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**Citizen's Level of Participation and Satisfaction in Barangay Assembly:  
A Case of Philippine LGU**

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## CITIZEN'S LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION AND SATISFACTION IN BARANGAY ASSEMBLY: A CASE OF PHILIPPINE LGU

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this paper is to examine the extent of citizen participation and citizen satisfaction in local governance because of the powers of the Barangay assembly as stated in the Local Government Code of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 7160). This study aims at exploring the dynamic interplay of citizen's satisfaction in the conduct of Barangay assembly relative to their participation in the said assembly as a platform towards participatory local governance. Based on the results of our study, we recommended that the LGU participation and regular attendance in Barangay assemblies should be intensified, along with that, the citizen's participation and citizen's satisfaction right after the conduct of the Barangay assembly should have a feedback mechanism, and based on the findings of our study we presented policy implications and insights essential for enhancing what is contained in Chapter 6 of the Local Government Code of the Philippines (LGC of 1991).*

**Keywords:** *Barangay Assembly; Citizen's Participation, Satisfaction, Local Government*



## A. Introduction

An inclusive society, where there is high citizen participation in the affairs of local governance, is a success in democracy. It must be denoted that participation, together with their satisfaction related to local governance and decision-making is essential to realize this type of society. (Cleary, Matthew R; Stokes, 2006)

In the Philippine context, the grassroots level of participation in the affairs of local governance is exercise at the Barangay level, as noted in the Local Government Code of the Philippines (Pimentel, 1991).

“[T]he barangay level of the local government is the *basic political unit* which serves as the primary planning and implementing unit of government policies, plans, programs, projects, and activities in the community, and [where the] *collective views of the people may be expressed, crystallized and considered, and where disputes may be amicably settled*” (Book III Chapter 1, Section 384). [Underscoring added].

The Local Government Code of the Philippines (Pimentel, 1991) institutionalized citizen’s participation in local governance and decision-making utilizing barangay assembly, which is the authorized venue in which the viewpoints of citizens might be communicated, take shape, and deliberated, and where conflict may be settled amicably. On this point,

“... [T]here shall be a barangay assembly composed of all persons who are actual residents of the barangay for *at least six (6) months, fifteen (15) years of age or over, citizens of the Philippines, and duly registered in the list of barangay assembly members* .... [T]his [barangay assembly shall meet at least twice a year to hear and discuss the semestral report of the Sangguniang barangay [barangay council] concerning its activities and finances as well as problems affecting the barangay” (Section 397 of LGC of 1991). [Underscoring added]

This provision appears that the consequence of citizen participation in the affairs of local governance and decision-making in the Philippine context could not be taken too lightly. If we want to look at the inclusivity of the affairs in local governance as mandated, this should be



viewed through the lens of citizen's participation in barangay assembly. There is a need to look at citizen's satisfaction with their participation in the affairs of local governance as seen from the point of the mandated barangay assembly. Thus, the quality of barangay assembly becomes discernible in the extent of participation and in the level of satisfaction of those citizens that attended it.

At present, there is a dearth of research studies on the topic of citizen participation as it relates to the Barangay Assembly. An example can be gleaned from the studies of (Adorable, 2012) and (Caparas, M; Agrawal, 2016), which are the nearest so far in this topic of barangay assembly as a platform for citizens participation in local governance. In pursuing this topic of research, it will provide insights relevant to barangay officials as to the dynamic interplay of participation and satisfaction of citizens in the conduct of barangay assembly, and in the affairs of local governance and decision-making; and will contribute to the scarcity of relevant researches in this area.

Specifically, the study will identify the effects of citizen's level of satisfaction to their participation or non-participation. This will furnish relevant information to the local government unit by providing a basis for enhancement and evaluation to improve the policies and encourage the citizens to take part in participatory governance. It will also provide an advantage to the following: 1) the citizens that will empower their rights and privileges in terms of voicing out public opinion to create efficient and sustainable programs and services of the barangay; 2) the barangay in which this study can increase public support and sustain efficient programs and services; 3) the officials for legitimate political efforts and credible decision making which can provide alternative solutions and recommendations as to the basis of decision making and policy proposals; and 4) it will serve as a model to other barangays, officials, researchers to contribute from the basic political unit to the totality of the nation, specifically in participatory governance.

