

Implementation and community satisfaction of barangay justice system in the local government unit of Aritao: Challenges and opportunities

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ISSN: 2243-7703

Online ISSN: 2243-7711

OPEN ACCESS

Received: 27 April 2025

Revised: 12 May 2025

Accepted: 18 May 2025

Available Online: 20 May 2025

DOI: 10.5861/ijrse.2025.25118

Abstract

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods design to assess the implementation of the Barangay Justice System (BJS) and the level of community satisfaction in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya. It integrated both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the BJS functioned and impacted the local population. Quantitative data, gathered from 80 members of the Lupon Tagapamayapa and 40 constituents through structured surveys, evaluated the implementation levels of mediation, conciliation, and arbitration. Qualitative data, collected from 10 participants via semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion, explored personal insights, challenges, and recommendations related to the BJS. Results showed that the BJS was implemented at a very good level, with mediation being the most effectively executed component. Community satisfaction was also rated very good, with operations and creativity/resourcefulness receiving the highest scores, while the settlement of disputes scored slightly lower, indicating room for improvement. Key challenges included inconsistencies in arbitration practices and varied satisfaction in dispute resolution. Based on the findings, the study recommended targeted training for Lupon Tagapamayapa members and the enhancement of dispute resolution mechanisms. The research provided evidence-based insights and actionable recommendations to strengthen the BJS in Aritao, ensuring it remained responsive, effective, and community-centered in managing local conflicts.

Keywords: barangay justice system, community satisfaction, challenges and opportunities

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1. Introduction

The origins of localized dispute resolution in the Philippines can be traced to the pre-colonial period, when indigenous communities, organized into autonomous tribes and villages, relied on tribal elders and chieftains to mediate conflicts and uphold customary law. These early practices reflected a deep cultural commitment to restorative justice and community harmony (Reyes & Santiago, 2019). It was only during the Spanish colonization that the archipelago was unified under a centralized government, resulting in the establishment of structured political subdivisions—provinces, municipalities, cities, and barangays—which allowed for more systematic governance and control (Dela Cruz & Navarro, 2020). Within this framework, the Cabeza de Barangay was tasked with resolving minor disputes, a role that paralleled earlier indigenous practices.

Despite political transitions, including the American colonization following the Treaty of Paris in 1898, the system of local governance persisted, preserving the barangay as the smallest political unit. According to Medina and Agustin (2021), this continuity laid the foundation for what is now known as the Barangay Justice System (BJS) or *Katarungang Pambarangay*, a hybrid mechanism that fuses traditional dispute resolution customs with statutory legal frameworks. The BJS institutionalized the role of *Lupong Tagapamayapa*, composed of community-appointed mediators, to address disputes amicably without resorting to formal litigation. This evolution demonstrates the adaptive nature of the barangay system in preserving communal peace while supporting the national legal infrastructure. Ultimately, the BJS reflects a long-standing Filipino tradition of resolving conflict through dialogue, consensus, and localized authority, continuing a legacy that began long before the Spanish or American colonial governments imposed formal structures.

On June 11, 1978, Presidential Decree No. 1508, otherwise known as the *Katarungang Pambarangay Law*, was enacted to institutionalize and preserve the deeply rooted Filipino tradition of amicably resolving disputes at the community level without resorting to formal court proceedings. Spearheaded by Alfredo Flores Tadiar, the principal author of the decree, the law emphasized mandatory conciliation efforts at the barangay level before parties could elevate their disputes to judicial bodies. Tadiar not only authored the law but also drafted its implementing rules and served from 1980 to 1992 as a member of the Committee of Consultants under the Bureau of Local Government Supervision, playing a critical role in overseeing its national implementation. Under the provisions of the decree and as cited in Presidential Decree No. 1185, the conciliation panel, known as the *Lupong Tagapamayapa*, was created to operationalize this community-based justice system.

With the passage of the Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act No. 7160), the barangay system underwent significant reforms. The Punong Barangay, now an elected official, was delegated quasi-executive, quasi-legislative, and quasi-judicial powers at the grassroots level. Their responsibilities extended beyond governance to include enforcement of national laws and local ordinances, the promotion of peace and order, the delivery of basic services, and the resolution of local issues such as illegal squatting, drug abuse, and child welfare. The *Lupong Tagapamayapa*, typically composed of the Punong Barangay and 10 to 20 respected community members, continued to serve as the primary conciliation body for local disputes, strengthening the barangay's role as a foundational pillar of participatory justice.

