

The Procurement Process in the Barangays of the City of Manila: Examining Practices and Alternative Systems and Problems Towards a Procurement Primer

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Abstract. Since Republic Act 9184 (RA 9184) was enacted in 2003 by the Philippine Government, National Government Agencies have been guided by their customized procurement manual and Local Government Units by their local government procurement manual. Barangays faced significant challenges navigating the intricate mandatory procurement process, mainly because they lacked access to a clear and simplified procurement guide. This gap hindered their ability to manage resources and make informed decisions effectively. This study aims to determine the awareness, compliance, practices, and challenges in the organization and operation of the procurement process in selected barangays of the City of Manila, with the ultimate goal of finalizing findings that can serve as the basis for an action plan. The study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches through surveys, focus group discussions, interviews, and observations. Twelve barangays were selected from Manila's six districts based on population and national tax allotments, with 120 barangay officials serving as respondents. The researchers statistically analyzed the data using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Likert scaling based on the respondents' answers to enhance understanding. The study reveals that respondents are partially aware of and moderately comply with RA 9184 and its guidelines. The respondent's education, years of service, experience, and training in government procurement significantly influence the barangay procurement organization and operations. Key challenges include lack of knowledge, insufficient training, low budgets, lengthy processes, and external influences. In response to these challenges, the researcher has developed the 4-ACES Action Plan and a Barangay Procurement Primer designed to enhance procurement knowledge and practices in barangays. 4-ACES stands for: Attend training and seminars, Create a special committee, Enact an ordinance, and Spread the procurement policy. These proposed changes offer the potential for significant improvements in barangay procurement processes, leading to more efficient operations and better compliance with RA 9184 and its guidelines.

Keywords: Barangay procurement process; Public bidding; Local government unit.

1.0 Introduction

Public Procurement is vital in delivering public services, promoting good governance, and fostering sustainable economic growth. Governments globally spend approximately US\$9.5 trillion annually on procurement, which constitutes around 12–20% of a country's Gross Domestic Product. In the Philippines, government spending on

capital outlays and maintenance expenses accounts for approximately 60% of the total budget, totaling \$43 billion (Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems (MAPS), 2021). Imagine how 42,011 barangays in the Philippines allocate their budget to purchase goods and services, fund infrastructure projects, and engage consulting services to implement programs, projects, and activities, ultimately delivering quality public services. Since 1901, government procurement of supplies, materials, and equipment in the Philippines has been conducted through public bidding. Infrastructure Projects and Consulting Services were previously regulated separately until 2001, when all procurement rules were unified under Republic Act No. 9184 (RA 9184), also known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act of 2003."

RA 9184 is landmark legislation consolidating all procurement laws and policies in the country, applying to various government entities, including National Government Agencies (NGAs), Government Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs), Government Financial Institutions (GFIs), State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), and Local Government Units (LGUs), including barangays, to promote good governance and combat corruption in the procurement process (Republic Act No. 9184, 2003). RA 9184 became effective in 2003, with its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) – A taking effect later that year. To further systematize procurement procedures and ensure transparency, the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB) issued Resolution No. 013 (2006), which approved the Generic Procurement Manual (GPM) as a standard guide for all government entities, including local government units (LGUs), in conducting their procurement activities.

Due to the GPM's broad applicability, numerous LGUs requested a specialized procurement manual tailored to their needs. In response, the GPPB Technical Support Office (GPPB-TSO) sought assistance from the Asian Development Bank to develop a manual for local government units (LGUs). The resulting Procurement Manual for Local Government Units (PMLGU) (2007) incorporates relevant provisions from the Local Government Code, budget and finance guidelines, and RA 9184 and its IRR to ensure LGUs' compliance with procurement regulations (GPPB Resolution No. 30, 2007). LGUs, being closest to the people, are well-positioned to address local needs and priorities. By leveraging procurement processes, LGUs, including barangays, can acquire Goods and Services, Infrastructure Projects, and Consulting Services to effectively implement sustainable development programs and initiatives within their jurisdictions, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals as catalysts for positive change (Bilsky et al., 2021).

The PMLGU (GPPB, 2007), Section 1, provides: "This Manual shall apply to all procurement activities of provincial, city, and municipal governments, regardless of class or category." *A separate manual shall be developed, particularly for the barangays, to address the peculiarities of their organization and operations.* The PMLGU, designed for LGUs and patterned after the GPM, only applies to Provinces, Cities, and Municipalities. It received support from the Asian Development Bank and World Bank in 2008. However, the PMLGU was not updated to reflect the changes introduced by the 2009 Revised IRR of RA 9184, resulting in potential ambiguity in interpretation. The GPPB issued Resolution No. 10 (2014), approving the 2014 Local Government Procurement Manual (LGPM) to address this issue. This updated version incorporates all changes made by the 2009 Revised IRR and relevant GPPB resolutions, guidelines, and circulars issued between 2009 and 2013 (GPPB, 2014). This ensures consistency and clarity in the procurement processes for LGUs.