This topic of research will attempt to examine citizen's participation, their experiences, and satisfaction in the context of a particular Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU). From the findings, policy or strategy will be created as





a viable intervention program that could enhance citizen's participation. Thus, the following questions must be measured to realize the mentioned objectives: 1) *what is the extent of citizen participation in the barangay assembly?* 2) *what is the extent of citizen satisfaction in the barangay assembly?* 3) *does citizen's satisfaction affected their participation in barangay assembly?* and 4) *what are the viewpoints of citizens relative to their satisfaction and participation in Barangay Assembly?*

The answers to these questions will help Local Government Unit officials and community leaders to learn the importance of getting the pulse of its constituents relative to their levels of satisfaction and participation in the conduct of Barangay assembly. Hence, this could provide insight, on the part of LGU officials, of the interplay between citizen's satisfaction and participation in local governance and decision-making. This could provide a basis for coming up with a strategy in enhancing the frequency of doing Barangay assembly, and improving the quality of citizen's satisfaction and participation. This can provide an opening for the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to diagnose the relationship between BLGU constituents and officials. The study expects to contribute to the growth of citizen's participation in one BLGU in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines, and hopefully, positively influence the conduct of barangay assemblies of the other seventy-nine Barangay LGUs in the city.

This study is done within the confines of one BLGU and does not generalize its findings for all other BLGUs in Cagayan de Oro City in particular, and to the rest of BLGUs in the Philippines in general. Since the insights of both Barangay officials and constituents will be elicited, the study will expect insight differentials and subjectivity in participants' responses, which will be mitigated by focusing on their collective thoughts and concerns within the purview of the Local Government Code mandate relative to Barangay assembly.

## **B. Method**

### **1. Research Design**

In this study, the researcher used a mixed-method approach which implied collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data to



ascertain the effect of the variables being dealt with in this study (Creswell, J; Plano Clark, V; Gutmann, M; Hanson, 2003), namely: citizen's experiences in barangay assemblies, their level of satisfaction, and the participation of the citizens.

The research locale was Barangay Bulua in Cagayan De Oro City, Philippines. It is one of the fastest developing barangays with 14,166 registered voters in 2018 (COMELEC, 2018), ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the top 10 most populous barangays of Cagayan de Oro City with a population of 32, 348, which is 10% of the City's population (Authority, 2015).

The research informants and participants involved 247 sample respondents for the survey questionnaires; 15 participants were asked to participate in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). These fifteen consisted of current officials of the Barangay, citizens who have participated in the 2018 1<sup>st</sup> Semester Barangay Assembly, zone leaders, association leaders, civil societies and private organizations; and, citizens who failed to participate in the 2018 1<sup>st</sup> Semester Barangay Assembly. These informants and participants were taken from the 366 attendees of the 2018 1<sup>st</sup> Semester Barangay Assembly records.

## **2. Data Collection and Analysis**

### **a. Quantitative Data**

Step 1: A survey instrument was developed, pretested, and subjected to exploratory factor analysis to determine its validity and reliability before it was used in the actual data gathering. As such, all data coming from this survey were subjected to Descriptive Statistical Analysis. It used a 7-point Likert Scale that measured the respondent's level of satisfaction and participation, this answers Questions no. 1 and no. 2 of this study.

#### **1) Citizen's Satisfaction**

It ranges from very highly satisfied with a corresponding score of 7, highly satisfied given a score of 6, satisfied a score of 5, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied a score of 4, dissatisfied a score of 3, highly dissatisfied a score of 2 and very highly dissatisfied a score of 1. The scores on the level of participation and satisfaction are then analyzed and interpreted based on the following:



Scores	Interpretation
6.02 – Above	Very highly satisfied
5.16 – 6.01	Highly satisfied
4.30 – 5.15	Satisfied
3.44 – 4.29	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
2.58 – 3.43	Dissatisfied
1.72 – 2.57	Highly dissatisfied
Below – 1.71	Very highly dissatisfied

## 2) Citizen’s Participation

It ranges from very highly participative with a corresponding score of 7, highly participative a score of 6, participative a score of 5, neither participative nor non-participative a score of 4, non-participative a score of 3, highly non-participative a score of 2, and very highly non-participative a score of 1. The scores on the level of participation and satisfaction are then analyzed and interpreted based on the following:

Scores	Interpretation
6.02 – Above	Very highly participative
5.16 – 6.01	Highly participative
4.30 – 5.15	Participative
3.44 – 4.29	Neither participative nor non-participative
2.58 – 3.43	Non-participative
1.72 – 2.57	Highly non-participative
Below – 1.71	Very highly non-participative

Step 2: Moreover, Simple Linear Regression was also used to answer Question no. 3 of this study.

