

## Implementation Of Transparency and Accountability in Barangay Sta. Rita & San Nicolas Minalin, Pampanga

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**Abstract.** The research conducted in Barangay Sta. Rita and San Nicolas, Minalin, Pampanga, aimed to investigate the implementation of transparency and accountability among barangay officials. The study found a majority of female respondents, indicating a positive trend towards gender diversity in leadership roles. Furthermore, respondents in the 36-40 age group were most prevalent, suggesting active engagement from individuals with valuable experience. Marriage was common among respondents, reflecting the importance of familial support in leadership roles. High school graduates comprised the majority, highlighting the significance of practical knowledge in governance. Regarding tenure, a substantial number of respondents had served for 13-20 years, indicating deep community knowledge among experienced officials. In terms of transparency and accountability, the research uncovered commendable practices. Barangay officials demonstrated efficiency in budget management, public service delivery, local legislation, elections, infrastructure development, community engagement, conflict resolution, and resource management. The weighted means for each domain ranged from 3.73 to 4.10, indicating highly implemented practices across various governance aspects. These findings underscore the success of barangay officials in upholding high standards of transparency and accountability, serving as a model for effective local governance. The research suggests the importance of investing in professional development for officials, promoting gender and age diversity, and enhancing community engagement to sustain these positive practices. Ultimately, the implications extend beyond Barangay Sta. Rita and San Nicolas, highlighting the potential for positive change in local governance structures to improve community well-being.

**Keywords:** Accountability; Barangay governance; Community engagement; Transparency; Professional development

### 1. Introduction

The Philippines, a nation known for its breath-taking landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and vibrant communities, has, unfortunately, garnered a reputation for being criticized as a corrupt country. Scandals, allegations of misappropriation of public funds, and a perceived lack of accountability have plagued the country's government, raising concerns both domestically and on the international stage (Ong, 2018). The roots of this issue delve deep into the socio-political fabric of the nation, necessitating a comprehensive examination of the state of governance at its most grassroots level, the Barangays. The Philippines has, over the years, faced consistent criticism for its struggle against corruption. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index and various international watchdogs have ranked the country poorly in terms of corruption

levels (Boysillo, 2017). Allegations of graft, embezzlement, and misuse of public resources have cast a long shadow over the nation's potential progress. The consequences of corruption are far-reaching, impacting the country's socio-economic development, diminishing trust in government institutions, and perpetuating poverty (Frivaldo, 2019).

The imperative for the Philippines to strive for a government grounded in transparency and accountability cannot be overstated. Transparency and accountability are fundamental pillars of good governance (Bastian, 2020). They ensure that the government acts in the best interests of the citizens, utilizes public resources efficiently, and maintains the rule of law. An accountable government is essential for fostering trust between the people and their leaders. Moreover, it is critical for attracting investment, spurring economic growth, and improving the overall quality of life for citizens. Transparency and accountability are not confined to national or municipal governments; they should begin at the most local level of governance, the Barangays. Barangays are the smallest political units in the Philippines, and they serve as the primary interface between the government and the people. It is at this level that citizens experience the tangible impact of governance decisions on their daily lives, making transparency and accountability within Barangays of paramount importance (Magno, 2020).

The challenge, however, lies in implementing and upholding transparency and accountability in these community-level governments (Carpio, 2020). Achieving transparency and accountability in Barangays requires clear systems and processes for financial management, open access to information, ethical conduct of officials, and mechanisms for citizen participation (Aquino, 2017). This necessitates not only effective policies but also a culture shift within the Barangay administration and among its residents. Regrettably, there is a dearth of studies focusing on the specific topic of "Transparency and Accountability in Barangays" in the Philippines (Gutierrez, 2017). While extensive research has been conducted at the national level, this crucial grassroot level has been relatively overlooked. This study aims to bridge this gap by shedding light on the current state of transparency and accountability in Barangay Sta. Rita and San Nicolas, Minalin, Pampanga, providing actionable insights for improvements (Valerio, 2018). Moreover, the researcher, as a Master of Public Administration student, is deeply committed to advocating for good governance and believes this research aligns with their main agenda of advancing public administration principles, which are vital for the betterment of the Philippines and its people (Bueno, 2021).

