



Evaluating the resolving disputes practices of Lupong Tagapamayapa: Constituents' view from Barangay Bual Sur, Midsayap, Cotabato, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This paper aims to assess how the Lupong Tagapamayapa is effective in resolving disputes, based on the perceptions of local residents in Barangay Bual Sur, Midsayap, Cotabato, Philippines. It also explores whether socio-demographic factors influence how people view the system's effectiveness. **Methodology/approach** – A descriptive-correlational approach was used. A total of 114 individuals who had experienced dispute resolution through the Lupong Tagapamayapa were selected through purposive sampling. Respondents rated the system's performance in four areas: understanding of the barangay justice system, clarity of procedures, decision-making, and interpersonal skills. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine links between demographic traits and perceptions of effectiveness. **Findings** – Findings revealed a positive but weak relationship between age and perceived effectiveness across all domains, with correlation coefficients ranging from $r = 0.297$ to $r = 0.349$ ($p \leq 0.001$), and older constituents tending to view the system more favorably. In contrast, sex and employment status were not significantly associated with perceptions of effectiveness ($p > 0.05$). The Lupong Tagapamayapa was rated highly effective, with overall domain means ranging from 3.877 to 3.916 (on a 1–5 scale). **Novelty/value** – Local justice systems play a fundamental and pivotal role in community peacebuilding. Our findings stress not only the strengths of the Lupong Tagapamayapa, particularly in legal knowledge and interpersonal skills, but also the importance of engaging younger members of the community more actively. The study supports the need for sustained training and awareness efforts at the barangay level.

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INTRODUCTION

Conflicts and disagreements are a part of life. They are inevitable, and we all encounter them at a certain point in life. While some issues can be ignored, others require immediate attention. Ignoring serious conflicts can lead to them escalating and becoming more complex, requiring more money and period to settle issues. While litigation is one of the solutions for resolving disputes, it can be expensive and time-consuming. Furthermore, the process may not be satisfactory for the parties involved. As a

result, people are increasingly looking for alternatives to the traditional court system that are faster, more efficient, and potentially less expensive. We need to explore these alternatives and find ways to resolve conflicts that are fair, just, and effective for everyone involved (Ronquillo et al., 2025).

The Katarungang Pambarangay includes the Lupong Tagapamayapa, which is a peacekeeping agency that operates at the barangay level (Benter, 2020). Lupong Tagapamayapa relies on community members elected to serve as mediators and are tasked with resolving minor disputes among individuals living under their jurisdiction (Bueno, 2013). According to Viray & Wekke (2021), members are appointed by the Punong Barangay and serve voluntarily, although some receive incentives depending on the municipal or barangay regulations. The Katarungang Pambarangay, as explained by Metillo et al. (2022), functions as a mechanism for local conflict resolution and is embedded in the basic political structure of the Philippines.

However, Sobradil (2019) claims that the technique of settlement has been challenged for its limits. Although the Lupong was effective in declogging the court systems, its efficiency varied depending on the subject matter of the case. This is influenced by a variety of variables, including women's hesitation to prosecute their cases for financial, cultural, and religious reasons. Furthermore, women's age, civil position, religion, and educational achievement can all influence how they settle conflicts and how aggressively they pursue their claims. Similarly, Elizaga-Pagalilauan (2022) found that members of Lupong Tagapamayapa encounter challenges in fulfilling their roles, including the failure of parties to appear, a lack of respect for authority, and an absence of regular training, courses, and meetings.

According to another study by Elizaga-Pagalilauan (2022), the inability of respondents to appear is the most serious problem they encounter. Disrespect for authority, as well as the absence of regular seminars, courses, and meetings, contribute to problems that arise. Prejudicial decision-making and parties' tardiness during conflict settlement were the least common objections. In Barangay Justice Systems, Ybañez / Gun-ob (2013) outlined detailed procedural steps such as mediation and pangkat formation, but studies like that of Umengan (2023) noted that although compliance is generally high, gaps remain in areas like term limits and public trust. Araña et al. (2023) also emphasized that awareness of the Barangay Justice System significantly influences the conflict management skills of Lupong members.