However, the LGPM (2014), section 1, provides: "This Manual shall apply to all procurement activities of all Local Government Units, i.e., provinces, cities, municipalities, regardless of class or category." Despite a promise in the PMLGU (2007) to create a separate procurement manual for barangays, no such manual has been issued. The LGPM (2014) did not include barangays, and the GPPB has not released any Barangay Procurement Manual (BPM) or Barangay Procurement Primer (BPP). The Updated 2016 Revised IRR of RA 9184 mandates its application to all government entities, including all LGUs.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the GPPB have not issued the promised separate procurement manual for barangays for over two decades. Being unaware of the peculiarities in the organization and operations of the barangays, yet aware of the intricacies and complexities of government procurement, they seem to have chosen to abandon the BPM when they released the LGPM (2014). The lack of a specific BPM or BPP for barangays will continue to cause inconsistencies, intolerance, and confusion in the Barangays. It will seed an infectious system of graft and corruption in the basic political unit of our system of government.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed RA 12009, the "New Government Procurement Act of 2024," on July 20, 2024, superseding RA 9184 (DBM, 2025). However, despite this new law, the government has yet to release a BPM or BPP to guide barangay procurement processes. While public procurement is essential for stimulating economic activity (Magakwe, 2022), the procurement processes in barangays differ significantly from those in higher government entities, particularly in terms of the qualifications of procurement personnel (GPPB Resolution No. 01, 2004). However, the complexity of public bidding and contract management necessitates a simplified guide for barangays to ensure compliance with procurement laws, promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance (TAGG).

Moreover, despite the local autonomy granted to barangays under the Philippine Constitution (1987, Article X, Section 2), they lack a tailored framework, such as customized procurement manuals, like those found in other government entities. This highlights the need for a BPM or BPP to support effective, efficient, economical, and ethical procurement practices. Furthermore, the qualifications for members of the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) differ across various government levels. While higher entities require officials with specific procurement education, skills, training, and expertise, barangays often rely on elected officials with minimal qualifications, raising concerns about their preparedness to manage complex procurement responsibilities (GPPB, 2024, section 11.2). This research aims to fill the gap in understanding barangay procurement organization, operations, and challenges by analyzing current practices and proposing an action plan for a simplified procurement primer. The researcher, with experience in procurement and barangay governance, believes that this study is essential for enhancing procurement practices, promoting transparency and accountability, and ensuring good governance at the grassroots level.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The quantitative and qualitative research designs were employed in this study to ensure validity and reliability, ultimately achieving the final research objective. Aside from the quantifiable data obtained by the researcher through survey questionnaires, he complemented the quantitative data with focus group discussions (FGDs), interviews, and observations of documents, including the 2024 Annual Procurement Plan (APP) and the Barangay Full Disclosure Policy Board (BFDPB), for compliance purposes. In this context, the researcher employed this method, which he found to be suitable for analyzing the observance by barangay officials of the procurement processes provided under RA 9184, the 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. The researchers used the study's findings as the basis for an action plan to develop the Barangay Procurement Primer, aiming to effectively implement the government procurement process in the barangays.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in the Barangays as Procuring Entities (PEs) of the six districts of the City of Manila, National Capital Region, Philippines.

2.3 Research Participants

The total number of barangays in the City of Manila is 897. The study selected twelve barangays in Manila, with two barangays per district – one with the highest population and National Tax Allotment (NTA) from 2022 to 2025 (DBM, 2021; DBM, 2022; DBM, 2023; DBM, 2024) and one with the lowest, based on the 2020 Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) (PSA, 2024) Census. Using the purposive sampling method, the study focused on elective and appointive barangay officials who play key roles in local governance and administration, namely the Punong Barangays (PBs) who served as Head of the Procuring Entity (HoPE); Sangguniang Barangay Members or Barangay Councilors (BC) who served as BAC Chairman and Members; Barangay Secretaries (BS) who served as BAC Secretariat; and Barangay Treasurers (BTs) who served as Technical Working Group (TWG) and/or End – User Unit. These officials, a total of 120, were the study's respondents.

2.4 Research Instrument

The researcher used a survey questionnaire as the primary instrument in conducting his research. The instrument was validated by different procurement, administration, and statistics experts, after which the research adviser approved it. The researcher formulated a matrix to determine which items pertained to specific questions and

procurement processes. The instrument was subdivided into four parts, which included the following: Part I requested the demographic profile of the respondents; Part II determined the level of awareness of the respondents based on the different provisions of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR and GPM; Part III asked for respondents level of compliance on the provisions of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM; Part IV identified the practices and alternative systems, and challenges encountered by the respondents that affect their compliance with RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR and the GPM; Part IV – A determined the observance of practices and alternative systems in the implementation of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR and the GPM; Part IV – B determined the observance of challenges in the implementation of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR and the GPM.

