

Communication Practices of Municipal Information Office: A Case in Selected Municipalities in Batangas Province

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Abstract— Communication plays a fundamental role in bridging the gap between governments and citizens as it gives access to relevant information and signifies an avenue for citizens to participate in community affairs, particularly on issues that matter most to them. This study is about the communication practices of Municipal Information Office (MIO) confined in the selected municipalities in Batangas province with designated municipal public information officers. Thereby, this assessed the views of the community residents and the Sangguniang barangay about the function of PIO. The respondents of the study involved the community residents and the members of the Sangguniang Barangay in the selected municipalities. To identify the number of the population needed, simple random sampling was used. The survey instrument was constructed to collect pertinent and adequate data. Moreover, an informal interview was conducted during the survey to gather pertinent and sufficient information. As for the challenges, this study revealed that they differ from one community to another and that includes: budget constraints, lack of interest and least of priority, communication channels, and management capacity. For the output, based on the issues and challenges identified, a community participation structure and mechanism project (PROJECT SiLOG (Strengthening Initiatives on Improving Local Governance), was proposed

Keywords— Communication practices; public communication; Public Information Office.

I. INTRODUCTION

Strengthening communication practices in the community is the role played by the Public Information Office. The best way to work on this is to enhance and establish communicative practices in the local government unit. It is widely recognized that effective public communication ensures success in community participation, thus leading to effective community management. Increasing awareness among community people is meant to increase knowledge on empowerment and development. Understandably, effective communication can boost teamwork and lead to better project collaboration. Hence, the need to be applied particularly among local government units which are entrusted with the function to inform and update the members of the community about what transpired, is transpiring and will transpire not only to make them fully engaged on activities that enable them to live safely, securely, and peacefully. This crucial task is explicitly and implicitly addressed to Public Information Office. Public Information Offices (PIOs) are offices that bridge the communication gap between city government/municipalities

and their constituents through dissemination of relevant information regarding programs, projects, and activities toward achieving productive and well-informed citizenry.

The PIO by virtue of Section 454 of the Local Government Code of the Philippines was created and the functions are provided in Section 486 [2]. These are the formulation of measures for the consideration of the Sanggunian and provide technical assistance to the Mayor in providing the information and research data required for the delivery of basic services.

Acknowledging the communication practices of public information offices by the Sangguniang Barangay and the residents, the researcher primarily focused on this subject and its vital role in the community. This assesses the views and awareness of the community residents and the Sangguniang barangay about the function of PIO. Further, this research will lead the local PIOs, to enhance their communication practices with Sangguniang barangays and the residents. Further, this study helped the researcher propose a strategy to help PIOs improve their communication practices and allow the residents to enhance their role in the community.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study assessed the communication practices of the Public Information Office, in the selected municipalities in Batangas province. Specifically, this answered the following:

1. How may the communication practices of Public Information Office of selected municipalities be described by the Sangguniang Barangay, and the residents, with the following dimensions:
 - 1.1 Basic service delivery to people;
 - 1.2 Information dissemination;
 - 1.3 Giving of support to programs, projects, and activities;
 - 1.4 Dissemination of information on livelihood matters; and
 - 1.5 Advocacy campaign information?
2. Is there a significant difference between the responses of Sangguniang Barangay and barangay residents?
3. What are the issues and challenges of the municipalities?
4. Based on the findings, an structure and mechanism project for the municipal level was proposed to improve communication practices.

III. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the study's objectives, the researcher used a mixed research method. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) [1], this method of research focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Further, to identify the sample size of 384 respondents, a simple random sampling was applied. Further, survey instrument was constructed to collect pertinent and adequate data for the study. To test the reliability of the instrument, a dry -run was conducted at Los Banos, Laguna participated by 20 community residents and five barangay officials. Upon having the result of 0.978, the items were approved for administration in the actual survey. The survey was conducted on-site considering the profile of the respondents. Informed consent was sought from the respondents for their willingness to participate in the study. In addition, an informal interview was done during the conduct of the survey. Thereby, statistical tools were employed such as Frequency and Percentage, Comparison of Means, Independent Samples t-test, and Pearson R Moment Correlations.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the level of performance of Public Information Office in the basic service delivery to people. The table depicted that in basic service delivery to people, PIO ensures accessibility to public services as per Barangay Residents with 3.20 as its highest mean in contrast of 3.00 mean of Sangguniang Barangay. This was followed by PIO supports government projects and developments as per residents with a mean of 3.19 while for Sangguniang Barangay, it was 3.10.