There has been limited research conducted to determine the effectiveness of Lupong Tagapamayapa members, particularly in Barangay Bual Sur, in implementing the Barangay Justice System. Barangay Bual Sur was selected for this study due to the first author's firsthand experience as a resident and observed challenges, such as land disputes and family conflicts, which underscored the need to evaluate Lupong Tagapamayapa's mediation practices in this barangay prior to others. This study aimed to provide an evaluation and insights into the efficiency of the mediation council in resolving conflicts from the view of the constituents. Additionally, the study covered details on the capability of council to address citizen issues.

As Lupong Tagapamayapa acts as a mediator and develops ways to improve dispute resolution within the Philippine Justice System, particularly by addressing their identified training needs in conflict resolution and legal procedures (Araña et al., 2023), this study also demonstrated how the barangay judicial system worked. The relevance of interpersonal skills (Astuti et al., 2023), proper decision-making (Villamor & Dagohoy, 2021), and the adoption of structured processes, including mediation and arbitration, was highlighted in the related literature. These competencies support the core duties of Lupong Tagapamayapa members but are not consistently observed in all barangays.

Generally, the study aimed to evaluate the practices of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in settling disputes as perceived by the constituents of Barangay Bual Sur. Specifically, it sought to determine the socio-demographic profile of the respondents; assess the effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in terms of knowledge on the barangay justice system, systematic procedures, decision-making, and

interpersonal skills; and investigate the significant relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their perceived effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in settling disputes. The study was conducted in Barangay Bual Sur, Midsayap, Cotabato, Philippines.

THEORETICAL BASIS

The study is anchored on Attribution Theory by Kelley & Michela (1980), which explains how individuals assess the causes or reasons behind behavior. This theory is relevant to understanding how constituents evaluate the practices of Lupong Tagapamayapa and how their perceptions are influenced by internal beliefs and external circumstances. Individual behavior is greatly influenced by one's understanding of the events occurring in their environment. When people feel they have control over their circumstances, they are more likely to take responsibility for their actions. In contrast, when they believe they lack such control, they tend to attribute outcomes to external forces (Black et al., 2019). Attribution Theory distinguishes between internal attributions, where people credit their achievements to personal effort and ability, and external attributions, where outcomes are linked to chance or outside influences. Individuals who see success as stemming from their own actions tend to remain engaged and motivated, while those who attribute success to luck may be less inclined to participate actively.

Additionally, cognitive biases such as the fundamental attribution error—blaming others' actions on personal traits rather than context—and the self-serving bias—crediting successes to oneself and failures to external factors—also play a role in how community members interpret roles and actions (Schmitt, 2015). This theory supports the study's aim of understanding the perceived effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa. It helps explain how individuals form judgments about the system based on their beliefs and experiences, and how these perceptions affect their level of trust and engagement with barangay-based dispute resolution.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their perceived level of effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Community Mediation and Barangay Justice

Community mediation is widely used to resolve minor disputes efficiently and at low cost. International and Philippine evidence shows that mediation improves access to justice when procedures are clear and impartial, which supports compliance and social harmony. In the Philippines, the Katarungang Pambarangay requires most local disputes to pass through the Lupong Tagapamayapa before reaching the courts, which positions the Lupon as the first resort for settlement at community level (Tabucanon et al., 2008).

Knowledge of the System

Knowledge of rules, steps, and timelines signals institutional competence and shapes fairness judgments. When users understand the process and believe it is applied consistently, they tend to view the forum as more legitimate, even when outcomes are not in their favor. This is consistent with procedural justice work that links understandable procedures to perceived legitimacy (Tyler et al., 2015; Wever & Ybema, 2024).

Systematic Procedures

Quality of procedure—accurate records, transparent steps, appropriate venues, timeliness, and absence of informal costs—relates to procedural justice and legitimacy in local dispute resolution. Studies report that fair and consistent processes often predict acceptance of decisions more strongly than the outcome itself (Tyler et al., 2015; Wever & Ybema, 2024).

Decision-Making

Users value impartial and timely decisions in mediation bodies. Process-based models argue that neutrality, consistency with facts, and timely action increase compliance and willingness to use the forum again. These expectations align with barangay practice that favors quick and even-handed resolution of disputes (Tabucanon et al., 2008; Tyler et al., 2015).