The researchers designed the instruments as a GPPB Certified Public Procurement Specialist (CPPS). On September 27, 2024, these instruments, comprising both quantitative and qualitative components in the form of questionnaires, FGD Questions, and Final Interview Questions, were meticulously examined, tested, and validated as reliable by Mr. Ronnie L. Guiterrez, a CPPS and an Accredited Lecturer/Speaker of the GPPB, and current Chief of Procurement and Head of BAC Secretariat of the Central Luzon State University (CLSU). The research instrument was translated from English to Filipino to address the difficulties reported by most respondents during the pilot testing with Barangay Dumlog of Toledo City Cebu, focusing on the complex technical terms of the law and procurement procedures. An FGD with BAC Members and support staff, as well as an interview with their Punong Barangay, were subsequently conducted to validate the translation.

On October 3, 2024, Mr. Neil Lester A. Gimeno, a GPPB CPPS and Administrative Officer IV, as well as a current PSA Region X BAC member, thoroughly re-examined, re-tested, and re-validated the research instruments. This process, which included quantitative and qualitative components in English and Filipino questionnaires, FGD Guide Questions, and Final Interview Questions, further confirmed the instrument's reliability. The instrument was then pretested with Barangay Santa Teresita, District 1, Quezon City, providing additional assurance of its quality.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

This study used specific steps to gather data. After carefully revalidating the instrument, the researcher asked permission from the PB or Chairpersons of the respondent barangays. A formal letter of request to conduct research was addressed to the different PBs, and a copy was furnished to the Office of the Mayor of the City of Manila and the Office of the Secretary of the DILG. After permission was granted, the researcher distributed copies of the English and Tagalog questionnaires, along with pencils and erasers, for convenience. An FGD with Barangay BAC Members and BAC Support staff, as well as a one-on-one interview with the PB, was scheduled for later.

Considering the difficulty in organizing the complete attendance of the participants of the FGD and the availability of the PBs because of their busy, rotational, and demanding schedules; declaration of class and office suspensions; existence of natural disasters and calamities; and Barangay Assemblies, the researcher limit the participants of the FGD to the following Barangay officials: 1. The BS representing the BAC Secretariat; 2. The BT represents the End-User Unit and the TWG financial expert; and 3. The Kagawad Chairperson of the Committee on Appropriation or any Kagawad or any BC representing the BAC of the Barangay. It was emphasized that respondents should answer all questions truthfully without reservation, and the names provided by the Barangay officials will be optional and treated as confidential, subject to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173) and in respect for their right against self-incrimination, as enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

Finally, the researcher requested a copy of the barangays' 2024 APP as part of the study and asked permission to take a snapshot of their BFDPB to confirm compliance with TAGG (GPPB, 2021). Such requested procurement documents are voluntary and not compulsory for the respondent barangays. Moreover, knowledge of the respondent barangays' preparation of the APP will validate their capability in procurement planning and strategy, a vital part of the barangay procurement process.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensures that the standards of ethics in the conduct of research are well-incorporated. The research study adhered to ethical guidelines and was evaluated by the Polytechnic University of the Philippines Research Ethics Committee (PUP – UREC), which met the requirements set by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB). It was approved on November 8, 2024, with UREC Code UREC-2024-1697.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile

Tables 1 to 3 present the demographic profiles of respondent barangay officials, including their education, years of service, and experience in government procurement. The results of the demographic profile of the respondents below help us understand the importance of the knowledge, skills, and qualifications necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities of a BAC Chairman, BAC Members, and BAC support staff. Concerning educational attainment, most respondents are college graduates or have at least a college level education, followed by 38.3% of High School graduates, 11.7% of those who have finished Vocational courses, and one who is an elementary graduate. A combination of all the respondents who did not attend college shows that the majority, or 50.8%, did not enter tertiary education.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to educational attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Elementary	1	0.80
High School	46	38.3
Vocational	14	11.7
College	59	49.2

In an FGD conducted by the researcher with respondents validated through interviews with their PBs, the majority of respondents emphasized that knowledge, training, and seminars should be given the utmost priority in appointing members of the BAC, the BAC Support staff, and the TWG, followed by skills and experience in government procurement. For the respondents, educational attainment is not a factor to be considered because it is given, under the Local Government Code or RA 7160 (1991), that the qualifications of elected Barangay Official are the following: 1) Citizens of the Philippines, 2) At least 18 years of age on election day, 3) Qualified voters in the barangay they propose to be elected, (4) Residents in the barangay for at least 1 year immediately preceding the day of the election, and (5) Able to read and write Filipino or any other local language or dialect (Republic Act 7160, 1991, section 39).

