

Integrity of Electoral Administration: The Case of Municipality of Parang, Sulu

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Abstract

This descriptive-correlational study assessed the integrity of electoral administration in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu during Fiscal Year 2021 in the contexts of pre-election, campaign, election day, and post-election and the significant correlation and differences in these levels when data are classified according to respondents' demographic profiles. In this study, out of 100 sector-respondents, male and female are equal in number, distributed within the 26-30 years old of age bracket, majority are married, and have Bachelor's degree. The integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, Election Day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu is moderately conducted. That is, there is a moderate imposition of election laws in the period of time immediately before elections or referendums, during campaign period, on Election Day, and during post-election by election authorities in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu. Except for educational attainment, all other profile variables used in this study such as gender, age, and civil status do not significantly intervene in ways how sector representatives assess the extent of integrity of electoral administration in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu. Pre-election, campaign,

Election Day, and post-election categories are highly correlated. This study tends to support Norris and Grömping (2019) Electoral Integrity Model. This model involves transparency in electoral process which starts from Pre-election (Election Laws, Election Procedures, Boundaries, Voter Registration, Party Registration), Campaign (Campaign Media, Campaign Finance), Election Day (Voting Process), and Post-Election (Vote Count, Results, Election Authorities).

Keywords – Integrity, Electoral Administration, Election Day, Campaign, and Pre & Post-Election.

INTRODUCTION

The foundation for the authority of democratic government is evident when the will of the people are expressed freely through authentic and credible elections. Hence, government is obliged to conduct genuine elections based on universal and equal suffrage guaranteed with the right of citizens to participate in government and public affairs that is free of discrimination and without unreasonable restrictions.

The rights to vote and to seek election to public office are recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and conventions that bind most countries in the world (Adona and Gronke, 2018). Basically, citizens not only have a right to participate in elections, yet they have a right to know for themselves whether the electoral process is valid and credible.

In the United States of America (USA), state governments are responsible for administering elections with duties often delegated to some 10,500 jurisdictions across the country (Adona and Gronke, 2018). As reported, the allocated federal funds alone were not sufficient to address the additional strain aggravated by the unprecedented rise in online voter registration and postal voting, and officials at all levels acknowledged that election infrastructure is generally underfunded. The majority of election administrations noted that the recruitment of a sufficient number of poll workers was a significant challenge. The numbers of polling stations were reduced by 20 per cent nationwide. Despite these numerous and compounding challenges, the work of the

election administration at all levels enjoyed general confidence (Adona and Gronke, 2018).

In the Philippines, while elections are recognized as the hallmark of every democratic society, the country's history with elections has been observed as anything but satisfactory although the notion of free and fair elections has been variously contested.

Pursuant to the adoption of the Constitution of the Philippines, elections under the country are expected to be free, peaceful and credible. Delivering on this Constitutional requirement is therefore the responsibility of several public and private institutions. This means that all Filipinos have a role to play to ensure democratic processes through electoral integrity.

The idea of electoral integrity is defined to refer to agreed international conventions and global norms, applying universally to all countries worldwide through the election cycle, including during the pre-election period, the campaign, on polling day, and its aftermath (Norris and Grömping, 2019).

Norris and Grömping (2019) proposed an Electoral Integrity Model. This model involves transparency in electoral process which starts from Pre-election (Election Laws, Election Procedures, Boundaries, Voter Registration, Party Registration), Campaign (Campaign Media, Campaign Finance), Election Day (Voting Process), and Post-Election (Vote Count, Results, Election Authorities). This was used as theoretical basis to survey electoral integrity across 337 elections in 166 countries around the world. The cumulative study covers all national presidential and parliamentary elections from July 1, 2012 to December 31, 2018.

Therefore, the electoral integrity and administration in the Philippines including areas in the southernmost part particularly in the Province of Sulu is inclusive in the framework of such Electoral Integrity Model. Logically, the extent of electoral integrity and administration in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu can be assessed under this framework. In line with these premises, this study was conducted to assess the administration of electoral processes in the Municipality

of Parang, Sulu to cover pre-election, campaign, Election Day, and post-election periods.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study assessed the integrity of electoral administration in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu during Fiscal Year 2021. Specifically, this research answered the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Gender;
 - 1.2 Age;
 - 1.3 Civil status; and
 - 1.4 Educational attainment?
2. What is the extent of integrity of electoral administration in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu in the context of:
 - 2.1 Pre-election
 - 2.1.1 Election laws;
 - 2.1.2 Electoral procedures;
 - 2.1.3 Boundaries;
 - 2.1.4 Voter registration;
 - 2.1.5 Party registration;
 - 2.2 Campaign
 - 2.2.1 Campaign media;
 - 2.2.2. Campaign finance;
 - 2.3 Election Day
 - 2.3.1 Voting process;
 - 2.4 Post-election
 - 2.4.1 Vote count;
 - 2.4.2. Results; and
 - 2.4.3 Electoral authorities?
3. Is there a significant difference in the extent of integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, Election Day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu when data are categorized according to:
 - 3.1 Gender;
 - 3.2 Age;
 - 3.3 Civil status; and
 - 3.4 Educational attainment?