Interpersonal Skills of Mediators

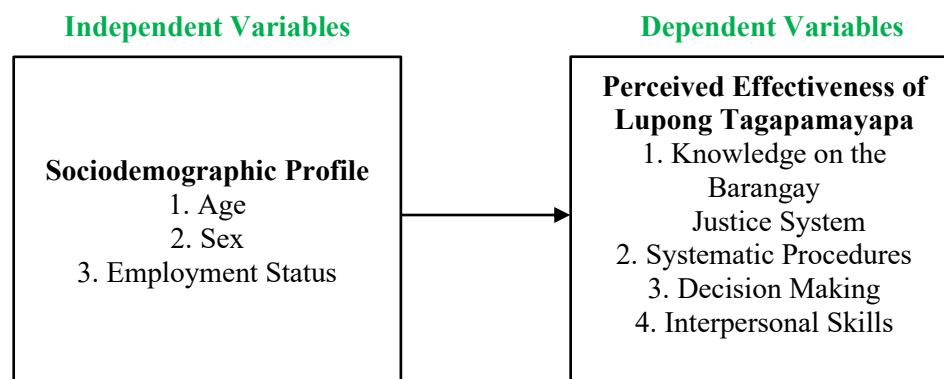
A mediator's interpersonal competencies—active listening, respectful communication, reframing, and tact—strongly influence satisfaction and settlement rates. Classic and contemporary scholarship shows that a mediator's personal qualities affect parties' evaluations of the process and its outcomes, which supports higher perceived effectiveness in community settings (Bowling & Hoffman, 2000).

Informal Justice in Low-Resource Settings

Across many countries, a large share of disputes is handled by informal or semi-formal institutions. Engagement with such forums can vary with age and social roles, while overall perceptions are shaped by whether procedures appear fair and respectful. Global work on informal justice highlights the importance of local norms and accessible processes for building trust and compliance (Akers, 2016; Röder, 2012).

There is broad evidence on mediation and procedural justice internationally, but limited domain-level evidence from barangay settings that links socio-demographics to specific perceptions of knowledge, procedures, decision-making, and mediator interpersonal skills. This study addresses that gap by modeling these links in a Philippine community mediation context (Tabucanon et al., 2008; Tyler et al., 2015; Wever & Ybema, 2024).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



METHOD

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive design was used to determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, specifically age, sex, and employment status, and to assess the perceived effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in terms of knowledge of the barangay justice system, systematic procedures, decision-making, and interpersonal skills. This approach offers a comprehensive overview of current conditions and aids in identifying trends in the data (Creswell, 2014). The correlational design, on the other hand, was employed to

examine the significant relationships between the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and their perceptions of the effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in resolving disputes. Correlational studies are useful in exploring associations between variables without implying causation (Field, 2018; Ortega & Sumayo, 2024). This design helped uncover patterns that may inform future strategies for improving community dispute resolution.

Research Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The respondents of this study were 114 constituents who had experienced the services of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in Barangay Bual Sur, Midsayap, Cotabato. They were selected based on their direct experience with the dispute resolution process, enabling them to provide relevant insights into its effectiveness. Inclusion criteria required participants to be residents of Barangay Bual Sur and at least 18 years old to ensure informed and mature responses. This selection aimed to capture diverse perspectives regarding the effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in the local community. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents who had firsthand experience with the Lupong Tagapamayapa's dispute resolution process. With permission from the barangay captain, the first author accessed records of constituents who filed complaints from 2018 to 2022. From this list, 114 respondents were identified based on availability and willingness to participate. As a non-probability sampling method, purposive sampling allows the selection of respondents based on characteristics directly related to the research objectives (Etikan et al., 2016).

Research Instrument

Data were gathered using a survey questionnaire composed of two parts. The first part collected socio-demographic data, including age, sex, and employment status. The second part evaluated the perceived effectiveness of the respondents across four domains: knowledge of the barangay justice system, systematic procedures, decision-making, and interpersonal skills. The questionnaire was adapted and modified from Dofeliz & Dela Peña (2022) to suit the context of this study. It was reviewed and validated by three expert criminologists who assessed its clarity, relevance, and alignment with the constructs being measured—a process that was also observed in many research studies, such as Ong & Bonganciso (2025), Galve & Sumayo (2024), and Obenza et al. (2024). A reliability analysis was then conducted on the data gathered, resulting in a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.984, indicating that the instrument is very reliable. This high reliability score suggests that the questionnaire consistently measures the intended variables, thereby enhancing the credibility of the findings. Validation is a critical step in ensuring that the instrument yields dependable results (Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020).

Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to the ethical guidelines of the University of Southern Mindanao Research Ethics Committee. Approval was secured from the Department Head of Criminal Justice Education at the University of Southern Mindanao, Kabacan Campus, and from the Barangay Captain of Bual Sur. Prior to data collection, informed consent forms were provided and explained to all potential respondents. These forms outlined the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and measures for ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. Respondents were given time to ask questions before signing the consent forms. Once approvals and consent were obtained, the first author coordinated with the eligible respondents—individuals who had filed disputes with the Lupong Tagapamayapa between 2018 and 2022—to administer the structured questionnaire. This systematic approach ensured that all

ethical standards were met and that respondents were fully informed of their rights and the study's objectives (Esto, 2024; Perater et al., 2025).

Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. To address the first research objective, frequency, percentage, and weighted mean were used to describe the respondents' socio-demographic profile and their perceptions of the Lupong Tagapamayapa's effectiveness. To test relationships between variables, Spearman's rho was used to analyze the correlation between age and the perceived effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa. This non-parametric test is ideal for ordinal or non-normally distributed data and is less affected by outliers (Dancey & Reidy, 2017). Additionally, point-biserial correlation was used to examine the relationships between the dichotomous variables (sex and employment status) and the continuous measures of perceived effectiveness. This test is appropriate when assessing the relationship between one binary and one continuous variable (McDonald, 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic profile of 114 respondents who have experienced the services of Lupong Tagapamayapa in Barangay Bual Sur, Midsayap, Cotabato. In terms of age, 71.1% of the respondents were 40 years old and above, while 28.9% were 39 years old and below. For sex, 54.4% were female and 45.6% were male. Regarding employment status, 72.8% of the respondents were employed, while 27.2% were unemployed.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency (N = 114)	Percentage (%)
Age		
39 years old and below	33	28.9
40 years old and above	81	71.1
Sex		
Female	62	54.4
Male	52	45.6
Employment Status		
Employed	83	72.8
Unemployed	31	27.2

Table 2 presents the perceived effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in resolving disputes in terms of their knowledge of the barangay justice system. All five items measured under this category received mean scores between 3.851 and 3.912. The highest mean was observed in the item regarding the dissemination of information through summons ($\bar{x} = 3.912$), while the lowest, still within the "Highly Effective" range, pertained to the timely resolution of cases within 15 days ($\bar{x} = 3.851$). The items related to handling unresolved cases, selecting the Pangkat ng Tagapagkasundo, and issuing a Certificate to File Action also received high effectiveness ratings ($\bar{x} = 3.886$ for each). The overall mean for this category was 3.884, indicating that respondents generally perceive the Lupong

Tagapamayapa as highly effective in terms of their knowledge and application of the barangay justice system.

Table 2. Perceived Effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in Resolving Disputes Vis-a-Vis their Knowledge of the Barangay Justice System

Statements	Mean	Description
A. Knowledge on the Barangay Justice System		
1. The Lupong Tagapamayapa through the Lupon Chairman (Punong Barangay) effectively disseminates information by sending summons to parties within the prescribed period of 1 to 3 days upon receipt of the complaint for mediation.	3.912	Highly Effective
2. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively ensures the timely resolution of cases by settling the cases filed before the Lupon Chairman within the prescribed period of 15 days from the day of the first meeting.	3.851	Highly Effective
3. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively handles cases that are not settled within the prescribed period of 15 days by endorsing the case to the Lupon members for the creation & selection of Pangkat ng Tagapagkasundo.	3.886	Highly Effective
4. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively implements the process for selecting the Pangkat ng Tagapagkasundo in which the Lupon Chairman allows the complainant and respondent to choose their Pangkat ng Tagapagkasundo from the list of appointed lupon members.	3.886	Highly Effective
5. The Lupong Tagapamayapa through the pangkat ng Tagapagkasundo effectively and promptly issues a Certificate to File Action if settlement is not reached before the Pangkat within the designated 45-day period.	3.886	Highly Effective
Mean	3.884	Highly Effective