### b. Qualitative Data

Step 3: Triangulation Approach was employed through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as a means of further deepening the survey findings and elicit further insights. Given the explanatory sequential research design of the study, there is a need to emphasize that the questions that were formulated for the FGD took its cue from the analysis of the quantitative data results or the survey. A Key Informant Interview (KII) was done to officials of the DILG to complement the relevant findings that transpire during the FGD. This will answer Question no. 4 of this study.



## **C. Finding and Discussion**

### **1. Finding**

The Barangay level is considered to be the closest access and proximity to the people. Hence, the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) is the most appropriate level to study citizen's participation and satisfaction in local governance and decision-making because, under the Philippine context of decentralization, active participation of citizens in the barangay assemblies is to be expected (Lavado, 2009).

In the BLGU archival records shown in Table 1, it revealed that in the last three years beginning calendar year 2016 to 2018, the only years in which records of Barangay assembly attendance is available, citizen's attendance, on average, is only 2.54% of the total number of registered voters.

Table 1. Barangay Assemblies Attendance by Number of Actual Attendees, by Percentage, and with Qualified Number of Citizens to Attend Barangay Assemblies, Barangay Bulua, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines, Calendar Year 2016-2018.

Year	Qualified Number of Citizens to Attend Barangay Assembly*	Barangay Assemblies Attendance Number of Actual Attendees	%
2016	14,022	378	2.69
2017	14,156	331	2.34
2018	14,166	366	2.58

With this low level of citizen's attendance, the sustainability of government policies, plans, programs, projects, and activities, as envisioned in Section 384 of the Local Government Code (Pimentel, 1991), becomes doubtful (Coldevin, 1987).

Therefore, it is reasonable to expect the question of whether such a small number of citizen's attendees is enough to constitute as representative of the more or less fourteen thousand citizens qualified to attend Barangay assemblies in the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU).



It is certain that this low number of citizen's attendees in those Barangay assemblies have repercussions to the powers vested by the Local Government Code of the Philippines, as stated in Section 398, Paragraph A, B, and C of the Local Government Code of the Philippines, wherein Barangay assembly could;

“Initiate legislative processes by recommending to the Sangguniang Barangay the adoption of measures for the welfare of the Barangay and the city or municipality concerned” (Pimentel, 1991).

“Decide on the adoption of the initiative as a legal process whereby the registered voters of the Barangay may directly propose, enact, or amend any ordinance” (Pimentel, 1991).

“Hear and pass upon the semestral report of the Sangguniang Barangay concerning its activities and finances” (Pimentel, 1991).

Vital to this provision is high citizen's attendance in order to make the hearing and passing of the semester report valid. Unfortunately, the data is very low. Hence, this put into question such power of the barangay assembly.

This very low attendance of the said BLGU during the barangay assembly as viewed from the perspective of Engagement Theory (Kearsley, Greg; Schneiderman, 1998), could mean that citizen's participation and satisfaction in these barangay assemblies were not meaningful, which is a motivating factor in their participation (Cavaye, 1999), however, could this premise be tenable in the context of Bulua barangay assemblies.

Because of this reality in barangay Bulua assemblies, the Local Government Code of the Philippines, on the other hand, is silent on the matter of what constitutes a quorum or even the minimum number of attendees in barangay assembly. Consequently, this highlighted a gray area as far as the Local Government Code is concerned. This observation found support in the remarks made by the Local Government Operation Officer from the Department of Interior and Local Government, who serves as key informant in this study.

“[T]here was no provision in the Local Government Code requiring the minimum number of citizens to declare a quorum in



the barangay assembly. ... Given that very low participation, [it] might as well affect the initiation of legislative process to adopt measures of the welfare of the barangay; the proposal, enactment, and amendment of any ordinance, and the transparency of the activities and finances”.

At this point, there is again a need to reiterate the study’s operational definition of satisfaction and participation. The former refers to the frequency in which observations, queries, suggestions, comments, and clarifications of citizen-participants of the barangay assembly were suitably answered; the appropriateness of the ambiance of the venue; the clarity of the report presented; the knowledge ability of barangay officials in connection to the report and/or agenda they presented. While the latter refers to the frequency of observations, queries, suggestions, comments, clarifications, and discussions that were initiated during the barangay assembly.

a. The extent of Citizen’s Participation

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Citizen-Respondents on their Self-Reported Participation Level, 2018 1<sup>st</sup> Semester Barangay Assembly, Barangay Bulua, Cagayan de Oro City, CY 2018.