4. Is there a significant correlation among the extent of integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, Election Day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to achieve the following objectives, thus it sought to determine the following:

1. The demographic profile of respondents in terms of gender, age, civil status, type of occupation, and educational attainment;

2. The extent of integrity of electoral administration in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu in the context of Pre-election (Election laws, Electoral procedures, Boundaries, Voter registration, Party registration), Campaign (Campaign media, Campaign finance), Election Day (Voting process), and Post-election (Vote count; Results, Electoral authorities);

3. The significant difference in the extent of integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, election day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu when data are categorized according to gender, age, civil status, type of occupation, and educational attainment; and

4. The significant correlation among the extent of integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, election day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study was conceptualized as follows: Based on Norris and Grömping (2019) Electoral Integrity Model, the contexts of Pre-election, Campaign, Election Day, and Post-election were treated as the Dependent Variable. Meanwhile, gender, age, civil status, type of occupation, and educational attainment were treated as the Independent Variable. The interplay of these variables can be illustrated in Figure 1 below.

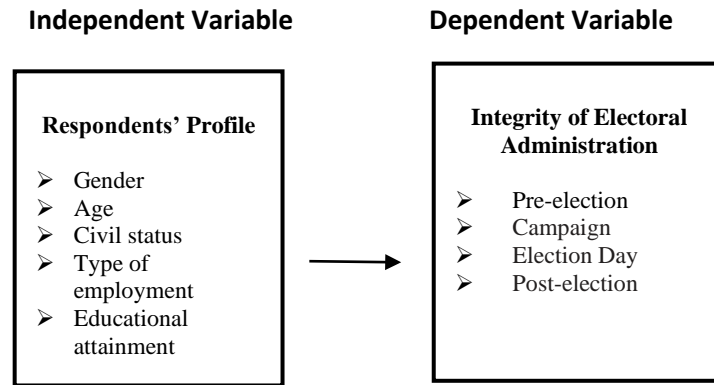


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Study

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will be beneficial to each of the following entities:

Election Officers. This study and its findings will give significant insights to the municipal election officers in their quest for more authentic information to supplement their understanding of the concepts and theories relating to the integrity of electoral administration that are essential in ensuring free, honest, and credible elections. The findings of this study can also be utilized by the election officers as supplemental background to formulate and implement policies and programs in relation to effective electoral reforms.

Constituents. Municipal constituents can be provided with necessary inputs in the exercise of their Constitutional rights and duties to safeguard free, honest and credible electoral processes. With adequate knowledge taken from this research, the constituents will become more vigilant to face against electoral malpractices, injustices, and irregularities.

Student-researchers. This study will motivate more researchers to venture on other avenues or research areas related to this field along the framework of determining some more aspects and factors related to integrity of electoral administration.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

To properly achieve its objectives, this study was guided by the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference in the extent of integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, election day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu when data are categorized according to gender, age, civil status, and educational attainment; and

3. There is no significant correlation among the extent of integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, Election Day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This presents the research method to be adopted in the conduct of this study. It covers research design, research locale, respondents of the study, sampling procedure, data gathering procedure and tools, research instrument, validity and reliability, and statistical treatment of data.

Research Design

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 63) a research design is “a program that guides a researcher in collecting, analyzing and interpreting observed facts.” Similarly, Babbie and Mouton (2001: 75) regard research design as the road map or blueprint by which one intends to conduct a research and achieve his/her research goals and objectives.” A descriptive research design method was employed in this study, that is, with the intent to describe, quantify, and infer as well as to discover relationships among variables and to allow the prediction of future events from present knowledge or phenomenon of integrity of electoral administration, namely:

1) The socio-demographic profile of respondents in terms of gender, age, civil status, type of occupation, and educational attainment;

2. The extent of integrity of electoral administration in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu in terms of Pre-election, Campaign, Election Day, and post-election periods;

3. The difference in extent of integrity of election administration Municipality of Parang, Sulu in terms of Pre-election, Campaign, Election Day, and Post-election periods when data are grouped according to gender, age, civil status, type of occupation, and educational attainment; and

4. The correlation between the extent of sub-categories subsumed under the integrity of election administration in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu in terms of Pre-election, Campaign, Election Day, and Post-election periods.

Local Government Units (LGU) employees, teachers, and constituents of Parang, will be the sources of data which will be quantified to answer the research questions in this study. Library and internet research will be the additional sources of information to be used to enrich the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of this research. The data from the respondents will be collected through the use of questionnaires.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in the Municipality of Parang among the forty (40) barangays to be represented by LGU employees and constituents for Fiscal Year 2021. These barangays are under political control of the Municipality of Parang, Sulu.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were the LGU employees, constituents and teachers assigned as Poll Inspectors during elections in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu.

Distribution of the target Samples of the Study

Municipality of Parang, Sulu	Groups			
	Teachers	LGU Employees	Constituents	
Total	30	40	30	100

Sampling Design

A purposive sampling method was employed in this study. Representatives of one hundred (100) samples were purposively chosen based on the availability of the

group representatives. The use of purposive sampling in this study was to ensure the representation of gender, age, civil status, type of occupation, and educational attainment.