Legend:

1.00 - 1.74	Not Effective
1.75 - 2.49	Slightly Effective
2.50 - 3.24	Effective
3.25 - 4.00	Highly Effective

Table 3 shows the perceived effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in resolving disputes in terms of systematic procedures. All five items in this section were rated as “Highly Effective”, with mean scores ranging from 3.904 to 3.93. The highest mean was noted in the implementation of appropriate venues for settling cases ($\bar{x} = 3.93$). Ensuring each concern is recorded, timely proceedings, and the maintenance of ethical standards regarding service fees also received high ratings (means between 3.904 and 3.921). The overall mean for systematic procedures was 3.916, indicating that respondents perceive the systematic procedures employed by the Lupong Tagapamayapa as highly effective.

Table 3 . Perceived Effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in Resolving Disputes Vis-à-Vis Systematic Procedures

Statements	Mean	Description
B. Systematic Procedures		
6. The Lupong Tagapamayapa through the Lupon Chairman effectively ensures each concern is taken seriously by recording all written and oral complaints.	3.912	Highly Effective
7. The Lupong Tagapamayapa through the Lupon secretary (Barangay Secretary) effectively ensures that minutes during the proceedings are recorded and taken down notes.	3.912	Highly Effective
8. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively implements an appropriate venue for settling cases (i.e. Barangay Hall, People's Hall).	3.93	Highly Effective
9. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively ensures every proceeding runs efficiently by being timely during the schedule of hearings or deliberations.	3.921	Highly Effective
10. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively holds ethical standards by not asking to charge fees for its services before nor after hearings.	3.904	Highly Effective
Mean	3.916	Highly Effective

Legend:

1.00 - 1.74	Not Effective
1.75 - 2.49	Slightly Effective
2.50 - 3.24	Effective
3.25 - 4.00	Highly Effective

Table 4 presents the perceived effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in resolving disputes in terms of decision-making. All items under this category were rated as “Highly Effective”, with mean scores ranging from 3.86 to 3.904. Ensuring the timely resolution of cases by being decisive and action-oriented received the highest mean ($\bar{x} = 3.904$), while both ensuring fair and just decisions ($\bar{x} = 3.86$) and ensuring fair solutions without personal interest or bribery ($\bar{x} = 3.86$) received the lowest means, though both still fall within the “Highly Effective” category. Other items, such as providing guidance by referring to relevant laws ($\bar{x} = 3.895$) and maintaining impartiality through consistency and evidence-based decisions ($\bar{x} = 3.868$), also received high effectiveness ratings. The overall mean for decision-making was 3.877, indicating that respondents view the Lupong Tagapamayapa as highly effective in this aspect.

Table 4. Perceived Effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in Resolving Disputes Vis-à-Vis Decision-Making

Statements	Mean	Description
C. Decision Making		
11. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively ensures a fair and just decision for both parties.	3.86	Highly Effective

12. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively provides guidance and insights into the case by referring the content of the case to any relevant laws or ordinances.	3.895	Highly Effective
13. The Lupong tagapamayapa effectively ensures the timely resolution of cases by being decisive and action-oriented in settling disputes in our barangay.	3.904	Highly Effective
14. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively ensures impartiality by consistency in its decision and always considers the evidence and pertinent facts presented before them.	3.868	Highly Effective
15. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively ensures that all parties receive fair and just solutions by setting aside their interests and avoiding any possibility of bribes that may cause advantages and disadvantages to the parties involved.	3.86	Highly Effective
Mean	3.877	Highly Effective

Legend:

1.00 - 1.74	Not Effective
1.75 - 2.49	Slightly Effective
2.50 - 3.24	Effective
3.25 - 4.00	Highly Effective

Table 5 presents the perceived effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in resolving disputes in relation to interpersonal skills. All five statements in this category received mean ratings between 3.842 and 3.895, all falling within the “Highly Effective” range. The highest mean was observed for showing initiative in adopting peaceful negotiation and amicable settlement ($\bar{x} = 3.895$), while ensuring 24-hour availability had the lowest mean ($\bar{x} = 3.842$). Other areas, such as collaborative conflict resolution, accommodating concerns, and promoting gender equality, all received high mean ratings ($\bar{x} = 3.886$ to 3.877). The overall mean for interpersonal skills was 3.889, indicating that respondents generally perceive the Lupong Tagapamayapa as highly effective in this aspect.