Regarding years of service in the barangay government, most respondents have been elected as PB or BC or appointed as BS or BT and have served their barangays for 1–3 years. They are followed by 25.8% of those who served for 4–6 years, 10.8% for 7–9 years, 3.3% for 10–12 years, and 1.7% for 13 years or more.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to years of service

Years of Service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – 3 Years	70	58.3
4 – 6 Years	31	25.8
7 – 9 Years	13	10.8
10 -12 Years	4	3.30
13 – Up Years	2	1.70

Demographic Profile: Experience in Government Procurement

When it comes to years of experience in government procurement, the majority of the respondents have no experience, followed by 14.2% who have 1 – 3 years of experience, 10.8% who have 10 years and more experience, 10% who have 7 – 9 years experience, and 5.8% who have 4 – 6 years of procurement experience.

Table 3. Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to years of experience in the government procurement process

Years of Service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Experience	71	59.2
1 – 3 Years	17	14.2
4 – 6 Years	7	5.80
7 – 9 Years	12	10.0
10 -Up Years	13	10.8

An in-depth analysis of the qualifications of the BAC Chairman and BAC Members under RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR and GPM for NGAs, SUCs, GOCCs, GFIs, and LGUs, shows that the BAC Chairman should be at least the third-ranking permanent Plantilla official and BAC members should be at least a fifth ranking permanent Plantilla official, one representing the legal, and the other the technical or financial field (Updated 2016 Revised IRR of RA 9184, 2024, section 11.2). This only shows that appointment in the BAC and BAC Support Staff requires high educational attainment, skills, experience, training, employment status, security of tenure, and salary grade level, which are absent in elective Barangay Officials. Making RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM applicable to all PEs, regardless of class, without considering the nature of the organization of barangays is adding insult to injury. Moreover, respondent Barangays are composed of limited personnel with a limited budget and operating in small office spaces, some under bridges and overpasses, unlike NGAs, SUCs, GOCCs, GFIs, and LGUs that have different departments, divisions, and offices headed by qualified appointive officials that can tackle and implement different duties, functions, and operations including the complexities and accountabilities of government procurement.

3.2 Awareness of the Procurement Process based on RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and GPM

Findings revealed that all the respondents, with a grand mean of 2.49, are partially aware of the provisions of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM (see Table 4). Based on the six indicators of the level of awareness used by the researcher, the highest level of awareness attained by the respondents is moderate awareness of the PhilGEPS, ranked at number 1, followed by moderate awareness of the Procurement Organization at number 2, moderate awareness on the Principles and Objectives of the Philippine Government Procurement Process at number 3, partial awareness on Procurement Planning at number 4, partial awareness on Public Bidding Process at number 5, and partial awareness on the Alternative Methods of Procurement (AMP) ranked at number 6.

Table 4. *Level of awareness of the provisions of RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR of RA 9184, and GPM*

Indicators		Mean	Interpretation
Principles and Objectives of the Philippine Government Procurement Process		2.53	MA
Procurement Organization.		2.60	MA
Procurement Planning		2.46	PA
Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS)		2.64	MA
Public Bidding Processes		2.40	PA
Alternative Methods of Procurement (AMP)		2.34	PA
Grand Mean		2.49	PA
Legend:	Rating Scale	Verbal Interpretation	Symbol
	3.51-4.0	Fully Aware	FA
	2.51-3.50	Moderately Aware	MA
	1.51-2.50	Partially Aware	PA
	1.0-1.50	Not Aware	NA

Ranking at number 1, respondents' highest level of awareness is on the PhilGEPS because it is a mandatory requirement under RA 9184 and other DBM, COA, and DILG-issued circulars for procurement of commonly used supplies and posting purposes (GPPB, 2021). On the other hand, ranked at number 6, respondents' lowest level of awareness is about the Alternative Methods of Procurement. In the FGD and interviews conducted by the researcher, most respondents emphasized that they are newly elected and newly appointed officials who lack experience and have not attended training or seminars on government procurement. For the respondents, transparency is the most important principle of government procurement because of the importance of informing their constituents on how they spend public funds during their administration, which explains their high level of awareness of the PhilGEPS, which requires the posting of important procurement documents in the PhilGEPS website, website of the Barangay, if any, and on conspicuous places located within the premises of the Barangay (GPPB Circular 1, 2021).

Moreover, in the same FGD and interview, the researcher found that among all the available types of public bidding and all the AMPs available for barangays, Shopping is the most widely used method due to the familiarity, practice, and tradition that barangay officials have adopted from their predecessors. For the respondents, Shopping is easy, convenient, and flexible and is well-suited for barangay services. Furthermore, according to respondents, public bidding and the AMPs involve a complex process that requires adequate knowledge and attention. They neglect these processes, considering the other functions, duties, and

responsibilities they render to their constituents. Thus, they explain why they have the lowest awareness of the AMPs and are only partially aware of the public bidding processes. Finally, according to Table 2, most respondents are newly elected barangay officials, and the nature of their official service in the barangays is based on the election results. Newly elected barangay officials have no choice but to serve as BAC Chairman and members even without the proper procurement training, skills, and experience. This results in partial awareness of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. Hence, this lack of knowledge and awareness affects the entire barangay procurement operation and processes.

