.75%, which is acceptable for quantitative analysis.

Research Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed through (1) a review of relevant literature and prior research, (2) ethical guidelines for local government administrators, and (3) expert evaluation to ensure content validity.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections:

Section 1: General Information

Demographic and professional characteristics of respondents, including gender, age, education, administrative position, and years of experience.

Section 2: Qualifications of Local Administrators

Measured using items adapted from public administration competency frameworks. Five dimensions were assessed:

Knowledge of laws and public policy

Managerial and leadership skills

Administrative experience and expertise

Analytical and decision-making ability

Communication and coordination skills

(Example item: "I possess adequate knowledge of local administrative laws and regulations.")

Section 3: Professional Ethics of Local Administrators

Four ethical dimensions were included:

Integrity and transparency

Fairness and public-interest decision-making

Professional responsibility and adherence to standards

Confidentiality and avoidance of conflicts of interest

(Example item: "I make decisions based solely on fairness and the public interest.")

Section 4: Work Behavior of Local Administrators

Three behavioral outcomes were measured:

Transparency in administrative operations

Administrative efficiency

Building and maintaining public trust

(Example item: "I regularly disclose relevant information to ensure transparency.")

All items used a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was assessed by three experts in public administration and local governance. Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) values ranged from 0.67 to 1.00, meeting acceptable standards.

A pilot test with 30 similar respondents from a neighboring province was conducted prior to the main data collection. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha yielded the following coefficients:

Qualifications = 0.92

Professional ethics = 0.94

Work behavior overall = 0.93

Transparency = 0.90

Administrative efficiency = 0.89

Public trust = 0.91

All coefficients exceed the minimum accepted threshold of 0.70, demonstrating strong internal consistency.

Data Collection Procedures

Official permission was obtained from the Provincial Office of Local Administration Promotion and heads of relevant LGOs.

Questionnaires were distributed via direct delivery, e-mail, and Google Forms to accommodate different organizational contexts.

Respondents were briefed on the study purpose and assured of confidentiality.

Follow-up reminders were sent after one and two weeks to increase response rates.

Completed questionnaires were screened for completeness; invalid or partially completed responses were excluded.

Data collection was carried out between February and April 2025.

Data Analysis and Statistical Techniques

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 28.

Descriptive statistics:

Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to describe demographic data and all study variables.

Inferential statistics:

Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the influence of:

Independent Variables: Administrator qualifications and professional ethics

Dependent Variables:

Transparency

Administrative efficiency

Public trust

Separate regression models were estimated for each dependent variable.

Assumption testing:

Before conducting regression analysis, key assumptions were tested:

Normality (Kolmogorov–Smirnov test)

Linearity (scatterplots)

Multicollinearity (Variance Inflation Factor: VIF < 5)

Homoscedasticity (Breusch–Pagan test)

All assumptions were met.

Research Results

1. Response Rate and Demographic Characteristics of Respondents of the 385 questionnaires distributed to local administrators across Maha Sarakham Province, a total of 334 completed questionnaires were returned and verified, yielding a response rate of 86.75%. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of respondents.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 334)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	226	67.7%
	Female	108	32.3%
Age	Under 35 years	42	12.6%
	35–44 years	108	32.3%
	45–54 years	124	37.1%
	55 years and above	60	18.0%
Education	Upper secondary	28	8.4%
	Diploma / Vocational	43	12.9%
	Bachelor's degree	194	58.1%
	Master's degree and above	69	20.6%
Work Level	Mayor / Chief Executive	82	24.6%

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	Deputy Executive	118	35.3%
	Division/Unit Head	134	40.1%
Work Experience	< 5 years	56	16.8%
	5–10 years	97	29.0%
	11–20 years	128	38.3%
	> 20 years	53	15.9%

Note: All mean scores reported below represent levels of agreement measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = lowest, 5 = highest). They do not represent GPA or academic scores.

Model 1: Effect of Qualifications on Work Transparency

Table 2 Regression Results: Qualifications → Transparency**

Predictor	B	Beta	Sig.
Administrative Experience (EXP)	0.373	0.393	0.000*
Legal and Policy Knowledge (KAO)	0.415	0.350	0.000*

Model fit: R = 0.708, R² = 0.502, DW = 1.93

Interpretation: Experience and legal knowledge are the strongest predictors of transparency, jointly accounting for 50.2% of the variance.

Model 2: Effect of Qualifications on Administrative Efficiency

Table 3 Regression Results: Qualifications → Efficiency

Predictor	B	Beta	Sig.
Educational Attainment (QUA)	0.126	0.089	0.046*
Administrative Experience (EXP)	0.127	0.133	0.030*
Legal and Policy Knowledge (KAO)	0.412	0.345	0.000*
Analytical & Coordination Skills (ACS)	0.315	0.265	0.000*

Model fit: R = 0.775, R² = 0.601, DW = 2.04

Interpretation: All domains of qualifications significantly contribute to efficiency, explaining 60.1% of outcome variance.