Table 5. Perceived Effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in Resolving Disputes Vis-a-Via Interpersonal Skills

Statements	Mean	Description
D. Interpersonal Skills		
16. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively ensures every concern is addressed by accommodating the concerns of both parties even beyond the prescribed period in settling disputes.	3.877	Highly Effective
17. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively implements collaborative conflict resolution among its constituents by showing respect and tact during conflict resolution regardless of age, sex, political affiliation, and social status.	3.886	Highly Effective

18. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively ensures to make themselves available to serve 24 hours a day as expected from public servants.	3.842	Highly Effective
19. The Lupong tagapamayapa effectively shows initiative and adopts the Filipino-time-honored principle of solving conflict through peaceful negotiation and amicable settlement rather than resorting to the higher court.	3.895	Highly Effective
20. The Lupong Tagapamayapa effectively promote gender equality in making decisions and without biases regardless of the sectors represented.	3.886	Highly Effective
Mean	3.877	Highly Effective
Overall Mean	3.889	Highly Effective

Legend:

1.00 - 1.74	Not Effective
1.75 - 2.49	Slightly Effective
2.50 - 3.24	Effective
3.25 - 4.00	Highly Effective

Table 6 presents the correlation between socio-demographic characteristics (age, sex, and employment status) and the perceived effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa in resolving disputes. The results show that age has a statistically significant but weak positive correlation with all four domains: knowledge of the barangay justice system ($r = 0.318$, $p = 0.001$), systematic procedures ($r = 0.312$, $p = 0.001$), decision-making ($r = 0.349$, $p = 0.000$), and interpersonal skills ($r = 0.297$, $p = 0.001$). This indicates that older respondents tend to perceive the Lupong Tagapamayapa as more effective across these domains. However, the association is only weak. For sex, the correlations with all four domains were very weak and not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Similarly, employment status showed very weak, negative, and statistically insignificant correlations with all domains ($p > 0.05$).

Table 6 . Socio-demographic Characteristics and Perceived Effectiveness of Lupong Tagapamayapa in Resolving Disputes

Paired Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation	P-value
Age and Knowledge	.318**	weak	0.001
Age and Systematic Procedure	.312**	weak	0.001
Age and Decision-making	.349**	weak	0.000
Age and Interpersonal skills	.297**	weak	0.001
Sex and Knowledge	0.172 ^{ns}	very weak	0.067
Sex and Systematic Procedure	0.178 ^{ns}	very weak	0.059
Sex and Decision-making	0.134 ^{ns}	very weak	0.156
Sex and Interpersonal skills	0.085 ^{ns}	very weak	0.366
Employment Status and Knowledge	-0.093 ^{ns}	very weak	0.326
Employment Status and Systematic Procedure	-0.009 ^{ns}	very weak	0.926
Employment Status and Decision-making	-0.073 ^{ns}	very weak	0.440
Employment Status and Interpersonal skills	-0.073 ^{ns}	very weak	0.443

** - Highly Significant at 1% level of Significance

ns- Not Significant at 5% level of Significance

Discussion

In Table 1, the findings indicate that the majority of respondents who have experienced the services of Lupong Tagapamayapa in Barangay Bual Sur are older adults, with 71.1% falling in the 40 years old and above category. This aligns with Choi, Lee, and Lee (2021), who observed that older individuals are often more engaged with community services, likely due to their longer-term residency and accumulated experiences. The sex distribution shows a slightly higher representation of females (54.4%) compared to males (45.6%). This is supported by Correll et al. (2007), who found that women tend to be more involved in community-oriented activities and services, which may explain the greater female engagement in Lupong Tagapamayapa-related experiences. Regarding employment status, a significant proportion (72.8%) of respondents were employed. This result is consistent with Parker and Kettner (2018), who reported that employment is associated with greater participation in community and governance activities, possibly because of the stability and resources that employment provides. These socio-demographic patterns suggest that older adults, females, and employed individuals are more likely to engage with the Lupong Tagapamayapa in Barangay Bual Sur. Attribution theory (Kelley & Michela, 1980) supports the idea that these groups may perceive the effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa more favorably due to their greater involvement and roles within the community. Such engagement may influence their overall perception of the barangay justice system's effectiveness (Black et al., 2019).