3.3 Compliance with the Provisions of RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and GPM

Regarding the six indicators of compliance, respondents' overall compliance is moderate, and none fully complied with the provisions of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM (see Table 5). Respondents' highest level of compliance is moderate in Procurement Planning, ranked first; Procurement Organization, second; Principles and Objectives of the Philippine Government Procurement Process, third; PhilGEPS, fourth; and Public Bidding Process, fifth. Respondents' lowest level of compliance is partial compliance in the AMPs, ranked at number 6.

Table 5. *Level of compliance with the provisions of RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR of RA 9184, and GPM*

Indicators		Mean	Interpretation
Principles and Objectives of the Philippine Government Procurement Process		2.76	MC
Procurement Organization.		2.77	MC
Procurement Planning		2.80	MC
Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS)		2.74	MC
Public Bidding Processes		2.54	MC
Alternative Methods of Procurement (AMP)		2.35	PC
Grand Mean		2.66	MC
Legend:	Rating Scale	Verbal Interpretation	Symbol
	3.51-4.0	Fully Complied	FC
	2.51-3.50	Moderately Complied	MC
	1.51-2.50	Partially Complied	PC
	1.0-1.50	Not Complied	NC

Table 5 shows that respondents moderately complied with the provisions of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. Confronted with the respondents' partial awareness but moderate compliance with the procurement law and its guidelines, the researcher tried to validate the outcome of this quantitative data with the qualitative data gathered through FGD and interviews with the respondents. In the FGD and Interview conducted by the researcher, the respondents were asked: "Among the three types of Public Bidding, namely Goods and Services, Infrastructure Projects, and Consulting Services, what is/are the most regularly practiced in your barangay?" All respondents replied that public bidding of goods and services is their barangay's most important bidding type because they require goods, supplies, and materials to deliver public service and perform their duties to their constituents. According to the respondents, they seldom require public bidding on infrastructure projects because these projects are usually provided to them by their district representatives. Additionally, they do not need public bidding for consulting services due to their limited budget and the necessity of consulting services in their barangays. A supermajority of the respondents admitted that they do not usually conduct public bidding processes in their barangay because they entrust the entire bidding process to their "special contractors," who are responsible for ensuring compliance with technical specifications, budget allocation, bidding requirements, and bidding documents, thereby fulfilling the requirements of the procurement law and the COA.

Moreover, in the same FGD, the respondents were asked: What is/are the best Alternative Methods of Procurement that you habitually implement in your barangay? All the respondents answered "canvass" or "canvassing," popularly known as "shopping" under RA 9184 because it involves price shopping or looking for a cheaper amount. Since respondents were only familiar with the procurement process of shopping, they disregarded other procurement methods, such as Limited Source Bidding, Direct Contracting, Repeat Order, and the fourteen types of Negotiated Procurement. Hence, they are partially aware and partially compliant with the AMP, confirmed by quantitative and qualitative research data. Furthermore, another question asked in the FGD is: "How do you rate your barangay's experience in Procurement using PhilGEPS?" Explain." Most respondents gave PhilGEPS a grade of satisfactory to very satisfactory. However, when asked to explain, all respondents admitted that they do not use PhilGEPS because they lack the training to procure electronically. They gave the

grade of satisfactory to very satisfactory to PhilGEPS because of the convenience and easy access in posting the necessary documents required for TAGG purposes (GPPB, 2021).

Finally, Barangays are taking compliance with the procurement law and its guidelines for granted. Using qualitative research data, the researcher exposed the truth behind the implementation of public bidding and other alternative procurement methods in the barangays. Due to a lack of proper procurement training, insufficient funds, political influences, and leniency on the part of procurement oversight agencies to monitor, report, and sanction violators of the procurement process, barangays deliberately neglect the importance of public procurement in delivering quality public service.

3.4 Observance of Practices and Alternative Systems in the Implementation of RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and GPM

Findings regarding the observance of practices and alternative systems in the implementation of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM revealed that respondents moderately observed them with an overall weighted mean of 2.52 (see Table 6).

