BIBLIOGRAPHY

TULOD, JERGIE LYN A. APRIL 2011. <u>From Manual to Automated: Communication Strategies used by the COMELEC in Educating the Voters in Mankayan, Benguet</u>. Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to: determine the socio-demographic profile of the respondents; voters' perception on the reliability of the new system in voting; preferences of the voters in voting system; problems encountered by the voters; sources of information on the how to's in voting; communication strategies used by the COMELEC in educating the voters; and the problems encountered by the COMELEC in educating the voters.

The researcher used interview schedule to gather the needed information for the study. The data obtained from 100 respondents and a COMELEC Chairman were tabulated using descriptive analysis, frequency counts and percentages.

Most of the respondents belonged to age brackets of 40-50. There were more female respondents compared to male respondents. Most of them were married and reached tertiary level.

With regard to the voters' perception on the reliability of the new system, most of them said that the new system was free from bias and that there is no fraud in the new system. Meanwhile, when asked about their preferences in voting system, majority of the respondents were pro-automation.

Moreover, most of the respondents said that their main problem encountered in the election was the difficulty in looking for their precincts since some of the precincts were merged.

With regard to the voters' source of information on the how to's in voting, majority claimed that their main source of information was the TV/Radio.

With the communication strategies used by the COMELEC in educating the voters, COMELEC Chairman of the Municipality of Mankayan said that they conducted a seminar/orientation.
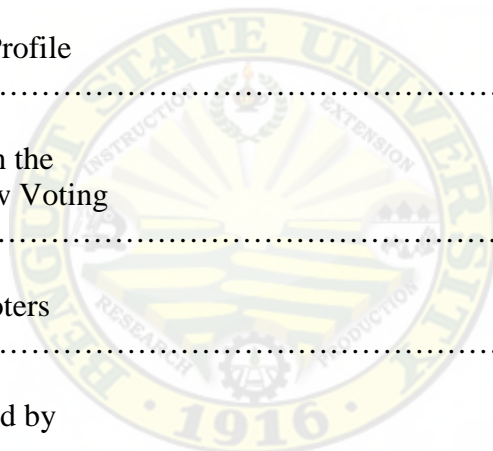
Furthermore, the COMELEC Chairman of the municipality enumerated some of the problems they encountered in educating the voters, most of which dwelt on the lack of participation among the voters.

Through this study, the following were recommended: the COMELEC should increase their utilization on the mass media in disseminating information about the automated voting system; aside from the barangay to barangay approach used in educating the voters, the COMELEC should use multiple strategies in educating the voters as to the new electoral process; the COMELEC should address the existed problems they encountered for the previous election for the betterment of the automated voting system to be utilized in the next elections.

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INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Notwithstanding the rapid advances in technology, the Philippines was used to the traditional way of voting and casting of votes for years when it comes to the conduct of elections. Elections in the Philippines have always been done manually.

Under this system, voters in the Election Day are expected to come early to their respective precincts. When the election formally starts, voters have to write by hand the names of their chosen candidates. After that, they should drop their votes into the ballot boxes by themselves. Then counting is done with the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI) reading the votes aloud and recording them by means of a tally sheet or election return (ER), and on a blackboard or tally board. Canvassing then takes place in the municipal or city board of canvassers, provincial board of canvassers and national board of canvassers, respectively. After canvassing, the winners for the municipal and city offices are proclaimed. The process normally took months before they proclaim the winning candidates.

Furthermore, the whole election process of manual voting has a lot of weak points such as the hustle of writing the long names of the candidates chosen during the election, substitution of ballots at the precinct level, misreading of votes during tallying, rampant tampering of election returns and statements of votes at the canvassing stage, questions about its accuracy and slow results in proclaiming the winners of the election (Lordzden, n.d).

According to Bautista, this multiple process is long and mind-numbing and provides opportunities for electoral fraud, such as substitution or stuffing of ballot boxes, vote-paddling or shaving which is commonly known as "dagdag-bawas".

However, the manual listing of the candidates, the tedious counting of votes and the waiting for what seems to be eternity was then replaced by a simple process. The approval of Republic Act No.8436 (Poll Modernization Law) gave the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) the authority to implement the use of an automated system in the casting and counting of votes for the May 2010 elections. With this law, it aims to prevent the number of election frauds and anomalies by lessening human error.

In addition, according to Angara (2009), through automation we can ensure a credible transition of power and have clean, honest and orderly 2010 elections. Setting up the country's automated and electoral system is a crucial step towards clean and honest election.

But observed, still some of the voters prefer to practice the traditional way of voting. Lack of information dissemination and educating the voters regarding poll automation contributes to their preferences with regards to the systems in voting. Thus, dealing with the new system really needs to be well established for the easy adoption of the voters.