TABLE I. Level of Performance of Public Information Office as to Basic Service Delivery to People

Items	Residents		Sangguniang Brgy	
	Mean	VI	Mean	VI
a. delivers the service in the shortest time possible for the clients.	3.14	G	2.90	G
b. provides information through multiple channels depending on specific needs at specific times.	3.13	G	2.94	G
c. ensures accessibility to public services.	3.20	G	3.00	G
d. promotes citizen-oriented community.	3.15	G	3.08	G
e. supports government projects and developments.	3.19	G	3.10	G
Composite Mean	3.16	G	3.00	G

Table 2 presents the level of performance of the Public Information Office in information dissemination. As shown, for information dissemination, the residents with a composite mean of 3.08 assessed the Public Information Office as good. Likewise, the Sangguniang barangay having a composite mean of 3.00, assessed the PIO as good

Table 3 presents the level of performance of Public Information Office in terms of giving support to programs, projects, and activities. The table having a composite mean of 3.06, means that the residents assessed the PIO as good in giving support to programs, projects, and activities. Similar to

the Sangguniang barangay, with a composite mean of 3.02, interpreted as good also.

TABLE 2. Level of Performance of Public Information Office as to Information Dissemination

Items	Residents		Sangguniang Brgy	
	Mean	VI	Mean	VI
a. produces public information programs thru TV/Print advertisements.	2.98	G	2.82	G
b. disseminates information materials like flyers, brochures, and periodicals.	3.03	G	2.90	G
c. utilizes multiple social media sites.	3.16	G	3.02	G
d. supervises all public information dissemination activities of the government.	3.10	G	3.14	G
e. implements communication/information and advocacy programs of national government scope.	3.13	G	3.10	G
Composite Mean	3.08	G	3.00	G

TABLE 3. Level of Performance of Public Information Office as to Giving Support to Programs, Projects, and Activities

Items	Residents		Sanggunian Brgy	
	Mean	VI	Mean	VI
a. posts government projects' signboard through multiple channels.	3.19	G	3.06	G
b. presents accurate performance evaluation and other reports on community projects and programs.	3.01	G	3.02	G
c. promotes major local government programs and projects.	3.08	G	3.08	G
d. facilitates feedbacks as evaluation using multiple channels.	3.03	G	2.96	G
e. ensures public accountability and transparency through the public disclosure of information	3.00	G	2.98	G
Composite Mean	3.06	G	3.02	G

TABLE 4. Level of Performance of Public Information Office as to dissemination of information on livelihood matters

Items	Residents		Sanggunian Brgy	
	Mean	VI	Mean	VI
a. creates issue-based partnerships with TV/Radio local programs on livelihood activities of the community.	3.01	G	3.00	G
b. gives access to marginalized people to be aware of the programs specific to their livelihood needs.	2.99	G	3.02	G
c. sets local TV/Radio programs to strengthen community capacity to respond to issues on livelihood matters.	2.87	G	2.90	G
d. produces a government-wide livelihood intervention of programs through multiple channels to assess the status of community beneficiaries.	3.08	G	3.04	G
e. provides available and accessible channels of information to help the poor and marginal groups get into productive community undertakings.	3.22	G	3.57	E
Composite Mean	3.04	G	3.11	G

Table 4 displays the level of performance of Public Information Office in the dissemination of information on livelihood matters. As shown, the composite mean of 3.04 from the residents and the composite mean of 3.11 from the Sangguniang barangay, means that the public information office is good in the dissemination of information on

livelihood matters.

Table 5 presents the level of performance of Public Information Office in the advocacy campaign information. Having a composite mean of 2.97 from the residents and 2.95 from the Sangguniang barangay means that the PIO is good in the advocacy campaign information. This implies that PIO uses tactics to reach out to people and drive awareness among them about the activities of the local and national governments.

TABLE 5. Level of Performance of Public Information Office as to Advocacy Campaign

Items	Residents		Sanggunian Brgy	
	Mean	VI	Mean	VI
a. carries out through several channels a combination of proactive, planned work and entrepreneurial campaign on opportunities as they arise.	2.99	G	2.92	G
b. undertakes activities to promote media coverage (e.g., press conferences, interviews, press seminars and other special activities) of priority issues and/or major events.	2.96	G	2.88	G
c. disseminates materials and consults with press on story and other information requests undertaking appropriate follow-up action.	2.91	G	2.94	G
d. participates in selecting the information transmitted to key citizenries.	2.98	G	2.94	G
e. acts as focal persons on specific issues through monitoring and reporting on developments and responding to inquiries.	3.04	G	3.08	G
Composite Mean	2.97	G	2.95	G

Table 6 presents the significant difference between the assessment of the barangay residents and Sangguniang Barangay as to level of performance of Public Information Office. As shown in the table, the variables: self-reliance and self-help, identification of suitable stakeholders, needs identification and goal determination, consultation, genuine interest, accountability, ownership and control, and partnership with corresponding p-value of .869, .063, .339, .261, .093, .558, .085, and .161 respectively and which all are greater than .05 level of significance, hence got a verbal interpretation of not significant. This means that the decision is failed to reject the null hypothesis. On the other hand, the variable: sharing of benefits with corresponding p-value of .017 and which is lesser than .05 level of significance, hence got a verbal interpretation of significant. This means that the decision rejects the null hypothesis. This result illustrates that sharing of resources and benefits between community residents and local government unit is observed. Hence, this leads to creating stronger relationship which contributes to the

growth and development of the society

TABLE 6. Significant Difference between the Perceived Extent of Community Participation of Barangay Residents and Sangguniang Barangay

Variable	Respondents	Mean	t-value	p-value	Decision to Ho	VI
self-reliance and self-help	Residents	3.10	.165	.869	Failed to Reject	NS
	SB	3.08				
identification of suitable stakeholders	Residents	3.10	1.866	.063	Failed to Reject	NS
	SB	2.86				
needs identification and goal determination	Residents	3.06	.967	.339	Failed to Reject	NS
	SB	2.99				
Consultation	Residents	3.02	1.125	.261	Failed to Reject	NS
	SB	2.94				
genuine interest	Residents	3.22	1.683	.093	Failed to Reject	NS
	SB	2.94				
Accountability	Residents	3.01	.586	.558	Failed to Reject	NS
	SB	2.95				
ownership and control	Residents	3.10	1.728	.085	Failed to Reject	NS
	SB	2.95				
sharing of benefits	Residents	3.11	2.441	.017	Reject	S
	SB	2.91				
Partnership	Residents	3.05	1.405	.161	Failed to Reject	NS
	SB	2.94				

Legend: S: Significant; NS: Not Significant; SB: Sangguniang Barangay

As for the challenges, this study revealed that these challenges differ from one community to another. This includes the following: budget constraints, lack of interest and least of priority, communication channels, and management capacity.

For the output, based on the issues and challenges identified from the data gathered and statistically treated, a structure and mechanism project was proposed. This proposed plan will help the barangay residents and Sangguniang Barangay be involved in creating good local governance through communication. Likewise, this project will allow the local government offices to enhance their communication processes by allowing the community to be heard and initially take part in the plans and decisions affecting the lives of their citizens.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon careful analysis and interpretation of the collected data, the following are hereby recommended, in the light of findings and conclusions:

1. It is necessary for the local government unit to include in their plans and budget the establishment of two-way dialogue with citizens with a focus on promoting participation.
2. The municipal government may provide a series of monthly capacity-building events to local communicators / Sangguniang barangay to bring awareness and prioritization of public communication.
3. Ensuring access to updated and relevant information necessitates different channels and networks as it is a key component of public communication that leads toward

community improvement.

4. Although social media is an effective means to communicate, careful attention is needed in terms of channel selection to ensure that vulnerable segments of the population can also access relevant information, as internet access and digital literacy levels vary significantly

VI. CONCLUSION

The communication practices of Public Information Office as to their level of performance in basic service delivery, information dissemination, giving support to programs, projects, and activities, information dissemination on livelihood matters, and advocacy campaign, were assessed as having good practice. Basic service delivery to people is the most observed communication practice of Public Information Office/r. There is no significant difference between the responses of the Sangguniang Barangay and the residents.. The issues and challenges of the municipality are budget constraints, lack of interest and least of priority, communication channels, and management capacity. The study found that there is a need to strengthen public

communication, leading to the improvement of the initiatives among community members.

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- [2] Section 106 of the LGC
Sections 2, 34, 35, 41, 98-116, and 397 of the LGC (Republic Act 7160).
Sections 41 and 98 to 116, Republic Act 7160 or the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991