Table 6. *Level of observance of practices and alternative systems in the implementation of RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and GPM*

Indicators		Mean	Interpretation
1.	The barangay uses modern commercial techniques, such as e-procurement and framework agreements, to maximize value for money.	2.33	PO
2.	The Officials consider each item's relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits to procure.	2.40	PO
3.	The barangay develops a comprehensive policy manual that defines authority, responsibility, and guidelines for the organization and procurement.	2.59	MO
4.	Before issuing the solicitation, the barangay establishes the criteria by which the resulting bids or proposals will be evaluated.	2.70	MO
5.	The Barangay adopted a code of ethics and required its personnel to uphold the code and seek commitment to it by all those with whom they engage.	2.70	MO
6.	The Barangay accurately defines, represents, and fully expresses the requirements and description of their need in the specification requirement for procurement.	2.63	MO
7.	The barangay uses spend analysis as a procurement strategy to leverage buying power, reduce costs, and provide better management and oversight of suppliers.	2.66	MO
8.	The Barangay uses a cost-benefit analysis to decide whether to lease or purchase an item or service.	2.64	MO
9.	The Barangay takes the lead in outsourcing activities by identifying services that could best be fulfilled through a competitive, fair, and transparent outsourcing process	2.57	MO
10.	The Barangay understands and implements a policy on Green Public Procurement.	2.60	MO
11.	The Barangay conducts strategic procurement planning for Projects, Programs, and Activities in the Barangay	2.71	MO
12.	The barangay practices sustainable procurement by considering sustainability's social, economic, and environmental aspects in procuring goods and services.	2.72	MO
13.	The barangay identifies and implements technology that aids the procurement process and supports the organization's overall strategy.	2.74	MO
14.	Barangay Procurement is transparent in its practices, processes, policies, and relationships with all stakeholders and protects confidential information.	2.52	MO
15.	Barangay procurement identifies risk factors associated with each procurement, analyzes the probability of the risk occurring, and considers potential impacts.	2.73	MO
16.	Barangay adopts Supplier Relationship Management to maximize relationship value and minimize risk management for its procurement.	2.58	MO
17.	The Barangay uses videoconferencing, webcasting, and similar technology to conduct its procurement activities.	2.36	PO
18.	The Barangay adopts and implements the procurement policy on Electronic Submission and Receipt of Bids.	2.45	PO
19.	The Barangay allows submission of Alternative Documentary Requirements like expired Business or Mayors Permit with Official Receipt of renewal of application only during a state of calamity or public emergency	2.57	MO
20.	The Barangay complies with the Electronic Submission of Procurement Reports such as APPs and Procurement Monitoring Reports (PMRs).	2.58	MO
Grand Mean		2.52	MO
Legend:			
	Rating Scale	Verbal Interpretation	Symbol
	3.51-4.0	Fully Observed	FO
	2.51-3.5	Moderately Observed	MO
	1.51-2.50	Partially Observed	PO
	1.0-1.50	Not Observed	NO

Observance of practices and alternative systems in the procurement process helps maximize value for money and ensures the quality of the goods, services, projects, and consultants. Overall assessment reveals that respondents moderately observed the Practices and Alternative Systems implementing RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. The advent of digital technology has sparked curiosity in all aspects of society, including governance, also known as e-governance. To make the process convenient and accessible, respondent barangays identify and implement technology that aids their procurement process and supports their organization's overall strategy. However, constrained by their limited budget, skills, and knowledge, the respondents cannot take advantage of modern commercial techniques, such as e-procurement, early procurement activities (EPA) (GPPB Resolution No. 6, 2019), and framework agreements (FA) (GPPB Resolution No. 27, 2019) to allow them to maximize value for money.

3.5 Observance of Challenges in Implementing RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and GPM

Findings regarding respondents' level of observance of challenges in implementing RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM revealed that respondents partially observed challenges with an overall weighted mean of 2.45 (see Table 7). In the FGD conducted with the twelve barangays, respondents provided the following problems, issues, concerns, and challenges in the order of priority: (1) No Knowledge, lack of training and seminars in Government Procurement cited by 91.6% of the respondents; (2) No Experience/ Newly Elected or Newly Appointed Barangay Official (58.3%); (3) Low Budget /Insufficient Budget to conduct Public Bidding (50%); (4) Long process or long timeframe or period to procure using Public Bidding (33.3%); (5) Threshold or limit in canvas or shopping is too low, Inflation or increase in the prices of commodities, supplies and materials, and Contractor/Politicians influence (all at 25%); and (6) Disagreement between Council Members in adopting the project (8.3%).

Moreover, in a one-on-one interview with the twelve PBs, the data gathered validated that the main problem, issue, concern, and challenge of barangays in the implementation of RA 9184, the 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM is the lack of knowledge and training in government procurement. According to the PBs, the reasons for this problem are as follows: (a) Lack of funds or budget for training and seminars, (b) Lack of organizers offering government procurement training and seminars, (c) Absence of Training and seminars offering purely Barangay Procurement Process, and (d) Absence of free or discounted Barangay Procurement training and seminars.

Based on the findings derived from the quantifiable data gathered, supported by FGD, interviews, observations, and GPPB resolution on TAGG (GPPB, 2021) in government procurement, the 4-ACES Action Plan was developed by the researcher to facilitate the creation and adoption of a proposed Procurement Primer for improving the government procurement process in barangays. The 4-ACES refers to the 4-Step Action Plan, and the acronym **A-C-E-S** stands for:

Step 1: **A** – Attend: To understand procurement laws and processes, individuals involved in procurement, including the Punong Barangay, Barangay Secretary, End-User Unit, and Barangay Council members, should participate in training sessions organized by the GPPB.