With this regard, the researcher aims to find out the different communication strategies used in educating the voters about the new procedure in casting and counting of votes, the voters' perception towards the poll automation, and to identify whether these communication strategies used had a direct effect on their perceptions itself. This is to measure the efficacy of the communication strategies that were applied.

Statement of the Problem

The study deals with the communication strategies used in educating the voters on poll automation.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the respondents?

2. How do they perceive the reliability of the new procedures in voting?

3. Which do they prefer, the manual voting or automated voting?

4. What problems did the voters encounter during the election?

5. Where did they get information on how to vote with the new procedures and technology?

6. What communication strategies were implemented by the COMELEC in educating the voters on poll automation?

7. What problems did the COMELEC encounter in educating the voters?

Objectives of the Study

The study endeavored to:

1. Determine the socio-demographic profile of the respondents.

2. Determine the voters perceptions on the reliability of the new procedure in voting.

3. Determine the respondents' preferred voting system.

4. Determine the problems encountered by the voters during the election.

5. Determine where the respondents got information on how to vote using the new procedures and technology in voting.

6. Determine the communication strategies implemented by the COMELEC in educating the voters on poll automation.

7. Determine the problems encountered by the COMELEC in educating the voters.

Importance of the Study

Through this study, the election staff (COMELEC) will be given the ability to further examine and determine the efficacy of the communication strategies that were implemented in educating the voters on poll automation.

The findings of the study would be an aid in understanding the different needs of the voters in familiarizing themselves easier and better about the new technology in counting and casting of votes that is being utilized in the country today. This study is also vital in determining easier and better ways of effectively educating the voters. With proper voters' education, obtaining a better and more successful election in the future would just be a walk in the park.

Also, this can be used as a reference for the next study dealing with automated election.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study focused on the communication strategies implemented by the COMELEC in educating the voters with regard to the new system in voting. The data that gathered includes the profile of the respondents; voters' perception towards the reliability of the new system in voting; preferences of the voters between the manual voting and automated voting; problems encountered by the voters during the election; sources of

information by the voters with regards to the how to's in voting; communication strategies used by the COMELEC in educating the voters; and the problems encountered by the COMELEC in educating the voters.

The researcher targeted mainly the voters from Mankayan, Benguet as her respondents.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Manual Voting

Every country has its own election history, and the Philippines has its own too. The country has been used to practice the manual voting process for years.

The history of manual voting started from July 30, 1907 which was the elections for 80 seats in the First Philippine Assembly, fought between Partido Nacionalista and Partido Nacional Progresista up to October, 2007. A total of 100 years, the system of elections in the country was manual. Despite of its numerous disadvantages, the country managed to deal with the process for over a hundred years (Lorzden, n.d.).

Some of the noted disadvantages are: its slow results because the counting of votes is just performed manually. It takes weeks and even months before the COMELEC finally reveal the winning candidates. This is also the reason why many candidates are appealing to the COMELEC and to the court that they have been cheated during the counting. Due to this, they would try to file a recount of votes. Second, is that many cruel candidates are making deal with some Board of canvassers who are primarily composed of teachers to manipulate the results. In addition, some of the politicians are also making deal with electric companies, to shut down the power during canvassing so that's the time where they can have the opportunity to change the votes and cheat in the election (Dejaresco, 2009).

Moreover, according to Dejaño (2009), manual voting system gave rise to fraudulent election practices like tampering of election returns and statements of votes.

After each election, the COMELEC and courts are flooded with complaints of election fraud.

Basic Feature of the Automated Election System

Under the automated election system (AES) that was implemented pursuant to Republic Act No. 8436 (Poll Modernization Law), as amended by Republic Act No. 9369, the counting, tally, transmission and consolidation of votes was done by computers. The COMELEC has purchased 82,200 voting machines from the foreign company Smartmatic, which the COMELEC calls Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS) machines (Bautista, 2010).

The PCOS Technology

The brand of PCOS machine that was used on May 2010 elections is the SAES (Smartmatic Auditable Election System) 1800. The SAES 1800 is a type of optical mark reader machine, which is the technology being commonly used in counting the results of computerized examinations, such as the NCEE, where the examinee marks an answer by shading an oval or bubble next to an item in a multiple choice test. The PCOS scans, photographs and records the ballot that were dropped into the transparent ballot box. At the close of voting hours, the PCOS is given the command to start counting the recorded votes. The PCOS prints out eight election returns that reflect the names of candidates and the number of votes garnered by each candidate (Center for People Empowerment in Governance, 2009)

Automated Voting

According to Osio (2010), the public thirst for rapid and objective results has increasingly led countries to adopt new technology to improve electoral processes.