Model 3: Effect of Qualifications on Public Trust

Table 4 Regression Results: Qualifications → Public Trust

Predictor	B	Beta	Sig.
Educational Attainment (QUA)	0.133	0.093	0.034*
Administrative Experience (EXP)	0.360	0.371	0.000*
Legal and Policy Knowledge (KAO)	0.427	0.352	0.000*

Model fit: R = 0.872, R² = 0.760, DW = 1.63
Interpretation: Public trust is best explained by experience and legal knowledge (76% variance).

Model 4: Effect of Ethics on Transparency

Table 5 Regression Results: Ethics → Transparency

Predictor	B	Beta	Sig.
Integrity & Transparency (IT)	0.509	0.520	0.000*
Competence & Standards (PKC)	0.247	0.205	0.000*

Model fit: R = 0.774, R² = 0.598, DW = 1.91

Interpretation: Ethical transparency and ethical competence explain 59.8% of transparency behavior.

Model 5: Effect of Ethics on Administrative Efficiency

Table 6 Regression Results: Ethics → Efficiency

Predictor	B	Beta	Sig.
Integrity & Transparency (IT)	0.118	0.120	0.034*
Fairness & Professional Conduct (FPC)	0.599	0.646	0.000*
Competence & Standards (PKC)	0.474	0.390	0.000*

Model fit: R = 0.790, R² = 0.624, DW = 1.94
Interpretation: Fairness and adherence to professional standards are the strongest ethical predictors of efficiency.

Model 6: Effect of Ethics on Public Trust

Table 7 Regression Results: Ethics → Public Trust

Predictor	B	Beta	Sig.
Integrity & Transparency (IT)	0.506	0.506	0.000*
Fairness & Professional Conduct (FPC)	0.127	0.135	0.028*
Competence & Standards (PKC)	0.214	0.173	0.000*

Model fit: R = 0.719, R² = 0.517, DW = 1.71

Interpretation: Ethical transparency is the strongest predictor of public trust, accounting for 51.7% of the variance.

Discussions

1. Interpretation of primary findings Qualifications → work behavior. The regression results show that administrative experience and knowledge of law and related policies consistently and strongly predict transparency, administrative efficiency, and public trust. Educational attainment and analytical/coordination skills also contributed to efficiency and trust, though with more minor standardized effects. These findings suggest that practical, context-specific competencies (experience + legal/policy knowledge) matter more for observable administrative behaviors than formal credentials alone. In other words, knowing how the local system works and having on-the-job experience enable administrators to make transparent, procedurally correct, and credible decisions for citizens. This pattern aligns with competency-based public administration and ethical leadership literature, which emphasizes applied knowledge and experience as drivers of compelling and legitimate governance (cf. Brown & Treviño-style ethical leadership arguments; local studies cited earlier, such as Thirawan, 2025; Chantarasombat, 2021). The high R² for public trust (0.76) indicates that qualifications, especially legal/policy knowledge and experience, explain a substantial portion of why citizens and stakeholders trust local officials. Ethics → work behavior Among ethical dimensions, integrity and transparency, and fairness/professional conduct were the most consistent predictors. Integrity and explicit ethical transparency strongly predicted administrative transparency and public trust, while fairness and adherence to professional standards were particularly important for administrative efficiency. These results highlight that ethical values are not merely moral ideals but also have measurable behavioral consequences: ethics shape decisions (fairness, adherence to standards) and information disclosure practices (transparency), which, in turn, influence citizens' trust. This supports theoretical claims from ethical leadership and institutional trust frameworks: when leaders model integrity and fairness, organizational norms shift toward accountability and consistent service delivery, producing higher citizen confidence (supported by local references such as Phuangpanya, 2024; Worapongpat, 2025c).

2. Accounting for mixed or non-significant findings. Not all predictors were significant across every model. For example, analytical and coordination skills were highly rated descriptively but were not always statistically significant in models predicting transparency or trust. Likewise, organizational confidentiality showed weaker and inconsistent relationships with outcomes. Possible explanations: Functional specificity: Analytical skills may primarily enhance internal decision quality (efficiency) rather than public-facing behaviors like

disclosure (transparency). This is consistent with their stronger role in the efficiency model but weaker role for transparency/trust. Measurement nuance: "Organizational confidentiality" can be double-edged. While confidentiality is essential for protecting sensitive information, excessive emphasis on confidentiality can appear as opacity to the public, reducing measurable transparency. Thus, the ambiguous effect may reflect tension between appropriate confidentiality and perceived secrecy. Contextual constraints: Local political culture, bureaucratic routines, or resource constraints in Maha Sarakham may curb the behavioral expression of some competencies; even competent administrators might be limited by institutional barriers (budget, political interference), which dilute the statistical effect of specific skills. These nuances underscore that high self-reported competence does not automatically translate into observable public-facing behaviors; context and institutional incentives mediate the translation of the attribute into action.