Interpretation	Frequency	
	(N=247)	%
Very highly participative	86	34.8
Highly participative	102	41.3
Participative	20	8.1
Neither participative nor Non-participative	24	9.7
Non-participative	14	5.7
Highly non-participative	1	0.4
Very highly non-participative	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100</b>

During the 2018 1st Semester Barangay Assembly, as shown in Table 2, 41.3% of citizens-respondents were found to be highly participative as compared to 34.8% who were very highly participative, 9.7% consider themselves as neither participative nor non-participative,



8.1% as participative, 5.7% as non-participative, and 0.4% as highly non-participative. All in all, there were 84.2% of the 247 sample citizen-respondents that could be considered in the range of being participative.

b. Level of Citizen’s Satisfaction

Now, let us see the extent of citizen’s satisfaction on their involvement in the said Barangay assembly.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Citizen-Respondents Self-Reported Satisfaction Level, 2018 1<sup>st</sup> Semester Barangay Assembly, Barangay Bulua, Cagayan de Oro City, CY 2018.

Interpretation	Frequency (N=247)	%
Very highly satisfied	66	26.7
Highly satisfied	132	53.4
Satisfied	27	10.9
Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied	15	6.1
Dissatisfied	5	2.0
Highly dissatisfied	2	0.8
Very highly dissatisfied	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100</b>

The results of the survey on citizen’s satisfaction on their participation in connection with the 2018 1st Semester Barangay Assembly, had shown, as revealed in Table 3, of the 247 citizen-respondents, 53% considered themselves highly satisfied, 27% very highly satisfied, 11% satisfied, 6% neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, 2% satisfied, and 0.8% Highly dissatisfied. All in all, there were 91% of the 247 sample citizen-respondents that could be considered in the range of being satisfied. There are more who were satisfied than being participative during the conduct of said Barangay assembly.

c. Effect of citizen’s satisfaction to their participation

At this point, we need to look at how these observations relative to citizen satisfaction affect their participation in Barangay assemblies. To determine the effect of satisfaction on their participation, a simple linear regression analysis was applied. As shown in the regression statistics in Table



4 below, the coefficient of correlation (R) is 0.69, which means that the association between satisfaction and participation is moderate. However, the effect size of such a correlation, as reflected in the Adjusted R Square (R<sup>2</sup>), is 0.48, which means that 48% of the variability in citizen participation can be explained by satisfaction. This likewise revealed that 52% of citizen's participation in Barangay assemblies could be explained by other factors besides their satisfaction. On the part of the Barangay officials of Bulua, this is an area that needs further research since the data is vital in coming up with strategy to further enhance the present information campaign to citizens that they must attend Barangay assemblies.

Moving on, as depicted in the ANOVA results, again in Table 4 below, the probability that the result of our Regression Analysis could not be due to random chance was reflected by F=230.79; df=1; p=0.000; and, this means that 99% probability that the result of our Regression Analysis was not merely accidental or attributable to random chance but indeed satisfaction have an effect on citizen's participation, as operationally defined in this study.

Table 4: Summary Table of the Result of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Regression Statistics						
R	0.6963					
R Square (R <sup>2</sup> )	0.4848					
Adjusted R Square	0.4827					
Standard Error	0.7496					
Observations	247					
ANOVA Table						
	Df	SS	MS	F	Sig. F	
Regression	1	129.59	129.59	230.79	0.000 <sup>b</sup>	
Residual	245	137.68	0.56			
Total	246	267.27				
Table of Coefficients						
	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-Value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	0.82	0.31	2.61	0.01	0.20	1.43
Satisfaction	0.84	0.06	15.19	0.00	0.73	0.95





As shown earlier, given the magnitude of the explanatory power of satisfaction to participation, thus, we need to know the predictive ability of satisfaction to citizen participation. In the Table of Coefficients,  $t_{stat} = 15.19$ ;  $p=0.00$ ; thus, this means that 99% probability that the predictive ability of satisfaction to participation in Barangay assembly could not be attributed to random chance. Therefore, this predictive ability had shown that for every one-unit increase in satisfaction, participation increases by 0.84 units. In other words, as far as the respondents in this study are concerned, their satisfaction relative to their participation of Barangay assemblies had a positive effect on their actual participation in Barangay assemblies.