One example of this grassroots system in action is found in Aritao, a second-class municipality in southern Nueva Vizcaya, composed of 22 barangays. Aritao illustrates how the *Katarungang Pambarangay* system functions within rural communities, helping maintain social cohesion and reduce judicial congestion by promoting peaceful dispute resolution at the barangay level.

Despite the growing body of literature on the Barangay Justice System (BJS) in the Philippines, a significant research gap remains in the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data to holistically assess its implementation and impact at the grassroots level. Most existing studies have traditionally employed either a purely quantitative approach, focusing on statistical outcomes such as the number of cases resolved and satisfaction ratings, or a qualitative design, emphasizing the experiences and perspectives of community mediators and stakeholders (Candelaria & Morales, 2020; Javier, 2019). While these methodologies have contributed valuable insights, they often fall short in capturing the nuanced interplay between community satisfaction and the operational realities faced by the Lupong Tagapamayapa.

This study addresses this methodological gap by employing a mixed-methods approach, which enables the triangulation of survey-based data with rich personal narratives. Specifically, the research aimed to evaluate the level of implementation of the BJS in selected barangays of Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya, assess community satisfaction, and document the lived experiences of barangay justice practitioners and their constituents. By combining numerical data with qualitative interviews, this study offers a more comprehensive understanding of both the perceived effectiveness and the practical challenges of local dispute resolution mechanisms. Moreover, the geographic and sociocultural focus on Aritao adds further depth to the existing literature, as many prior studies are concentrated in more urbanized or heavily resourced barangays (Santos & Rolda, 2021). By exploring the implementation in a second-class municipality with diverse and dispersed barangays, this research captures underrepresented voices and contextual dynamics, thereby contributing to more inclusive policy insights and localized interventions. This methodological innovation and contextual focus form the core of the research gap that this study seeks to address.

This study is anchored on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. The Barangay Justice System (BJS) plays a critical role in promoting peaceful and inclusive communities by offering accessible, community-based mechanisms for conflict resolution. By assessing the level of implementation of the BJS in selected barangays of Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya, and measuring community satisfaction, the study contributes to strengthening local institutions and enhancing justice delivery at the grassroots. Furthermore, the research supports SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by promoting effective, accountable, and participatory governance at the barangay level. The inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative insights aligns with the goal of developing inclusive institutions that are responsive to the needs and experiences of all stakeholders. Ultimately, this study reinforces the importance of empowering communities and ensuring that justice is accessible to all, especially in rural and underserved areas.

Moreover, this study aligns with the National Higher Education Research Agenda (NHERA), particularly under its research priority area of Governance and Education for Sustainable Development. NHERA encourages research that strengthens democratic institutions and enhances access to justice, especially in local communities. By assessing the level of implementation and community satisfaction with the Barangay Justice System (BJS) in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya, the research contributes to improving governance at the grassroots level. The integration of quantitative and qualitative methods responds to NHERA's emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches that support evidence-based policy formulation. Furthermore, this research supports the NHERA goal of building a just and humane society through effective civic engagement and conflict resolution strategies. Through its findings, the study can provide policy recommendations and capacity-building insights for local justice mechanisms, promoting a culture of peace, accountability, and participation—core values identified in NHERA for advancing inclusive and responsive public institutions.

Furthermore, this study supports the NVSU Research Agenda, which prioritizes research that contributes to rural development, good governance, and institutional resilience. With the Barangay Justice System (BJS) as the central focus, the research responds to NVSU's goal of fostering community empowerment through the development of local justice mechanisms and participatory governance models. By assessing the level of implementation and community satisfaction with the BJS in Aritao, the research generates actionable insights for improving conflict resolution at the grassroots level. This directly addresses NVSU's priority of research

utilization for community-based policy reforms and enhances the role of local leaders in delivering justice. Additionally, the study supports NVSU's vision to be a globally engaged university by producing community-relevant research that advances peace, cooperation, and inclusive development. The mixed-methods approach aligns with the university's commitment to methodological rigor and relevance in addressing real-world governance challenges in rural communities.