The realization of a transparent and accountable government at the Barangay level in the Philippines is not only desirable but essential for the nation's progress. By focusing on Barangay Sta. Rita and San Nicolas, Minalin, Pampanga, this study aims to unearth the specific challenges, pinpoint areas for improvement, and contribute to a broader understanding of how to foster good governance practices at the local level, ultimately making the Philippines a more just, equitable, and transparent nation. The need to conduct this study is underscored by several critical factors that warrant a comprehensive examination of transparency and accountability at the Barangay level, particularly in Barangay

Sta. Rita and San Nicolas, Minalin, Pampanga. These factors encompass not only the academic and research-based aspects but also the practical implications for governance, community development, and the nation as a whole.

Transparency and accountability in Barangays are inextricably linked to the welfare and active participation of citizens. A government that is open and accountable to its residents fosters an engaged citizenry. This study can serve as an advocacy tool for empowering the residents of Barangay Sta. Rita and San Nicolas to demand better governance, ultimately improving their quality of life. Generally, this study sought to assess the level of implementation of transparency and accountability in Barangay Sta. Rita and San Nicolas, Minalin, Pampanga. Specifically, the study addressed the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of Age, Gender, Civil Status, Educational Background, and Years in the Service?
2. What is the level of transparency and accountability of the respondents in terms of Budget and Finance, Public Services, Local Legislation and Decision Making, Elections and Governance, Infrastructure and Development, Community Engagement, Conflict Resolution and Justice, and Resource Management?
3. What suggestions or recommendations can be proposed or developed to improve the level of implementation of transparency and accountability in Barangay Sta. Rita and San Nicolas, Minalin, Pampanga?

## 2. Methodology

This study will be conducted in selected barangays of the Municipality of Minalin, Pampanga. Minalin is a fourth-class municipality and a town in Pampanga, Philippines. It is also known as the egg basket of the Northern Philippines. According to the 2020 census, it has a population of 48,380. It lies on the west side of the capital city of San Fernando. The Municipality of Minalin is politically subdivided into fifteen (15) barangays, one of which is in the poblacion. (Wikipedia: Minalin , n.d.) (DTI Philippines , n.d.) This study used descriptive research to gather information from respondents about barangay captains' openness and accountability in selected Minalin, Pampanga, and barangays. This study sought to learn about Minalin barangay captains' openness and accountability. Descriptive designs can help grasp a problem and its factors and features. They are narrower and more specialized than prototype designs. The research used a simple survey questionnaire.

### 2.1. Sampling Procedure

The sampling procedure involved selecting respondents from Barangay Sta. Rita and Barangay San Nicolas in Minalin, Pampanga. The selection process aimed to ensure representation across different demographic groups within the barangays. Specifically, respondents were chosen based on gender, age, marital status, educational background, and length of service in barangay leadership roles. This diverse sampling approach aimed to capture a comprehensive

understanding of transparency and accountability practices across various segments of the community.

### 2.2. Respondents

The respondents for this study were selected from Barangay Sta. Rita and Barangay San Nicolas in Minalin, Pampanga. They comprised individuals actively involved in barangay leadership roles, including barangay officials and community members engaged in local governance activities. The selection criteria ensured representation across different demographic categories, such as gender, age, marital status, educational background, and length of service in barangay leadership positions. This diverse group of respondents provided insights into the perceptions and experiences regarding transparency and accountability practices within the barangay governance structure.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The majority of respondents were female (44) compared to male respondents (31), indicating increasing gender diversity in barangay governance. This trend suggests a positive step towards gender equity and brings fresh perspectives to decision-making processes. The 36-40 age group had the highest number of respondents (26), indicating active engagement in barangay leadership. This age bracket represents experienced individuals contributing to governance. Most respondents were married (38), indicating stability and support from families in their leadership roles. This marital status could influence governance dynamics. High school graduates constituted the majority (34), highlighting the value of practical knowledge in local governance. The diversity in educational backgrounds brings varied perspectives to leadership. The largest group had served for 13-20 years (18), indicating significant experience in community dynamics and governance. Newer officials (2-6 and 7-12 years of service) bring fresh perspectives to leadership roles.