## **2. Discussion**

There are a lot of local government constituents who do not realize the importance of democracy. The power structures in a different type of government can hold on for a very long time because leaders make the rules for their own continued existence. A democratic society, however, emphasizes the use of citizen's participation which can influence the direction society has. (OECD, 2016)

It is widely assumed that enhanced citizens' participation improved development outcomes these outcomes benefit them more on the operations which traditionally do not engage them. In a study conducted by Labonne & Chase, several of these are the following reasons that could support that assumption. First, local communities are the most reliable source of information about their needed priorities, these are the decisions made through the participatory process - the barangay assembly; Second, participation is claimed to improve poverty targeting by tapping into the knowledge of the citizens in terms of their needs which in turn help the legislative craft laws to further align their needs to the interventions; Third, participation in decisions and implementation increases local ownership, which in turn improves the quality of the



operation and maintenance of projects; and Finally, participation in itself is seen as valuable, because it is through this that individuals voice are being heard (Labonne, Juliene; Chase, 2009).

The citizens under the participative range were asked on their insights in participating, these are the factors enumerated: 1) *they wanted to be informed on the affairs of local governance of Barangay Bulua*; and 2) *they wanted to exercise their rights to be informed*.

However, it must be emphasized that effective participation can be instrumental to shape the purpose of government action and decisions to better fulfill society's preferences and priorities. (OECD, 2016) The effectiveness of such participation is only possible if it can also inform and support the delivery of outcomes that matter to stakeholders – the citizens – in an accountable, innovative and cost-effective manner.

While the importance of participation in local governance cannot be underestimated, there are problems identified among citizens. This is the low participation whose reasons for non-participation are represented in this range. According to the 15.8% of the citizens who belong in the non-participative range and for those who did not attend the said barangay assembly, they shared the same concern, namely, *lack of time availability of barangay residents; unsure of their role in the barangay assembly; lack of information dissemination relative to barangay activities; and low enthusiasm and facilitation from the information in-charge*.

These findings that were made in studies (Musick, M. A.; Wilson, J; Bynum, 2000) relative to reasons of the low rate of citizen's attendance in local governance activities especially in developing countries due to citizen's lack of essential skills and knowledge must be qualified in the context of Bulua barangay assembly. This is because if one has to consider the remarked made above that they did not know their role in barangay assembly, this does not mean that they lack essential skills and knowledge needed in local governance and decision-making but rather they were not sure when do they need to position their role if in such instances they have to actively engage in the discussion that needs to take place during barangay assembly.



Nevertheless, this low rate of attendance in barangay assemblies would still have consequences relative to *inactivity; low enthusiasm; lack of consciousness of participation in local governance and decision-making; and public apathy* (Qinghao, W; Zhizhang, 2014). Given that, effective participation can be instrumental in shaping the purpose of government action and decisions to better fulfil society's preferences and priorities (OECD, 2016), then, the low attendance rate in Bulua barangay assembly could put into question on how effective such number of citizen-participants in barangay assembly can shape the purpose of government action and decision. Now, would it be possible that high participation in barangay assembly – as shown in the survey result – can offset low attendance in said assembly, given the fact that the Local Government Code is silent about the required quorum in barangay assembly for it to be considered valid.

On the other side, it would also raise a question relative to Philippine context local governance and decision-making that had surface because of what happens in Bulua barangay assembly. That is, in the absence of no provision in the Local Government Code of 1991 with regards to required number of attendees in a barangay assembly that would constitute a quorum, could this mean that shaping and/or influencing government action and decision could now be offset by a small number of citizen-attendees who were meaningfully engaged and highly participative during the conduct of barangay assembly. This question must be assumed that BLGU Bulua have done its part on awareness campaigns and dissemination programmers in a permanent manner with an aim of creating active and knowledgeable citizens and public officials. Although citizen's attendance during barangay assemblies was indeed very low, nevertheless, barangay Bulua, according to the documents that were retrieved in their archives, conducted and complied the protocol needed to be followed in the conduct of barangay assembly. (Ano, 2018)

The researcher elicited the following observations from the satisfied range of citizens: 1) *they are satisfied not so much on the physical preparation that have bearing on the conduct of barangay assembly rather in that aspect in which their expectation have been met, that is, they heard what they wanted to hear, consequently, they have been informed and/or updated*

on the affairs of local governance of Barangay Bulua. In other words, their expectation about barangay assemblies has something to do with the substance of the report rather than on other things.

Another citizen noted that satisfaction for her is just a carry-over effect of her obligation. This obligation entails not to be left out with what is going on in Barangay Bulua. As long as the things that they wanted to hear are included during the barangay assembly, then, they are satisfied.