Step 2: **C** – Create: A Special Committee should be established to discuss and finalize the Proposed BPP contents. This committee should comprise members who have undergone relevant training and have experience in barangay procurements, to streamline the procurement process.

Step 3: **E** – Enact: A barangay ordinance should be passed to formally adopt the Proposed Procurement Primer and make it the official guide for barangay procurement.

Step 4: **S** – Spread: The adopted BPP must be disseminated to all barangay officials, employees, suppliers, and contractors through publications and postings in prominent locations, including the barangay website and social media, to comply with local legislation and inform the community about the procurement process. An action plan was designed to serve as the basis for a proposed procurement primer.

Finally, the researcher also recommends the following: (a) the COA, DBM, DILG, and LGUs should conduct intensive procurement training for Barangay officials; (b) the GPPB should increase the Barangay thresholds for

shopping to address inflation; (c) the Congress should amend the qualifications of Barangay Procurement Officials; (d) the GPPB, COA, DILG, and Ombudsman should intensify procurement monitoring and reporting; and (e) the Barangays should promote income-generating projects to fund their expenses for training and seminars on government procurement.

Table 7. *Level of observance of challenges in the implementation of RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and GPM*

Indicators		Mean	Interpretation
1. Public Bidding is the default or regular mode of procurement.		2.95	MO
2. Use Brand Names in writing the technical specifications for procuring Goods.		2.44	PO
3. Implements programs, projects, and activities not found in the Annual Procurement Plan.		2.42	PO
4. Splitting of contracts that exceed procedural purchase limits to avoid competitive bidding or to circumvent the limits of approving or procurement authority.		2.22	PO
5. Prepares tailored fit specifications or engages in Tailor fitting in writing the technical specifications of the goods it wants to procure.		2.33	PO
6. Use a BAC Resolution approved by the Punong Barangay before conducting Shopping, Direct Contracting, Limited Source Bidding, Repeat Order, and Negotiated Procurement.		2.57	MO
7. BAC members, BAC Secretariat, Technical Working Group, and End-User Unit are not related within the 3rd degree of consanguinity or affinity with the bidder who joined the procurement process.		2.59	MO
8. Prohibits the scheme or arrangement between two or more bidders to establish bid prices at artificial levels.		2.68	MO
9. Prohibits the improper and unlawful enrichment of BAC Personnel by misusing their official function as Procurement Officials.		2.71	MO
10. Prohibits Coercive Acts by suppliers, contractors, consultants, and prospective bidders against Barangay Procurement personnel.		2.74	MO
11. Prohibits misrepresentation or concealment of facts to influence the procurement process.		2.73	MO
12. Opens any sealed bid and all documents required to be sealed or divulge their contents before the appointed time for the public opening of Bids or other documents.		2.58	MO
13. Delays, without justifiable cause, the screening for eligibility, opening of bids, evaluation, and post evaluation of bids, and awarding of contracts beyond the prescribed periods of action.		2.67	MO
14. Prohibits Undue influence or undue pressure on any member of the BAC or any officer or employee of the Barangay to take a particular action that favors or tends to favor a particular bidder		2.61	MO
15. Punong Barangay abuses its power to reject all bids using the reservation clause with manifest preference for any bidder closely related to him.		2.23	PO
16. Prohibits two or more persons/entities agreeing and submitting bids as bona fide bidders with pre-arranged lowest bid.		2.46	PO
17. Prohibits a bidder from maliciously submitting different bids through two or more persons, corporations, partnerships, or other business entities where he/she has an interest in simulating competition.		2.54	MO
18. Prohibits two or more persons/entities agreeing to refrain from submitting a bid or withdrawing from bidding to secure an undue advantage to any remaining bidders.		2.54	MO
19. Prohibits a bidder, by himself or in connivance with another, employing other acts or schemes that suppress competition that is disadvantageous to the public.		2.49	PO
20. Allows submission of eligibility requirements containing false information or falsified documents.		2.18	PO
21. Allows a bidder to use the name of another or allow another to use his name in the bid.		2.09	PO
22. Allows a bidder to withdraw his bid after post-qualification.		2.08	PO
23. Allows a bidder to refuse the acceptance of an award without justifiable cause.		2.19	PO
24. Accepts gifts or any form of monetary considerations from suppliers, contractors, and consultants during holidays or special days (birthdays, weddings, Baptism)		2.00	PO
25. No Contact Rule or No communication Rule with bidders from bid evaluation until a decision to award the contract was made by the BAC.		2.21	PO
26. Perform Procurement duties with the highest degree of excellence, professionalism, intelligence, skills, and priority above all other functions and duties.		2.53	MO
Grand Mean		2.45	PO
Legend:			
Rating Scale		Verbal Interpretation	
3.51-4.0		Fully Observed	
2.51-3.50		Moderately Observed	
1.51-2.50		Partially Observed	
1.0-1.50		Not Observed	
		Symbol	
		FO	
		MO	
		PO	
		NO	

4.0 Conclusion

The demographic profile of respondent barangay officials, including their educational attainment, years of service, government procurement experience, and government procurement training, affects the barangays' procurement organization and operations. The functions and duties of BAC Chairpersons, members, and

support staff require specific knowledge, skills, experience, and qualifications to handle complex and intricate procurement tasks, which necessitate a high sense of responsibility and accountability standards.