After the Supreme Court removed the last hurdle to poll automation, the computerization of the national and local elections on May 2010 finally took place. Thus, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) implemented the new procedures in the casting of votes and counting of ballots, which required the voters and election officials alike to adjust to these changes by learning how poll automation works (Bautista, 2010).

Pre-Election Procedures

To ensure that the PCOS machines are accurate and functioning well, at least three days before election day, the COMELEC conducted a dry run of the PCOS machines by inviting members of the public to accomplish test ballots. These ballots will be counted manually and election returns showing the results will be prepared. Then the same set of ballots will be counted by the PCOS machines and the results will be compared with that of the manual counting (Bautista, 2010).

Pre-Voting Procedure

For every voting precinct, there was Board of Election Inspectors (BEI) consisting of a chairman, poll clerk and a third member - that supervised the elections. Before voting begins, the BEI will initialize the PCOS machine in the presence of the public, usually poll watchers and other election watch groups, and show that the ballot box is

empty. An initialization report will thereafter be generated by the machine as proof of this fact (Bautista, 2010).

Paper-Based System

Since voting is done through optical mark reader-type machines, paper ballots were still used during the voting process. The ballots contain the names of candidates for every position, and the parties under the party-list system (Bautista, 2010).

Automated Voting Process

From the tedious and mind- numbing process in manual voting, voting in an automated election is made simple and fast. The procedure is as follows as discussed by the COMELEC in their website:

- Voter's name is verified on the list of registered voters;

- Voter is given a ballot, a secrecy folder (to cover voter in making his/her choices) and a pen;

- Voter proceeds to a voting booth or spot;

- Voter darkens or shades the ovals opposite the names of candidates and parties of his/her choice;

- Voter feeds or inserts the completed ballot on the PCOS machine ballot slot (the ballot can be fed to the machine in any orientation: top, bottom or either end);

- The machine reads or scans the votes (marked ovals) on both sides of the ballot simultaneously;

- The scanned ballot is ejected through the other end of the machine and is dropped on the ballot box; and

- Voter returns the secrecy folder and pen to the BEI, his/her right index finger nail is marked with an indelible ink, and affixes his/her thumbmark on the computerized voter list.

Post-Voting Procedure

The time the poll closes, the BEI performed what is called a "close function" by touching the appropriate button on the machine's LCD screen. This prevents the insertion of additional ballots after voting has ended. After the machine closes the poll at a particular precinct, it automatically counts all the votes cast and thereafter, an Election Return (ER) was printed in certain number of copies. The ER is a report on the result of voting in each precinct wherein the total votes cast for each candidate are tallied (Bautista, 2010).

Transmission of Results

After the ERs were printed, the transmission cable was then connected to the PCOS machine for the transmission of results from a particular precinct. The results were transmitted by the PCOS machines electronically to the City/Municipal Board of Canvassers (BOC) via canvassing/consolidation machines (CCMs), which consolidated the results from all precincts within the city or municipality. Results were transmitted electronically to the COMELEC central office. The same process took place from the city

or municipality to the province, then from the province to Congress and COMELEC (Bautista, 2010).

Communication Strategy

A communication strategy outlines a process for communicating and sharing information on project benefits and facts to target audiences and stakeholders. It is a tool used for promoting the awareness, knowledge and understanding of a project.

Moreover, according to Clemmer (n.d.), communication strategies, systems, and practices do play a central role in high-performance. Information, understanding, and knowledge are the lifeblood of the organizational body. A thoughtful and comprehensive communication strategy is a vital component to any successful change and improvement. The education and communication strategy sets the tone and direction of improvement efforts.

Voters' Education

The overarching objective of the COMELEC's voter education program should be the molding of a generation of new voters who capable of active and principled participation in elections and who are able to accept electoral defeat with integrity and grace (Jimenez, 2010).

In other words, according to Jimenez, voter education seeks to create in the Filipino voter, a deeper appreciation of the right of suffrage beyond that right being the ticket to participate in a rabidly partisan popularity contest.

METHODOLOGY

Locale and Time of the Study

Since the implementation of the new system in voting, anywhere in the country can be a target for this study. The study, however, was conducted in Mankayan, Benguet (Figure 1). It is a 1st class municipality in the province of Benguet, Philippines. According to the latest census, it has a population of people 34,563 in 6,495 households. It is politically subdivided into 12 barangays: Balili, Bedbed, Bulalacao, Cabiten, Colalo, Guinaoang, Paco, Poblacion, Sapid, Suyoc, Tabio, and Taneg (Figure 2).

Moreover, the total number of registered voters in Mankayan, Benguetas of 2009 was noted as 17, 523.As for the May 2010 elections, total number of registered voters who voted are13, 981. Thus, the total number of established precincts, clustered precincts and voting centers are 117, 33 and 28 respectively.

Mankayan, Benguet is a place where diverse people of different tribes reside. Apart from the mining industry in Paco, people from different barangays survive mainly on farming.