Based on the observations made by those who were satisfied and the others that were interviewed, it can be gleaned that they have been regular attendees of past barangay assemblies. As such, they appeared not so much interested in the physical aspect of the assembly but more on the substantive issues or topics that have a direct bearing on the local affairs of Barangay Bulua, and were tackled during the said assembly.

From the 9% of respondents who were dissatisfied shared their negative experiences in terms of the *time, venue, and schedule, and the manner* on how the barangay addresses their concerns, as it affected their motivation in sustaining participation during barangay assemblies.

As noted, the observations coming from those who were in the dissatisfied range pertains more on the logistics side of the conduct of barangay assembly while those who were in the satisfied range were more focused on the topic and content that was being dealt with or presented by the barangays officials. Even so, the leaders or the officials of barangay Bulua might consider the comments in the dissatisfied range as mere trivial. Nonetheless, it is incumbent upon them that they must recognize all these positive and negative observations as instruments to deliver better public service in the context of local governance as envisioned in the Local Government Code of the Philippines.

#### **D. Conclusion**

In a study conducted by Dobos & Jenei (2013), it emphasizes the need of instrumental engagement. Citizen's satisfaction influence citizen's participation. It suggests the need to give importance on citizens not only by hearing their concerns, but also considering their suggestions for



implementation. The officials' efforts to enhance the citizens' experiences and satisfaction may lead them to a feeling of importance and personal involvement. (Dobos, A; Jenei, 2013)

To conclude, the fact that 92.7% of these respondents have attended barangay assembly at least two times in the past, this tells us that what motivates them to keep on participating in Bulua barangay assemblies was because they were satisfied in the past assemblies they have participated notwithstanding the low number of attendees. This empirical finding had shown that in the Philippine context of local governance and decision-making, indeed, there is the basis to the claim that citizen's satisfaction in a barangay assembly would affect their participation in succeeding barangay assemblies.

The implication that goes along with this finding, is the success of local governance and decision-making in the context of the Local Government Code. This relies heavily on citizen's participation rather than on the number of attendees. Here, we have the classic model of quality versus quantity. Accordingly, if we have to extend further this line of reasoning, it would mean that as citizen's participation in Bulua barangay assemblies increases, the satisfaction level of its citizen participants in barangay assemblies would likewise increase, then, it follows that citizens-attendance in barangay assemblies would likewise increase.

However, as shown in the attendance record of Bulua barangay assemblies for the last three years, the attendance is even fluctuating. In 2016 there were 378 attendees; in 2017 there were 331, which are lower than the previous year; and in 2018 there were 366 though higher than the previous year nonetheless lower than that of 2016. This is indicative that there was the fall-out from the original 2016 attendees and perhaps no effort has yet been made by the officials of barangay Bulua that could inspire them back to attend barangay assemblies particularly in terms of information campaign, and other awareness-raising activities despite the DILG Circular that was issued for this purpose. Also, the steady number

of citizen-attendees in the last three years of barangay assemblies is also indicative that the officials of barangay Bulua have not succeeded in their efforts in convincing those indifferent citizens to attend barangay assemblies.

In light of the findings in this study, we recommend that citizen's participation and regular attendance in barangay assemblies should be intensified. Along this line, there is also a need to have a feedback mechanism to be institutionalized by barangay Bulua that would determine the satisfaction of citizens in their participation of barangay assemblies. The information that would come out from this feedback mechanism should be use as basis in coming up with strategy that can enhance citizen's participation. A corresponding barangay ordinance should be crafted by the barangay council of Bulua in order to reinforce this mechanism. Moreover, since the number of attendees for the last three years was highlighted in the study's findings, it would be for the good of all BLGUs that Chapter 6 of the Local Government Code of the Philippines should be revisited, and reexamined, as to its responsiveness to the present development in the field of local governance and decision-making. This is because in the context of low attendance in barangay Bulua assemblies, and with no explicit provision in the Local Government Code about quorum in barangay assembly, it seems to suggest that meaningful participation can offset low attendance and that attendance defined in terms of physical presence is not equivalent with participation, which has deeper qualitative connotations. On this note, we further recommend a need to conduct qualitative studies that will attempt in-depth access to beliefs and mindsets of Bulua citizens in connection with citizen participation in local governance. Additionally, similar studies must also be conducted in several Barangay Local Government Units to ascertain commonalities and differences. The findings in such studies should be utilized in policy and strategy formulation for the remaining seventy-nine barangays in the city of Cagayan de Oro that may improve citizen's participation in local governance.



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