### 3.2 Level of Transparency and Accountability of the Respondents

The second problem of this study focuses on the level of transparency and accountability of the respondents in terms of Budget and Finance, Public Services, Local Legislation and Decision Making, Elections and Governance, Infrastructure and Development, Community Engagement, Conflict Resolution and Justice, and Resource Management.

**Table 1** Level of Transparency and Accountability of the Respondents

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Budget and Finance	4.03	Highly Implemented
Public Service	4.04	Highly Implemented

***Continued... Table 1***

Local Legislation and Decision Making	3.93	Highly Implemented
Elections and Governance	3.88	Highly Implemented
Infrastructure and Development	4.09	Highly Implemented
Community resolution and justice	3.93	Highly Implemented
Conflict resolution and justice	4.10	Highly Implemented
Resource management	3.37	Highly Implemented

Table 1 shows the level of transparency and accountability of the respondents. Barangay officials are perceived to manage financial resources transparently and efficiently. Highly implemented with a weighted mean of 4.03. This result implies that the Barangay officials are doing an excellent job in terms of managing the budget transparency and accountability. They likely provide clear and easily accessible information about budget allocations and financial expenditures. Residents may trust that public funds are used efficiently and that there are mechanisms in place to prevent corruption and financial mismanagement. This result also indicates that the Barangay might actively engage the community in financial decision-making, allowing residents to provide input and scrutiny of budget-related matters. Similarly, the study of Gabriel et al. (2022) on Barangay officials indicates that high levels of transparency and accountability contribute to effective budget management and prevent corruption. High levels of transparency ensure that the community is well-informed about budget distributions and financial spending, building trust among residents. This also empowers residents to examine fund usage, aiding in the detection of irregularities. Mechanisms for holding officials accountable ensure they are responsible for their actions, making them answerable to the community for their financial decisions. The fusion of transparency and accountability fosters ethical conduct in managing budgets, reducing the risk of corruption within the Barangay.

Public services are easily accessible and distributed fairly within the community, in line with literature highlighting equitable service delivery. The high implementation rate, with a weighted mean of 4.04, suggests that Barangay officials are doing an excellent job in delivering public services transparently and accountably. They likely ensure that public services are readily available to all residents and are distributed fairly within the community. The Barangay may also actively seek residents' input, respond promptly to service requests, and provide clear information on public service projects. Research findings on the delivery of public services in Barangay settings align closely with good governance principles



outlined in a study conducted by Gabriel & Gutierrez (2017) in Nueva Ecija, Philippines. Illustrating how adherence to good governance principles correlates positively with improved service delivery underscores their significance for local governance contexts. The studies highlight fostering opportunities for public input and scrutiny while ensuring inclusive decision-making processes responsive to community needs. This suggests a broader trend where compliance with good governance principles is associated with enhanced service delivery and organizational outcomes. Further research could explore specific mechanisms through which transparency and accountability contribute to improved public service provision and increase organizational effectiveness in local government settings.

Highly implemented with a weighted mean of 3.93. This implies that the Barangay officials have been successful in maintaining a level of transparency where residents feel informed about the decision-making processes and can participate in discussions and debates regarding community matters. Furthermore, the verbal interpretation of "Highly Implemented" suggests that the majority of respondents perceive the Barangay as actively encouraging public engagement, welcoming residents' opinions, and making an effort to provide information on decisions and legislative actions. According to Casimiro et al. (2020), these practices contribute to building public trust and confidence in the Barangay officials' ability to make decisions in the best interests of the community.