Mankayan, Benguet was chosen for the number of diverse people who can respond. People from different places specifically from the lowlands migrate to Mankayan, Benguet due to the mining industry in Paco. Perception from different people of different backgrounds and are from different barangays is vital and will aid in obtaining the goal of this study

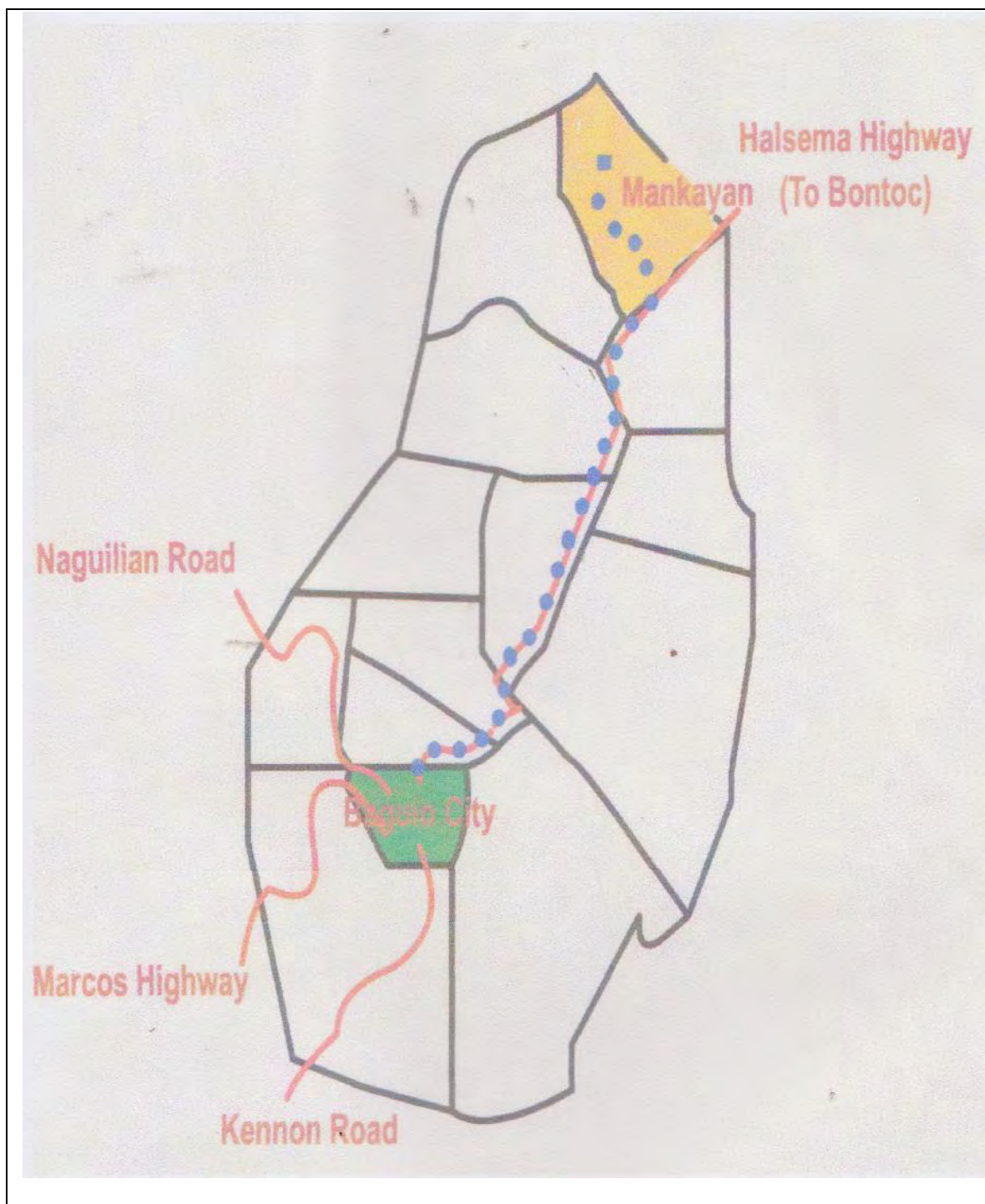The study was conducted on December 2010 to February 2011.