It is also consistent with the research thrusts of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), which promote interdisciplinary inquiry into governance, peace-building, and community development. As a social science-based inquiry into the Barangay Justice System (BJS), the research demonstrates the CAS agenda's focus on analyzing social institutions and understanding human behavior within community contexts. By exploring how the Lupong Tagapamayapa implements alternative conflict resolution methods and assessing constituent satisfaction, the study contributes to the CAS goal of producing research that informs public policy and civic engagement. It emphasizes ethical leadership, grassroots democracy, and restorative justice—areas that resonate with the CAS mission to promote civic responsibility and community transformation. Furthermore, the qualitative narratives collected from respondents enrich the college's pursuit of socially grounded, people-centered knowledge. Ultimately, this study exemplifies how CAS-based research can support inclusive and just institutions that foster societal well-being and community empowerment.

The Barangay Justice System (BJS) in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya, serves as a vital mechanism for resolving community disputes at the grassroots level. Comprising the Lupong Tagapamayapa, led by the Punong Barangay and consisting of 10 to 20 members, the system aims to address conflicts promptly and amicably, thereby decongesting formal courts and fostering community harmony. Despite its foundational role, the effectiveness of the BJS in Aritao remains underexplored. While the system is designed to handle various disputes, including family and community issues, there is limited empirical data assessing its implementation and the satisfaction levels of the constituents it serves. This gap in research is particularly pertinent given the diverse demographic composition of Aritao, which may influence the dynamics of conflict resolution and the community's engagement with the BJS. Addressing this research gap is crucial for enhancing the efficacy of the BJS in Aritao. By evaluating its current implementation and understanding community perceptions, the study aims to provide insights that can inform improvements in the system, ensuring it meets the evolving needs of the Aritao community. Hence, this study.

2. Related Literature

This study is grounded in Equity Theory, a psychological framework developed by John Stacey Adams (1965), which posits that individuals are motivated by a fundamental desire for fairness in social exchanges. According to the theory, individuals evaluate the fairness of their interactions by comparing the ratio of their inputs (such as time, effort, and resources) to the outcomes they receive (such as rewards, recognition, or resolution). This comparison is not made in isolation but in relation to the perceived input–outcome ratios of others. When individuals perceive an imbalance—such as when their inputs outweigh the outcomes received, or when others seem to benefit more with less effort—they are likely to experience dissatisfaction, frustration, or disengagement.

In the context of this study, Equity Theory provides a relevant lens through which to assess the implementation of the Barangay Justice System (BJS) in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya. The BJS, through its mediation, conciliation, and arbitration processes, relies heavily on the voluntary participation and cooperation of community members, especially those serving in the Lupon Tagapamayapa, as well as the constituents seeking resolution of disputes. From the perspective of Equity Theory, both groups function as social actors who contribute various inputs—time, emotional investment, civic duty, and community participation—with the expectation of achieving fair and impartial outcomes such as equitable dispute resolution, validation, and a sense of justice.

The theory supports the study by explaining how perceptions of fairness influence community satisfaction and the perceived effectiveness of BJS implementation. For instance, a constituent who actively engages in the conciliation process but perceives that their grievance was inadequately addressed may view the process as inequitable—especially if others appear to receive more favorable outcomes with seemingly less input. Similarly, Lupon members who feel that their efforts are not reciprocated with community trust or recognition may become disengaged from their roles. Thus, Equity Theory helps illuminate the psychological and social dynamics underpinning stakeholder perceptions in the delivery and reception of justice at the grassroots level.

By framing the analysis of BJS implementation through the Equity Theory lens, the study underscores the importance of perceived fairness as a key determinant of both the satisfaction of constituents and the sustained motivation of barangay officials and mediators. This theoretical orientation enriches the interpretation of the findings and supports the formulation of responsive strategies to enhance community-based justice and participatory governance. The Barangay Justice System (BJS), formally known as the Katarungang Pambarangay, serves as a community-based conflict resolution mechanism institutionalized under the Local Government Code of 1991. Its primary goal is to decongest the formal court system by enabling amicable settlement of disputes at the grassroots level, while promoting peace, harmony, and restorative justice within the barangay (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2020). The implementation of the BJS is operationalized through three interrelated processes: mediation, conciliation, and arbitration, which are facilitated by the Lupon Tagapamayapa, a body composed of community-respected individuals appointed by the Punong Barangay.