Respondents are not technically and intellectually proficient in RA 9184, the Updated 2016 IRR, and the GPM. Overall, the assessment reveals that they are partially aware of the procurement process. The result shows that respondents are partially aware of procurement methods like public bidding and AMP because they do not conduct public bidding for consulting services and rarely on infrastructure projects. The only AMP or regular procurement method they utilize is Shopping or canvassing.

In addition, the overall assessment also reveals that respondents moderately complied with RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. Respondents partially complied with the AMPs because, out of the five AMPs, Shopping is the most frequently exploited procurement method in the barangays. In the FGD and Interview conducted by the researcher, respondents admitted that they do not generally conduct public bidding and leave the entire process to their “special contractors.” Public bidding of Goods and Services is necessary for the respondents. However, public bidding for infrastructure projects is entrusted to their district representatives, and public bidding for consulting services is ineffective in barangays, considering their limited budget.

The structure and nature of the barangay government in terms of continuity of service and political influence affect their awareness and compliance with the procurement law and its guidelines. Barangay BAC Chairmen and members are elective officials serving three years unless reelected for another term. BAC support staff are appointed officials who serve for a term of three years, unless reappointed. The effort and expenses of barangays in training and developing their BAC Chairmen, members, and support staff will be wasted unless the same officials are reelected or reappointed for another term.

Moreover, unlike NGAs, GOCCs, GFIs, SUCs, and LGUs, where BAC Chairmen, members, and support staff are all appointive officials, barangays are limited to those chosen by their constituents via election. Since RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR and GPM are mandatory to all procuring government entities regardless of class, barangays do not have sufficient and qualified workforce to handle public bidding nor to fill up vacancies in cases of death, resignation, etc. of BAC officials and staff. Barangays are so small that their personnel is limited, unlike other government-procuring entities that can be divided into offices, departments, divisions, and sections.

Additionally, the problems, issues, concerns, and challenges encountered by the respondents that affect their compliance with RA 9184, the Updated 2016 IRR, and the GPM include the following: No knowledge, lack of training and seminars in government procurement; No experience/Newly elected or newly appointed Barangay Official; Low budget/Insufficient budget to conduct public bidding; Long process or long timeframe or period to procure using public bidding; Threshold or limit in canvas or shopping is too low, Inflation or increase in the prices of commodities, supplies and materials, and Contractor/Politicians influence; and disagreement between Council members in adopting the project.

Furthermore, respondents moderately observed the Practices and Alternative Systems in implementing RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. While respondents demonstrate moderate adherence to RA 9184, 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM, their use of technology in procurement is hindered by budget, skills, and knowledge limitations. Despite embracing digital tools to improve accessibility and convenience, they often lack the resources to fully utilize advanced techniques, such as e-procurement and framework agreements, for optimal value.

Finally, the proposed action plan should focus on a direct, legal, and step-by-step process to assist in developing and adopting a proposed procurement primer that effectively implements the government procurement process in the barangays. LGUs have their LGPM, which applies only to provinces, cities, and municipalities. In contrast, NGAs, GOCCs, and GFIs have Customized Procurement Manuals, and SUCs have University Procurement Manuals to adapt and comply with the comprehensive and complex nature of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. The adoption and implementation of a BPP will address the Barangay's issues,

including its demographic profile, partial awareness, moderate compliance, and moderate observance of “practices and alternative systems,” as well as other issues, concerns, problems, and challenges encountered during the implementation of the procurement law and its guidelines.

The peculiarities of the organization and operations of barangays were exposed in this study to give insight into the mandatory applicability of the procurement law and its guidelines at the barangay level. This research empowers barangay officials and employees to proactively address potential problems, identify key issues, and implement best practices and solutions based on the research findings. The research emphasizes the importance of adhering to procurement laws in preventing delays in implementing programs, projects, and activities, ensuring transparency, promoting fair competition, and holding barangay officials accountable. These are key factors in creating a Barangay Procurement Primer.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Fernando M. Yumang: Conception or design of the work, Data collection, Data analysis and interpretation, Manuscript drafting, Critical Feedback on the study design, Critical manuscript revision, and Final approval of the version to be published.
Christopher C. Mantillas: Original dissertation adviser.

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The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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