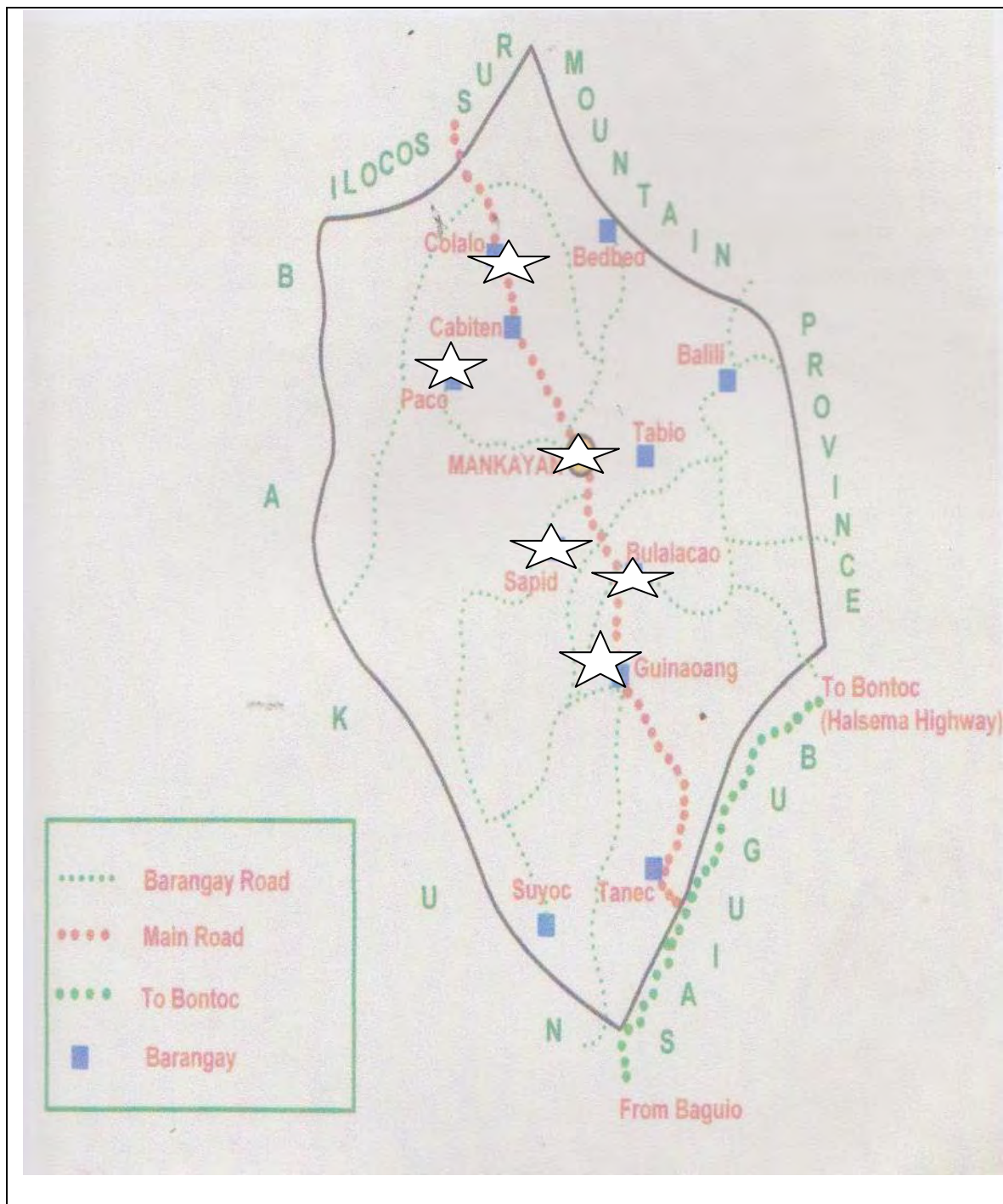Figure 1. Map of Mankayan, Benguet showing the locale of the study

Figure 2. Map of Mankayan, Benguet showing the specific locale of the study

Respondents of the Study

One hundred respondents were purposively chosen based on the following criteria: respondents should not be a first time voter; a registered voter of the place and voted last May 2010 election; respondents should be a resident of the municipality. Fifty respondents were from five barangays of the municipality: Guinaoang, Bulalacao, Sapid, Paco, and Colalo, while the other fifty respondents were from Poblacion, Mankayan, Benguet. For the key informant, the respondent was a COMELEC Chairman of the municipality.

Data Collection

An interview schedule was used as a tool in gathering the needed information for the study. The researcher translated the guide questions in Kankana-ey and Ilokano to facilitate understanding between the respondents and the researcher. Also, interview schedule was used for the key informant.

Data Gathered

The data gathered from the 100 respondents included their socio-demographic profile and their perceptions to poll automation. This includes their perceptions towards poll automation; preferences between manual voting and automated voting; problems encountered during the election; and their sources of information on the how to's in voting.

For the key informant, the data gathered included COMELEC's communication strategies utilized in educating the voters and problems encountered in educating the voters.