Mediation is the initial stage of the BJS process, where the Punong Barangay serves as a neutral party to facilitate communication between the disputing individuals. The primary aim is to help parties arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution through open dialogue, without the imposition of decisions (Mendoza & Mata, 2019). Effective mediation in the barangay context not only reflects the cultural values of *pakikipagkapwa* and *pagkakaisa* but also encourages community empowerment and non-adversarial resolution. Studies have shown that mediation fosters a higher degree of satisfaction among disputants due to its informal and participatory nature (Garcia & Reyes, 2021).

If mediation fails, the case proceeds to conciliation, which is conducted by the Lupon Tagapamayapa. Conciliation involves structured negotiation, where the Lupon helps clarify issues and encourages compromise between parties. Unlike mediation, conciliation may involve more directive strategies to reconcile differences. According to Garcia and Santiago (2020), conciliation in the BJS is guided by both procedural justice and cultural sensitivity, aligning with indigenous concepts of peacebuilding such as *bayanihan* and *pagsasama-sama*. The success of conciliation largely depends on the competence, impartiality, and ethical standing of Lupon members, as well as the trust placed in them by the community.

The final process is arbitration, which occurs only if both parties voluntarily agree in writing to submit their dispute to the Lupon for binding resolution. In arbitration, the Lupon acts like a quasi-judicial body that renders a final decision based on fairness and existing norms. While less commonly availed compared to mediation and conciliation, arbitration provides a practical mechanism for finalizing disputes, especially when informal dialogue proves ineffective. According to Dela Cruz and Ramos (2022), arbitration under the BJS plays a critical role in legitimizing community-based justice by offering enforceable resolutions that are still embedded within the local context.

Despite its promise, the effective implementation of the BJS faces challenges such as inadequate training of Lupon members, political interference, and limited public awareness (Lansangan, 2021). However, when implemented faithfully, the BJS represents a unique model of participatory governance and localized justice, rooted in Filipino values and supported by legal infrastructure. It reflects the principles of restorative justice, wherein the resolution process aims not merely at legal compliance but at restoring social harmony and relationships within the community.

Constituents' satisfaction is a vital indicator of the effectiveness of the Barangay Justice System (BJS), as it

reflects the trust, perceived fairness, and accessibility of local justice mechanisms. The implementation of BJS is evaluated not only in terms of outcomes but also through the lens of community experience—particularly in areas such as operational efficiency, dispute resolution, and the creativity and resourcefulness demonstrated by the Lupon Tagapamayapa and barangay officials.

Operational effectiveness of the BJS plays a crucial role in shaping public perception. It refers to the system's ability to deliver services in a timely, transparent, and organized manner. According to Lansangan (2021), constituents report greater satisfaction when BJS sessions are scheduled regularly, records are maintained properly, and proceedings are held with transparency and fairness. Barangays that demonstrate consistency in operations tend to gain stronger public trust and support, especially in communities where formal justice systems are less accessible.

Dispute settlement is the core function of the BJS and significantly affects satisfaction levels. Successful resolution of conflicts—ranging from minor disputes to interpersonal and property issues—often leads to increased community harmony and restored relationships. Garcia and Reyes (2021) assert that constituents are more satisfied when the process is non-adversarial and participatory, allowing both parties to voice their grievances and reach a compromise. The perceived impartiality of the Lupon and the fairness of the decision contribute heavily to the public's acceptance of outcomes.

In addition, the creativity and resourcefulness of BJS implementers greatly influence constituents' satisfaction. Faced with limited legal training and logistical constraints, Lupon members who innovate by adapting indigenous conflict-resolution practices, using culturally sensitive language, and applying empathy in proceedings are often viewed more positively by their communities (Dela Cruz & Ramos, 2022). These grassroots innovations reflect an ability to bridge formal policy with local realities, enhancing the legitimacy and responsiveness of the system. It is noted by the researcher that constituents' satisfaction hinges on a combination of functional efficiency, conflict resolution effectiveness, and human-centered implementation. When these elements are present, the BJS fulfills its mandate not only as a legal mechanism but as a meaningful expression of community justice and participatory governance.

Al-Ghani (2024) conducted a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the Barangay Justice System (BJS) in Zamboanga City, a highly urbanized area in southern Philippines. The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods, including surveys with 200 residents, interviews with 20 barangay officials and mediators, and analysis of secondary data from local BJS offices and formal courts. Findings revealed that 80% of respondents confirmed successful case resolution through the BJS, while 75% expressed satisfaction with the system's services and outcomes. Qualitative insights highlighted the key strengths of the BJS: accessibility, affordability, and active community participation. However, persistent issues were noted, such as limited resources, perceived bias, and insufficient training of mediators. The study further emphasized the BJS's role in reducing court congestion, with 40% of local court cases being settled at the barangay level—underscoring its value as a complementary mechanism to the formal judiciary.