3. Theoretical contributions Three theoretical contributions emerge: Contextualized competency–ethics model: The study empirically demonstrates that qualifications and ethics operate jointly but with different strengths across outcomes, supporting an integrated model that links competency-based administration and ethical leadership to specific governance behaviors. Differentiation of predictors by outcome: The findings show that predictors are outcome-specific (e.g., legal knowledge/experience→trust; fairness/standards→efficiency), extending theory by suggesting that governance outcomes require distinct mixes of qualifications and ethics. Local-context emphasis: By situating the analysis within Maha Sarakham, the study provides empirical evidence that cultural and institutional contexts shape how attributes translate into practice, offering a case for more localized theorizing in public administration research.

4. Practical and policy implications. Based on the results, the following recommendations are warranted: Targeted capacity building: Prioritize practical training on local laws, public policy, and case-based problem solving for administrators. Programs that simulate real administrative scenarios are likely to have greater behavioral effects than general academic courses. Ethics training and institutionalization: Develop ethics programs that focus on integrity, procedural fairness, and transparent disclosure protocols (e.g., standardized public reporting templates and regular open meetings) to strengthen citizens' trust. Performance appraisal alignment: Link promotion and incentives to demonstrable transparency and citizen-centered outcomes (not only internal metrics), to align individual motivation with public-facing behaviors. Balance confidentiality with transparency: Create clear guidelines distinguishing legitimately confidential information from public data that must be disclosed. This reduces the "confidentiality vs. transparency" ambiguity that the data suggest. Institutional supports: Improve institutional capacity (ICT for public disclosure, clear standard operating procedures) so that skills and ethics can be enacted in everyday practice.

5. Limitations and directions for future research. Limitations: Cross-sectional, self-report design: Causal claims are limited, and common-method variance may inflate associations. Single-province focus: While contextually rich, generalizability beyond Maha Sarakham is limited. Respondent mix: This analysis relies on administrators' self-assessments; although some citizen-perspective data were planned, the present models analyze administrator reports, which can bias estimates. Future research should: Use longitudinal or experimental designs (e.g., pre-post training evaluations) to improve causal inference. Triangulate data sources by incorporating citizen surveys and objective performance indicators (audit reports, service delivery metrics). Conduct qualitative case studies to unpack institutional barriers that limit the translation of competencies into public behaviors. Replicate the study across other Thai provinces to test contextual generalizability and compare institutional variations.

Conclusion of the discussion section

Overall, the study demonstrates that both practical qualifications (experience, legal/policy knowledge) and core ethical dimensions (integrity, fairness) matter substantially for transparency, efficiency, and public trust in local governance. The nuanced patterns and mixed findings remind policymakers and scholars that improving governance requires aligned investments in skills, ethics, and institutional conditions tailored to local realities.

Conclusion

This study examined how the qualifications and professional ethics of local administrators influence their work behaviors related to transparency, administrative efficiency, and public trust in Maha Sarakham Province. The results demonstrate that both qualifications and ethics play important but differentiated roles in shaping governance behavior.

Empirically, the analyses show that administrative experience and knowledge of laws and local regulatory frameworks were the strongest predictors across all behavioral outcomes, particularly in enhancing transparency and public trust. Educational attainment and analytical/coordination skills also contributed positively, though with more minor, less consistent effects. Among ethical variables, integrity, transparency, and fairness, and adherence to professional standards emerged as the most influential factors, significantly improving administrative transparency and effective performance. In contrast, organizational confidentiality showed weaker and more ambiguous relationships, suggesting tensions between maintaining confidentiality and ensuring openness in local governance.

Collectively, these findings support the core propositions of Ethical Leadership and Participative Management theories. Leaders who demonstrate honesty, openness in decision-making, fairness, and professional responsibility foster organizational environments that encourage accountability, improve administrative performance, and strengthen citizens' trust. The results also reinforce the argument that ethical conduct and practical competency must operate together to produce meaningful improvements in public-sector behavior, particularly in decentralized governance contexts such as Thai local administrative organizations.

The study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from a provincial Thai setting, highlighting how local institutional conditions shape the impact of both skills and ethics on administrative outcomes. This contextualized understanding is essential for designing capacity-building and ethics-development programs suited to the realities of local government operations.

Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference, and reliance on self-report measures may introduce social desirability or common-method bias. The focus on a single province also limits generalizability. Future studies should incorporate multiple data sources, include citizen perspectives, and adopt longitudinal or mixed-methods approaches to capture better how competencies and ethical standards translate into long-term behavioral change.

Overall, the study underscores that strengthening local governance requires simultaneous investment in administrators' practical competencies, ethical foundations, and institutional supports. Enhancing these areas is crucial not only for improving administrative transparency and efficiency but also for sustaining public trust in local government organizations.

Suggestion

Policy Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following policy measures are proposed to enhance the qualifications, ethics, and overall work behavior of local administrators in Maha Sarakham Province:

- Strengthen Competency Development

Establish continuous professional development programs focusing on analytical and coordination skills, decision-making, and strategic planning for local administrators.

Provide structured opportunities for administrators to gain practical experience through real-world projects, inter-organizational exchanges, or mentorship programs, thereby reinforcing administrative proficiency.

- Enhance Ethical Standards and Accountability

Clearly define ethical guidelines and codes of conduct for local administrators, emphasizing integrity, transparency, fairness, and adherence to professional standards.

Implement regular evaluations of ethical behavior using mechanisms such as ethics committees, performance reviews, or recognition systems for exemplary conduct.

Introduce confidential reporting systems (e.g., whistle-blower channels) to monitor and address ethical violations.

- Promote Transparent and Citizen-Centered Governance

Develop management systems and procedures that prioritize transparency and public participation in decision-making.

Facilitate structured communication and feedback mechanisms, such as town hall meetings, participatory budgeting, and digital feedback platforms, to strengthen trust and responsiveness to citizens' needs.

Encourage participative management practices that integrate citizen input into planning, monitoring, and evaluation of local services.

Recommendations for Future Research

The present study provides insights into how qualifications and ethics influence work behavior, but additional factors and methodological approaches could be explored in future research:

- Expanded Environmental Factors

Examine organizational culture, incentive systems, and the role of digital technology in shaping administrative behavior and transparency.

- Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Investigate mechanisms for assessing and monitoring the ethical conduct of local administrators, including longitudinal tracking of behavior changes.

- Citizen-Centered Perspectives

Incorporate empirical assessments of citizens' perceptions, expectations, and satisfaction with local governance to complement administrator-focused data.

- Methodological Improvements

Employ longitudinal or mixed-methods designs that combine surveys, interviews, and observational data to capture causal relationships and contextual influences better.

Consider multilevel modeling to account for both individual administrator characteristics and organizational or community-level factors that affect governance outcomes.

New Knowledge

This study provides several novel insights into the relationships among qualifications, professional ethics, and work behavior of local administrators in Maha Sarakham Province. The key contributions are summarized as follows:

Key Attributes of Local Administrators Affecting Work Behavior
Core Ethics Driving Positive Work Behavior
Work Practices Promoting Transparency and Efficiency
Context-Specific Contributions
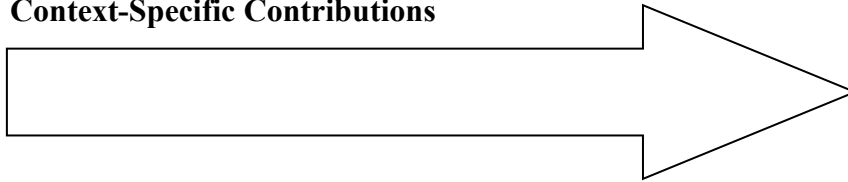
Key Attributes of Local Administrators Affecting Work Behavior

The study identifies that analytical and coordination skills, together with administrative experience, are the most significant attributes influencing transparent, efficient, and trust-building work behaviors. While previous research has generally highlighted the importance of qualifications, this study quantifies their relative impact on specific dimensions of local governance, demonstrating that legal knowledge and administrative experience are consistently strong predictors of effective work behavior in the Thai local government context.

Core Ethics Driving Positive Work Behavior.

Integrity, transparency, fairness, and adherence to professional standards were confirmed as critical ethical components that strongly influence administrators' performance. Notably, this study shows how these ethical dimensions interact with competencies to enhance public trust, providing empirical evidence from a context-specific setting that has previously been underexplored in Thailand.

Work Practices Promoting Transparency and Efficiency. The research highlights that integrating key attributes and ethics into daily administrative practices, particularly by emphasizing transparency, accountability, and citizen participation, leads to more responsible, efficient, and effective governance. This finding extends prior theoretical frameworks by demonstrating a practical pathway through which qualifications and ethics translate into measurable work behaviors, providing actionable insights for local government management and policy formulation.

Context-Specific Contributions. By focusing on Maha Sarakham Province, the study offers context-specific evidence that complements and extends broader international and national findings. Local socio-cultural factors, citizen expectations, and governance structures are shown to shape how administrator attributes and ethics manifest in actual work behavior.

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