Data Analysis

The data gathered were tabulated and were analyzed through descriptive analysis, frequency counts and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis and discussion of the data gathered based on the objectives of the study. It covers the socio-demographic profile of the respondents; voters' perceptions on the reliability of to the new system in voting; preferences in voting system; problems encountered during the election; sources of information of the voters with regards to the new system; and communication strategies of the COMELEC in educating the voters.

Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

The respondents' socio-demographic profile with regards to their age, sex, civil status, and educational attainment is presented in Table 1.

Age and sex. Most of the respondents belonged to age brackets of 41 to 50 with 26. This was followed by age brackets 51 to 60 with 23%; and age brackets of 31 to 40 with 20%. The rest belonged to age brackets of 61 to 70 and 71 and above. Moreover, most of the respondents were female (72%) that outnumbered the male respondents (28%).

Civil status. Married status had the highest population with 74%. The others were either single, widow or widower.

Educational attainment. Most of the respondents reached tertiary level with 55%. The secondary level then followed with 27% while the grade school level with 18%. All of them had formal education.

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

CHARACTERISTICS	FREQUENCY (N=100)	PERCENTAGE
Age		
20-30	22	22
31-40	20	20
41-50	26	26
51-60	23	23
61-70	8	8
71 and above	1	1
Total	100	100
Sex		
Male	28	28
Female	72	72
Total	100	100
Civil Status		
Married	74	74
Single	19	19
Widow/er	7	7
Total	100	100
Educational Attainment		
Elementary	18	18
High School	27	27
College	55	55
Total	100	100

<u>Voters' Perceptions on the Reliability</u>
<u>of the New System in Voting</u>

Since the start of the electoral process in the Philippines, the casting and counting of votes were done manually. But with the approval of R.A 8436 (Poll Modernization Law), the traditional system of voting was replaced by what was called the Automated Electoral System (AES). However, the idea of changing the process in voting went through series of debates. But, in May 2010 elections, the AES was finally conducted. Thus, opinions of the voters were drawn to determine the efficacy of the new system since the voters were the ones who are very much affected.

Table 2 then shows the voters' perceptions towards the new system in voting with regards to how reliable the new system was. When asked how they perceived the new procedures in voting, most of the respondents answered that the new system was free from bias with (50%) respondents. Twenty (20%) of the respondents perceived that there was no fraud in the new system. The other (30%) of the respondents perceived that the new system has no difference at all. They argued that in any procedure, there was no assurance that there was no fraud or the system was free from bias especially to those people hungry for power and position.

Table 2. Voters' perceptions on the reliability of the new system of voting

PERCEPTIONS	FREQUENCY(N=100)	PERCENTAGE
The new procedure is free from bias	50	50
There is no fraud in the new system	30	30
Non-responsive	20	20

Preferences of Voters in Voting System

Table 3 shows the preferences of the voters with regards to the system in voting. With one (1%) undecided, automated electoral system outnumbered the manual voting system with (63%) and (37%), respectively. Most of the respondents said that the new system was far easier and faster when it comes to casting and counting of votes. The laborious counting of votes brought about by the manual voting system then was now replaced by a single press of a button which was more advanced and results can be drawn in a short time which minimizes fraudulent practices.

However, some of the respondents still preferred the manual voting system. With the interviews done with the respondents, it shows that some refused to practice the new system in voting since they were used to practice the traditional way of voting. They also said that through manual counting of the votes, it was more accurate regardless of the laborious counting and a long time of waiting for the final results to be laid down to the public. They said that they were confident that their votes were ensured and counted. They also said that in case of errors, the ballots will still be counted unlike for the automated system of voting that the machine will not honor the ballots if there were undesirable marks on it.

Table 3. Preferences of voters in voting system

PREFERENCES	FREQUENCY(N=100)	PERCENTAGE
Automated	62	62
Manual	37	37
Undecided	1	1

Results show that the respondents preferred the new system in voting. This supports the statement of Osio (2010) which stated that the public thirst for rapid and objective results has increasingly led countries to adopt new technology to improve electoral processes.

Problems Encountered by the Voters

Regarding the problems encountered by the voters during the election, majority (51%) of the respondents answered that they had difficulty in looking for their respective precincts due to the merging of some precincts. Some answered that they lacked knowledge on how to use the new system in voting. Others complained about the rejected ballots and long lines which also contributed to the slow process of voting.

Moreover, majority were in favor in using the new system in voting in the next election. This only shows that the voters were maybe tired of dealing with the non-stop fraudulent issues and practices of the politicians during elections. This led them to embrace the new innovation and new system in voting.

Since it was the first time that the new system was practiced, it was but normal that series of issues from the voters were being raised. Thus, the voters' suggestions were also drawn for the improvement of the new system. Most of the voters said that the COMELEC should provide more machines in each barangay; they should conduct more seminars/orientations especially to the old ones; they should check the status of the machineries months before the election proper.