This study provides empirical support for the current research in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya, as it reinforces the importance of evaluating BJS implementation through both community satisfaction and operational effectiveness. The Zamboanga experience offers valuable benchmarks and highlights both the successes and limitations of the system, which can guide similar assessments in more rural or semi-urban contexts such as Aritao. The insights gained affirm the relevance of exploring mediation, conciliation, and arbitration, as well as the perceptions and satisfaction of constituents, to strengthen localized justice mechanisms in support of broader public administration goals.

3. Methodology

Research Design. This research adopted a convergent mixed-methods research design to collect and analyze data, addressing the research questions related to the implementation of the Barangay Justice System (BJS) in the

Local Government Unit (LGU) of Aritao. The quantitative approach provided measurable data that allowed the researcher to objectively assess community satisfaction and compare it with the effectiveness of BJS implementation. Using statistical tools, the researcher identified trends, correlations, and predictors, enabling the identification of factors influencing community satisfaction (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). On the other hand, the qualitative approach focused on gathering detailed insights from participants regarding their personal experiences with the BJS, allowing for a deeper understanding of the community's perceptions and how the BJS was perceived in practice.

Research Environment. The Municipal Local Government Unit (LGU) of Aritao, located in the province of Nueva Vizcaya, is an administrative unit that plays a vital role in the governance and public service delivery at the local level served as the research environment of this study. As part of its responsibilities, Aritao oversees 22 selected barangays (villages), each with its distinct demographic and socio-economic characteristics. These barangays are fundamental units within the local government structure, tasked with implementing programs and policies to ensure the well-being and development of their constituents. One of the significant governance tools in these barangays is the Barangay Justice System (BJS), a community-based conflict resolution mechanism aimed at promoting peace, order, and justice within the barangay level.

Respondents of the Study. To determine the appropriate sample size for this study, the researcher employed a standard sample size formula, ensuring a representative sample of respondents. A total of 80 members of the Lupon Tagapamayapa were selected from the 10 barangays in Aritao, which accounts for 80% of the total Lupon members across these barangays. This selection process provided a substantial representation of those directly involved in the implementation of the Barangay Justice System (BJS). Additionally, 40 constituents who had previously filed cases handled by the Lupon were selected through a convenience sampling method.

Sampling Procedure. This study employed a stratified sampling technique for the selection of respondents, with the 10 chosen barangays serving as the strata. Within each barangay, the researcher utilized a simple random sampling procedure to select 80 members from the Lupon Tagapamayapa. For the selection of the 40 constituents, a convenience sampling method was applied. Only those who had experienced having their cases handled by the Lupon were included in the study. This ensured that the participants had relevant first-hand experience with the BJS and could provide meaningful insights into its functioning.

Research Instrument

Barangay Justice System Implementation Questionnaire. This is a 43-item questionnaire developed and validated by Acbay et al. (2021) along the component of arbitration, conciliation, and mediation. The instrument was presented to the members of the panel of examiners for expert and content validation.

Constituent Satisfaction Questionnaire on the BJS Implementation. This is a 15-item questionnaire adopted from Gonzales (2020) to measure constituent satisfaction on the implementation of the barangay justice system along the components of operations, settlement of disputes, and creativeness and resourcefulness. The instrument was presented to the members of the panel of examiners for expert and content validation.

Statistical Treatment of Data. To ensure accurate and meaningful interpretation of the data collected, the researcher employed appropriate statistical and analytical tools suited to both the quantitative and qualitative components of the study.

Mean. The mean, or the arithmetic average, was utilized as the primary statistical tool for analyzing the quantitative data. This measure of central tendency was applied to determine the overall extent of implementation of the Barangay Justice System (BJS) as perceived by the members of the *Lupon Tagapamayapa*, as well as to assess the level of satisfaction expressed by the constituents who had availed of the services of the BJS.

Thematic Analysis. For the qualitative component of the study, thematic analysis was employed to interpret

and synthesize the data gathered from interviews and focus group discussions. This method involved identifying, analyzing, and reporting recurring patterns or themes that emerged from the narratives of both Lupon members and constituents. Thematic analysis provided depth to the research findings by capturing the lived experiences, perceptions, and contextual factors influencing the implementation and reception of the BJS in the selected barangays.