In Table 2, the results show a consistently high perception of the Lupong Tagapamayapa's effectiveness regarding their knowledge of the barangay justice system. The data indicate that respondents view the Lupon as capable of disseminating information, managing case timelines, handling unresolved disputes, and properly implementing processes related to the selection of Pangkat ng Tagapagkasundo and the issuance of Certificates to File Action. This consistent assessment suggests strong confidence in Lupon's procedural knowledge and their adherence to mandated timelines. These findings align with the results of Umengan (2023), who reported a "Great Extent" of compliance among Lupong Tagapamayapa members in similar procedural aspects, including the timely issuance of notices, resolution of cases within set periods, and constitution of the Pangkat Tagapagkasundo when needed. Such procedural competence supports community trust, as highlighted by Noveloso et al. (2024), who noted that self-perceived competence among community justice officers enhances their credibility and acceptance within the community. Maintaining these high standards, especially in meeting prescribed timelines, is important for ensuring continued trust in the barangay justice system (Tyler et al., 2015; Wever & Ybema, 2024). Timely dispute resolution can prevent conflicts from escalating and assures community members of prompt and fair treatment.

In Table 3, the data suggest that the Lupong Tagapamayapa is viewed as highly competent in implementing systematic procedures for dispute resolution. The highest score for providing appropriate venues highlights the importance of a suitable environment for conciliation efforts. Similarly, the high ratings for recording complaints, keeping minutes, running timely hearings, and adhering to ethical standards (such as not charging fees) reflect the community's recognition of fairness, transparency, and efficiency in the process. While all aspects are rated highly, the mean for ethical standards regarding service fees, though still high, is slightly lower than the others. This could point to a need for continued

emphasis on communicating and enforcing the policy of not charging fees for services to further reassure the public of impartiality and accessibility. These findings are supported by Agustin et al. (2018), who found that constituents recognized Lupong Tagapamayapa members for their adherence to procedural guidelines, minimizing conflict, and ensuring fair outcomes during conciliation. Additionally, the final procedural approach employed by the Lupong Tagapamayapa in dispute resolution is arbitration, wherein the parties may agree to have an impartial tribunal decide the case. Unlike mediation or conciliation, where outcomes are not enforced, arbitration rulings are legally binding. This method is often preferred due to the enforceability of arbitration decisions, especially in international contexts, though considerations around costs and enforcement must be taken into account before proceeding (Stewarts, 2025).

In Table 4, the results indicate that the Lupong Tagapamayapa is perceived as highly effective in decision-making, particularly in delivering fair and just outcomes, being decisive in resolving disputes, and ensuring impartiality. The consistently high mean scores across all items suggest that constituents have confidence in Lupon's ability to make decisions grounded in fairness, transparency, and legal guidance. The highest rating for decisiveness reflects the value placed on timely and action-oriented resolution of cases, while similarly high scores for impartiality, avoidance of personal interests, and consistency in considering evidence further highlight the community's trust in the Lupon's integrity. The maintenance of these standards is essential to sustaining public confidence and promoting a sense of justice at the barangay level. These findings are consistent with those of Villamor and Dagohoy (2021), who reported very high perceived decision-making effectiveness among Lupong Tagapamayapa members in other contexts. Their results, which featured an overall mean of 5.20, reinforce the conclusion that the effectiveness of decision-making within the Lupon is widely recognized. The process of decision-making itself is a complex and multifaceted ability, allowing individuals and groups to adapt to their environments and navigate vital choices in daily life. Theoretical perspectives and neuropsychological aspects of decision-making continue to be explored, with ongoing research highlighting that, despite advancements, further study is needed to fully understand and refine current models (Morelli et al., 2022).