Table 4. Problems encountered by the voters

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED	FREQUENCY(N=100)	PERCENTAGE
Had difficulty in looking for their precincts	51	51
Slow Process	21	21
Lack of Knowledge on the how to's on the new system of voting	18	18
Others (Long lines, defective machines, rejected ballots)	20	20

*Multiple responses

Sources of Information
for the New System

Table 5 shows the sources of information of the voters with regards to the how

tos' in the new system of voting. Most of the respondents or (69%) claimed that their

main source of information was the TV/Radio particularly the news programs and the

jingle which was performed by the Sexbomb Girls. It is interesting to note that the jingle

of the Sexbomb Girls was remembered by the respondents.

Also, (39%) claimed that they got information from the

newspapers/flyers/posters. How to's in voting were published in most of the newspapers

like The Philippine Daily Inquirer, The Philippine Star and many more. Respondents also

claimed that they learned the procedures in voting through the election flyers from the

candidates. In here, together with the candidates' platforms, the procedures in voting

were also cited. Moreover, 32% of the respondents said that they learned the procedures

in voting through the orientation/seminar conducted by the COMELEC. The rest said that

Table 5. Sources of information on the new system of voting

SOURCES	FREQUENCY (N=100)	PERCENTAGE
TV/Radio	69	69
Newspapers/Flyers/Posters	39	39
Seminar/Orientation by COMELEC	32	32
Neighbors/Relatives	22	22
Internet	9	9
Poll watchers and BEI	9	9

*Multiple responses

they relied on their neighbors/relatives and through the access in the internet. It was observed that there were numerous computer shops seen in the place. These were possible places where the respondents had accessed the internet. Others also claimed that they only knew the procedures in voting during the voting period and through the help of the poll watchers and the Board of Election Inspector (BEI).

Communication Strategies of the COMELEC
in Educating the Voters

Most of the respondents claimed that their main sources of information on the how to's in voting was the TV/Radio. Most of them relied solely to either the broadcasts or print media. Thus, out of ten respondents, only three of them knew about the voters' education which was conducted by the COMELEC. These could be due to lack of time

given to the COMELEC to disseminate the information needed by the voters with regards to the new system.

But still, Ms. Liza Likigan, the COMELEC Chairman of the municipality of Mankayan, Benguet said that despite the short span of time given to them to accommodate all the voters in the voters' education, it was still a success.

According to Likigan, one of their strategies in educating the voters with regards to the new system in voting was they went from barangay to barangay with the help of the barangay captains to disseminate the information needed by the voters. With the sample ballot and the marking pen at hand, they educated the voters on how to shade and on the do's and don'ts in shading.

Moreover, Likigan said that they conducted a seminar/orientation with the complete election paraphernalia such as the ballot secrecy folder, marking pen and the PCOS machine in the municipal hall. There, they demonstrated how to use the PCOS machine; how the PCOS works and how to submit the shaded ballot in the machine.

Problems Encountered by the COMELEC
in Educating the Voters

With regard to the problems encountered by the COMELEC in educating the voters, Likigan said that they had the difficulty in gathering the voters from each barangay to participate in the seminar/orientations done. According to Likigan, one of the reasons was the voters' acceptance of the new system.

With the interviews done with the voters, it shows that some refused to practice the new system since they were used to practice the traditional way of voting. Also,

Likigan further stated that they also had a difficulty in reaching far flung areas in the municipality.

Aside from the voters' acceptance of the new system in voting, the problems that arose may be due to lack of participation of the voters; lack of time by the COMELEC in conducting seminars/orientations on the procedures in the new voting system; lack of manpower in the COMELEC's side to facilitate a seminar/orientation/demonstration.

Other reasons may be due to the fact that most of the residents in each barangay relied on the media for their needed information and that they only have less time to participate in the seminar/orientation because of their work. The respondents said that most of them actually were in their fields or in their offices working when the seminar/orientation was conducted. This could be why there were less who participated in the seminar conducted by the COMELEC.

In addition, some of the voters' irresponsibility was also a factor why these problems were raised. Connecting it to the sources of information in the how to's in voting, there were nine of them who said that they only learned the procedure during the election proper through the help of the poll watchers and the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI). This fact contributed to the slow process in the election.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study endeavored to know the communication strategies used by the COMELEC in educating the voters. Specifically, it sought to determine the; socio-demographic profile of the respondents; voters' perceptions on the reliability of the new system in voting; preferences with regards to the voting system; problems encountered by the voters; sources of information of the voters in the new system; communication strategies and problems encountered by the COMELEC in educating the voters.

The study was conducted in the Municipality of Mankayan, Benguet from December 2010 to February 2011.