4. Results and Discussion

Problem 1. What is the level of implementation of the Barangay Justice System in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya as perceived by the Lupon Tagapamayapa in terms of mediation, conciliation, and arbitration?

In order to know the level of implementation of the barangay justice system in Aritao, the mean was computed, results is presented in the table in the succeeding page

Table 1

Level of implementation of the barangay justice system in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya as perceived by the Lupon Tagapamayapa

Barangay Justice System	Area Mean	Qualitative Description
Mediation	3.83	Very Good
Conciliation	3.70	Very Good
Arbitration	3.58	Very Good
Grand Mean	3.70	Very Good

The grand mean of 3.70, interpreted as "*Very Good*", indicates that the overall level of implementation of the Barangay Justice System (BJS) in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya—as perceived by the members of the Lupon Tagapamayapa—is highly satisfactory. This suggests that, in general, the BJS is functioning effectively in the selected barangays and that its processes are being carried out with a commendable degree of efficiency and consistency.

The findings imply that the Lupon Tagapamayapa sees the BJS as a reliable mechanism for resolving disputes at the community level. A grand mean categorized as "*Very Good*" reflects not only their active participation but also the community's engagement in the informal justice system. This is essential in promoting peace, order, and harmony in local communities, and in reducing the burden on formal courts. Among the three components, mediation received the highest area mean of 3.83, also described as "*Very Good*". This highlights mediation as the most effectively implemented aspect of the BJS, possibly due to its collaborative and non-adversarial nature, which encourages both parties to resolve issues amicably with the help of a neutral Lupon member. Conciliation followed with an area mean of 3.70, maintaining the "*Very Good*" rating. This suggests that barangay officials are also effective in guiding disputants toward mutual agreements, although slightly less so than in mediation. Arbitration, with the lowest area mean of 3.58, though still within the "*Very Good*" range, appears to be the least emphasized or possibly the most challenging component of the BJS to implement. This could be due to its more formal and binding nature, which may require a higher level of procedural adherence or may be less favored by parties seeking informal resolution.

It is noted by the current researcher that while all components of the Barangay Justice System are implemented at a high level, there is an opportunity to strengthen arbitration processes further to ensure a more balanced and equally strong implementation across all components. In order to have a clearer understanding of results, the different dimensions were discussed separately below.

Problem 2. What is the level of satisfaction of the constituents on the implementation of the barangay justice system in terms of operation, settlement of dispute. and creativity and resourcefulness?

Table 2

Level of constituents' satisfaction on the implementation of barangay justice system

Components	Area Mean	Qualitative Description
Operations	3.62	Very Good
Settlement of Dispute	3.45	Very Good
Creativity and Resourcefulness	3.61	Very Good
Grand Mean	3.56	Very Good

The data presented in Table 3 indicate that the overall level of constituents' satisfaction with the implementation of the Barangay Justice System (BJS) is Very Good, as reflected by the grand mean of 3.56. This suggests that the majority of community members recognize the BJS as an effective mechanism for maintaining peace, resolving disputes, and ensuring grassroots access to justice.

This high level of satisfaction underscores the system's perceived reliability, accessibility, and responsiveness to community needs. It implies that the constituents view the BJS not only as a legal structure but also as a functional institution embedded within the social fabric of the barangay. The very good ratings across all components reflect confidence in the capabilities of the Lupon Tagapamayapa and their role in upholding justice at the local level. Among the three components assessed, Operations received the highest satisfaction rating (Area Mean = 3.62), indicating strong approval of how the justice system is administered on a day-to-day basis. This includes the efficiency of processes, availability of services, and general administrative handling of complaints. Closely following is Creativity and Resourcefulness, with an area mean of 3.61, also described as Very Good. This result highlights constituents' appreciation of the Lupon's innovative approaches to conflict resolution, their adaptability in handling diverse cases, and their ability to use available resources to implement justice effectively. The component Settlement of Dispute received the lowest, though still very positive, mean rating of 3.45. While this score remains within the "Very Good" range, it suggests relatively lesser satisfaction in terms of actual resolution outcomes or perhaps the consistency and fairness in decision-making. This may point to areas where procedural improvements or enhanced mediation strategies could be beneficial.