In Table 5, the findings indicate that the Lupong Tagapamayapa is regarded as highly effective in demonstrating interpersonal skills, particularly in accommodating concerns, promoting gender equality, and adopting peaceful approaches to conflict resolution. The highest score for peaceful negotiation and amicable settlement underscores the value placed by the community on resolving disputes through non-adversarial means. While all items are rated as highly effective, the slightly lower mean for 24-hour availability suggests an area for potential improvement, especially in ensuring accessibility during urgent situations. Enhancing service availability could further increase trust and satisfaction within the community. These results are consistent with Añana et al. (2024), who emphasized the critical role of strong interpersonal skills among Lupong Tagapamayapa members in fostering effective communication, building positive relationships, and managing disputes successfully. Their findings, which also reported high self-perceived effectiveness in this domain, reinforce the importance of continued investment in training related to communication, conflict resolution, and cultural sensitivity. Moreover, the importance of interpersonal skills extends beyond the context of dispute resolution; in today's complex professional environment, these skills—encompassing problem-solving, handling stressful situations, and the capacity to comprehend and empathize with others—are highly valued not just in corporate settings but also in social and community engagements (Astuti et al., 2023; Bowling & Hoffman, 2000).

In Table 6, the findings indicate that age is the only socio-demographic factor examined in this study that shows a statistically significant, albeit weak, relationship with perceptions of the effectiveness of the Lupong Tagapamayapa. Older respondents were more likely to view the Lupon

Tagapamayapa as effective in terms of knowledge, systematic procedures, decision-making, and interpersonal skills. This suggests that increased life experience or longer exposure to community affairs may contribute to greater confidence in the barangay justice system, as also noted by Araña et al. (2023). However, the weak strength of these correlations implies that age alone does not fully account for differences in perception, and other factors such as education, marital status, or individual experiences may also play important roles. For sex, although female respondents tended to have slightly higher perceptions of effectiveness, the relationships were very weak and not statistically significant. This implies that socio-demographic characteristics are low factors in associating perceptions on the effectiveness of lupong tagapamayapa in resolving disputes.

This is consistent with Sobradil (2019), who observed that other factors—including cultural, socioeconomic, and experiential differences—may shape perceptions of effectiveness more than sex alone. Similarly, the very weak and insignificant correlations between employment status and perceived effectiveness indicate that employment does not substantially influence respondents' views of the Lupong Tagapamayapa. As noted by Dofeliz and De la Peña (2022), demographic factors like employment status may not be as influential as prior personal experiences or education in shaping such perceptions. While age appears to play a modest role in shaping perceptions of effectiveness, neither sex nor employment status shows a significant impact.

CONCLUSION

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the Lupong Tagapamayapa in Barangay Bual Sur, Midsayap, Philippines is generally effective in resolving disputes, with high marks given for knowledge, systematic procedures, decision-making, and interpersonal skills. The significant, though weak, relationship between age and perceived effectiveness suggests that life experience and greater community involvement may play a role in shaping more positive perceptions of the Lupong Tagapamayapa's performance. Meanwhile, sex and employment status were not found to be significantly associated with respondents' views. These compelling results, though, were not observed outcomes emphasize the need for continued efforts to sustain and strengthen the practices they do, particularly by engaging younger members of the community and by making services even more responsive and accessible.

In light of these results, the authors proposed several practical suggestions. The Lupong Tagapamayapa should continue to enhance their training programs, focusing on conflict resolution, effective communication, and decision-making, while also instituting regular workshops and feedback mechanisms to stay attuned to the needs of the community. All members should be provided with and encouraged to regularly review the Lupong Tagapamayapa Manual to ensure consistent and standardized practices. If gaps are identified, it is recommended that the DILG consider updating the manual based on research findings. Constituents of Barangay Bual Sur are encouraged to participate in educational programs and workshops to better understand the barangay justice system and to actively communicate with local officials. Criminology instructors are advised to incorporate practical activities, such as dispute resolution simulations and community service, into their curriculum to bridge theory and practice. Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to expand the scope of the study to include other barangays and utilize qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to gain deeper insights. Further research should also consider additional factors like educational attainment, marital status, economic status, previous experiences with the justice system, and community engagement, and may benefit from applying mediation analysis to explore complex relationships among variables or to explore other factors that could be strongly associate the effectiveness of Lupong Tagapamayapa in resolving

disputes. These actions will help ensure that the Lupong Tagapamayapa remains an effective and trusted institution for resolving disputes within the community.

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