The electoral process is viewed as fair and free from manipulation, consistent with literature emphasizing the importance of free and fair elections in democratic governance. Highly implemented with a weighted mean of 3.88. This implies that the Barangay officials have been successful in conducting elections in a fair and impartial manner, promoting voter education and participation, and ensuring that elected officials are accountable for their actions. The verbal interpretation of "Highly Implemented" suggests that the majority of respondents perceive the Barangay as actively encouraging and upholding the principles of a democratic process. Vilma et al. (2020), suggests that while the electoral process ensures accountability of elected officials, effective dissemination of ordinances ensures community leaders are well-informed about laws within their jurisdictions. Respondents trust that elected officials are chosen based on qualifications and merit, supported by mechanisms to address election-related grievances. These practices contribute to building public trust and confidence in both electoral processes and governance.

Information on projects is readily available, and projects are completed within budget and timeframe, reflecting principles of effective project management discussed in infrastructure development literature. The 4.09 weighted mean indicates that Barangay officials have succeeded in providing readily accessible information about infrastructure projects, engaging the community in decision-making and planning, and efficiently managing these projects within budget and timeframe. The verbal interpretation of "Highly Implemented" underscores that the majority of respondents feel confident that

the Barangay actively promotes transparency, prevents corruption and mismanagement in development projects, and delivers projects that contribute to the community's well-being.

Residents feel encouraged to participate in community activities and decision-making processes, consistent with literature emphasising the importance of citizen engagement in local governance. Highly implemented with a weighted mean of 3.93. This implies that the Barangay officials have been successful in actively encouraging residents to participate in community activities and decision-making, welcoming their opinions and contributions, and providing opportunities for community members to get involved in local initiatives. The verbal interpretation of "Highly Implemented" suggests that the majority of respondents perceive the Barangay as fostering a sense of unity and community spirit. The findings regarding residents' active participation in community activities and decision-making processes within Barangays resonate with Antonio et al. (2022), emphasising the importance of millennial community leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the evolving dynamics of leadership, particularly among younger generations, and their commitment to responsibility and accountability in addressing community challenges.

Clear mechanisms for resolving disputes and conflicts contribute to public trust, reflecting the importance of access to justice and conflict resolution mechanisms in maintaining social order. Highly implemented with a weighted mean of 4.10. This result suggests that the level of transparency and accountability in managing conflict resolution and justice-related matters is robust and consistently exceeds community expectations. With a weighted mean of 4.10, significantly above the midpoint on a typical 5-point scale, respondents overwhelmingly believe that transparency and accountability practices related to conflict resolution and justice are not just effective but highly commendable.

While perceived positively, there's room for improvement in managing and allocating resources, echoing discussions in the literature on resource governance and sustainable development. Highly implemented with a weighted mean of 3.73. This implies that the Barangay officials have been successful in managing and allocating resources efficiently while ensuring they are used responsibly and for the benefit of the community. The verbal interpretation of "Highly Implemented" suggests that the majority of respondents perceive the Barangay as actively promoting transparency and preventing corruption and mismanagement in resource allocation. These practices contribute to building public trust and confidence in the Barangay's ability to manage resources in the community's best interests.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, the findings derived from this survey of barangay officials paint a highly encouraging picture of local governance in the community. The prevalence of high scores in transparency and accountability across various domains, from budget management to infrastructure development, reflects the

dedication of barangay officials to fostering public trust and ensuring the efficient use of public resources. These officials have successfully created an environment that actively encourages community engagement, fair conflict resolution, and responsible resource management. Moreover, the demographic diversity among these officials, from gender balance to a mix of ages, educational backgrounds, and lengths of service, underscores the commitment to inclusivity and a well-rounded approach to local leadership. The community stands to benefit from such dedication and diversity, as it ensures that the evolving needs and aspirations of residents are met through effective and responsive governance. These findings also highlight the importance of recognizing that effective governance is not solely determined by formal education or tenure in office. Instead, the success of local leaders stems from their commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and the well-being of the community. The prevalence of highly implemented practices in critical domains suggests a forward-looking approach to governance that balances experience with fresh perspectives, and it sets a positive example for other communities aiming to enhance their local governance structures. As the community continues to evolve, the proactive engagement, responsible decision-making, and resource management demonstrated by barangay officials ensure that the barangay remains a vibrant and thriving part of the local landscape.

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