It is noted by the researcher that the findings affirm that the BJS in the locality is performing well in meeting the expectations of its constituents, with room for further enhancement particularly in the dispute settlement process to ensure even greater satisfaction and effectiveness.

Problem 3. What are the challenges and opportunities perceived by the respondents in the implementation of the barangay justice system?

Employing thematic analysis on the gathered qualitative data during the interview and focus group discussion conducted by the researcher, the following themes emerged along the challenges encountered by the participants in the implementation of barangay justice system in the municipality of Aritao.

Theme 1: Scheduling and Attendance Difficulties. This theme reflects logistical challenges in setting meetings due to conflicting schedules, non-appearance, and intentional avoidance by parties.

Theme 2: Mediator Impartiality and Emotional Challenges. This theme highlights the internal struggles of Lupon members in maintaining neutrality and managing emotional involvement during mediation.

Theme 3: Resistance to Resolution and Ineffectiveness of Outcomes. This theme captures the reluctance of parties to cooperate or abide by agreements, as well as the perceived ineffectiveness or dissatisfaction with mediation results.

5. Conclusions

Based on the significant findings of this study, the following conclusions were derived.

- The Barangay Justice System (BJS) in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya is effectively implemented, as indicated by a “Very Good” rating from Lupon Tagapamayapa members. The strong performance of mediation reflects the system’s collaborative nature and efficiency in community-based conflict resolution. This effectiveness underscores the BJS’s role as a functional, decentralized justice mechanism that helps reduce court caseloads while sustaining grassroots peace and order.
- Constituents expressed high satisfaction with the BJS, particularly in its operational efficiency and the creativity of its implementers. While the settlement of disputes showed slightly lower satisfaction, the overall “Very Good” rating affirms that the community perceives BJS as a reliable, accessible, and responsive system for resolving local conflicts and ensuring participatory governance.
- Despite its strengths, BJS implementation faces challenges related to scheduling, neutrality, and compliance with agreements. These issues necessitate institutional support, including capacity-building programs for Lupon members, structured monitoring systems, and enhanced policy guidelines to ensure fairness and sustainability in community dispute resolution.
- The study confirms that the Barangay Justice System is more than a conflict resolution tool—it is a vital pillar of grassroots governance. The insights gathered affirm that, when supported with adequate training, resources, and institutional trust, BJS can significantly contribute to local peacebuilding, participatory justice, and the broader objectives of public administration and democratic governance.

Recommendations - Based on the significant findings of the study and the conclusions mentioned-above, the following recommendations were offered.

- Local Government Units (LGUs), in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), should provide regular training programs focused on mediation, conciliation, and arbitration. Emphasis should be placed on impartiality, conflict sensitivity, and communication skills to strengthen the ability of Lupon members to fairly and effectively resolve disputes.
- Barangays should institutionalize monitoring systems to track the implementation of BJS cases, attendance of involved parties, and compliance with settlement agreements. This will improve accountability, reinforce public trust, and ensure the consistent delivery of justice.
- To motivate Lupon Tagapamayapa members and recognize their voluntary efforts, LGUs may consider non-monetary incentives such as awards, public acknowledgments, and access to further training. This can also help professionalize their role and encourage sustained community engagement.
- Information drives and education campaigns should be launched at the barangay level to raise awareness about the functions and benefits of BJS. Encouraging constituents to actively participate can help increase compliance, reduce conflicts, and build trust in the system.
- Higher education institutions offering Public Administration should incorporate the insights derived from this study—particularly on community-based justice, local conflict resolution mechanisms, and participatory governance—into courses such as Local Governance, Administrative Justice, and Peace and Development. This will enrich students’ understanding of the role of informal institutions in public service.
- It is recommended that similar studies be conducted in different municipalities or provinces to validate the findings and further explore the effectiveness and challenges of the Barangay Justice System in

varied contexts. Comparative studies may help inform national policy reforms and LGU-specific interventions.

- Implement digital tools and simple case-tracking systems at the barangay level to improve documentation, transparency, and follow-up on case proceedings and resolutions. This can reduce paperwork, streamline processes, and ensure data accuracy, making the BJS more efficient and accessible, especially in areas with high caseloads.
- Forge partnerships with universities, legal aid groups, and civil society organizations to support training, monitoring, and community education related to the BJS. These collaborations can provide technical expertise, enrich research on grassroots justice, and ensure the BJS remains adaptive to emerging social issues.

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