Research Instrument

A survey questionnaire was the main instrument employed in gathering for data on the extent of the state of local governance of the barangays in the Municipality of Jolo, Sulu as viewed by the barangay council members, youth, business, religious leaders, and government employees in terms of accountability, direction, fairness, legitimacy and voice, and performance.

It was adapted and patterned from Norris and Grömping (2019) study on “Electoral Integrity Worldwide”. This instrument has established reliability.

The research instrument used in this study consisted of two parts. Part I of the questionnaire focused on obtaining the demographic profile of the respondents which include gender, age, marital status, type of occupation and educational attainment. Part II was geared towards obtaining data on the extent of integrity of electoral administration in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu as viewed by teachers, LGU employees and the constituents in terms of Pre-election (election laws= 3 items, election procedures=4 items, boundaries= 3 items, voter registration= 3 items, party registration= 5 items), Campaign (media campaign= 5 items, campaign finance= 5 items), Election Day (voting process= 8 items), and Post-election (vote count= 5 items, result= 4 items, election authorities= 4 items).

Data obtained for the extent of integrity of electoral administration were analyzed using 5-point Likert Scale such as 5=Very High, 4=High, 3=Moderate, 2=Low, 1=Very Low.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Both descriptive and inferential statistical tools were appropriately adopted in the treatment of data to be gathered for this study, namely:

- 1) For research problem Number 1, Frequency counts and Percentages were employed to determine the

profile of respondents in terms of gender, age, civil status, and educational attainment;

- 2) For research problem Number 2, Mean and standard deviation were employed to determine the extent of integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, election day and post-election
- 3) For research question Number 3, t-test for independent samples was employed to determine the significant differences in the extent of integrity of electoral administration when data are grouped according to gender; and One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine the significant differences when data are grouped according to age, civil status, and educational attainment; and
- 4) For research question Number 4, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was adopted to determine the significant correlation among the sub-categories subsumed under integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, Election Day and post-election.

SUMMARY OF THE RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the data collected that were properly tabulated, computed and analyzed for this study.

Summary of Findings

The following are findings of this study:

- 1) **For Research Question Number 1: On demographic profile of sector-respondents:**

Out of 100 sector-respondents, male and female respondents are equal in number, distributed within the 26-30 years old of age bracket, majority are married, and have Bachelor's degree.

- 2) **For Research Question Number 2: On the extent of integrity of electoral administration in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu**

In the context of Pre-election;

Election laws rated as "Moderate Extent"

Electoral procedures rated as "High Extent"

Boundaries rated as "Moderate Extent"

Voter registration rated as “Low Extent”
Party registration rated as “Moderate
Extent”

In the context of Campaign;
Media campaign rated as “Moderate
Extent”

Election procedures rated as “Moderate
Extent”

In the context of Election day;
Election processes rated as “Moderate
Extent”

In the context of Post-election;
Vote count rates as “High Extent”
Results rated as “Moderate Extent”
Election authorities rated as “Moderate
Extent”

3) For Research Question Number 3: On Differences in the Extent of integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, election day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu

NO significant difference in the extent of integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, Election Day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu data are grouped according to gender, age and civil status.

However, THERE IS significant difference in the extent of integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, Election Day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu data are grouped according to educational attainment.

4. For Research Question Number 4: On Correlation among sub-categories subsumed under integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, election day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu

Generally, THERE IS a high positive correlation among sub-categories subsumed under integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, Election Day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that:

1) In this study, sector representatives of the Municipality of Parang, Sulu were appropriately represented in terms of gender, age, civil status and educational attainment.

2) Generally, sector representatives of the Municipality of Parang, Sulu assessed the integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, Election Day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu as moderately conducted.

3) That is, there is a moderate imposition of election laws in the period of time immediately before elections or referendums, during campaign period, on Election Day, and during post-election by election authorities in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu.

7) Except for educational attainment, all other profile variables used in this study such as gender, age, and civil status do not significantly intervene in ways how sector representatives assess the extent of integrity of electoral administration in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu.

8) Pre-election, campaign, Election Day, and post-election categories are highly correlated.

9) This study tends to support Norris and Grömping (2019) Electoral Integrity Model. This model involves transparency in electoral process which starts from Pre-election (Election Laws, Election Procedures, Boundaries, Voter Registration, Party Registration), Campaign (Campaign Media, Campaign Finance), Election Day (Voting Process), and Post-Election (Vote Count, Results, Election Authorities).

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends the following:

1) The election authorities shall improve the integrity of electoral administration in terms of pre-election, campaign, election day and post-election in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu.

2) The election authorities shall tighten the imposition of election laws and procedures in the period of time immediately before elections or referendums, during campaign period, on election day, and during

post-election by election authorities in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu.

3) Stake holders and peace keeping agencies shall cooperate with the election authorities in the conduct peaceful, honest and credible election activities in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu.

4) Student-researchers in the field of public administration are encouraged to conduct study similar to this one but to include other variables such as type of occupation in some other settings.

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