The respondents were the voters of Mankayan, Benguet and the COMELEC Chairman of the municipality. Most of the respondents belonged to age brackets 41-50. There are more female respondents compared to male respondents. Most of them are married and most of them reached the tertiary level in terms of educational attainment.

With regards to the voters' perceptions on the reliability of the new voting system, respondents perceived that the system is free from bias and that there is no fraud in the new system; most of the respondents prefer to practice the new system in voting thus the new system is far easier and faster in terms of casting and counting of votes. Their main source of information was the TV/Radio and newspapers/flyers/posters were their source of information; some of the respondents claimed that they had an orientation/seminar with the COMELEC.

Furthermore, the respondents also enumerated the problems encountered during the election proper which includes: lack of knowledge with regards to the how tos' in voting; they had difficulty in looking for their precincts since some of the precincts were merged; and some ballots were rejected and malfunctions of the machines which contributed to the slow process in voting.

The respondents are also in favor of practicing the new system in voting for the next elections.

With regards to the communication strategies used by the COMELEC in educating the voters, barangay to barangay approach was used. Seminars and orientations were done in the municipality office. Moreover, the COMELEC Chairman enumerated some problems in educating the voters such as: they had difficulty in gathering the voters for the demonstration; difficulty in reaching the far flung areas; lack of materials to be used for demonstrations.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study:

1. The voters are increasingly aware about the importance of the automated voting system over the manual voting system.

2. Despite the advantages brought about by the automated voting system, there were still some difficulties encountered during the electoral process.

3. Mass media plays a vital role in disseminating information on the how to'sin voting.

4. The barangay to barangay approach which was used by the COMELEC in

educating the voters was considered as an effective way in disseminating information needed by the voters.

5. There were still who are in favor to practice the traditional way of voting.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

1. The COMELEC should educate more the voters about the automated voting system.

2. The COMELEC and the voters should work hand-in-hand to address the difficulties encountered during the first automated election.

3. The COMELEC should increase their utilization on the mass media in disseminating information about the automated voting system.

4. Aside from the barangay to barangay approach used in educating the voters, the COMELEC should use multiple strategies in educating the voters as to the new electoral process.

5. The COMELEC should address the existed problems they encountered for the previous election for the betterment of the automated voting system to be utilized in the next elections.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule

FROM MANUAL TO AUTOMATED: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIESUSED BY THE COMELEC IN EDUCATING THE VOTERS IN MANKAYAN, BENGUET

This study aims to know the communication strategies utilized in educating the voters. In lined with this are the voters' perceptions towards poll automation.

_____

I.SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Name: _____   Age: _____

Sex: ____ Male ____ Female

Civil Status: ____ Single ____ Married ____ Widow/widower

Educational Attainment: _____

II. VOTERS' PERCEPTION

1. How do you perceive the reliability of the new procedures in voting?

    ___ Free from Bias

    ___ No Fraud

    ___ Others (Please specify)

2. Which do you prefer:

    ___ Manual Voting

    ___ Automated Voting

    Why?

3. How does it differ from the traditional way of voting?

       ___ Easier

       ___ Faster

       ___ Others (Please specify)

4. Where did you get information on how to vote using the new procedures and

technology in voting?

       ___ TV/Radio

       ___ Internet

       ___ Newspapers/Flyers/Posters

       ___ Seminar/Orientation

       ___ Neighbors/Relatives

       ___ Others (Please specify)

How did this help you?

5. What are the problems did you encounter during the election (in casting of votes)?

       ___ Slow Process

       ___ Lack of knowledge (How to's in voting)

       ___ Had difficulty in looking for precincts (Due to merging of some

precincts)

       ___ Others (Please specify)

6. Are you in favor of practicing the new procedures and technology in voting for

the next election?

       ___ Yes

       ___ No

III. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES (KEY INFORMANT)

1. What communication strategies did you used in educating the voters on poll automation?

2. What issues/problems did you encounter during the voters' education?

3. Why do you think these issues/problems arised?

4. With the problems noted, do you have any plans of using any strategies to educate the voters better? What are these strategies?

APPENDIX B

Republic of the Philippines
Benguet State University
College of Agriculture
Department of Development Communication
Bachelor of Science in Development communication

_____

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_____

_____

Sir/Madame,

Warm greetings!

I am a senior student of Benguet State University taking up Bachelor of Science in Development Communication major in Community Broadcasting conducting a research entitled "From Manual to Automated: Communication Strategies used in Educating the Voters in Mankayan, Benguet".

In this regard, please allow me to gather important information that will answer the objectives of my study from the concerned people in your barangay. Rest assured that all information that will be gathered is for academic purposes only.

Your approval to this request will be very much appreciated. Thank you and God bless.

Respectfully yours,

JERGIE LYN A. TULOD
Student Researcher

Noted:

ANNA LIZA B. WAKAT
Adviser

APPROVED: