

## **Voting Behavior of Voters in Banica, Roxas City**

**RANDY R. GIGAWIN**

[randyroxasgigawin@yahoo.com](mailto:randyroxasgigawin@yahoo.com)

Colegio de la Purisima Concepcion

Roxas City, Philippines

***Abstract*** - This descriptive-correlational study determined the voting behavior of voters in Banica, Roxas City. The respondents were 246 randomly selected registered voters taken from 18 polling precincts using the stratified proportional sampling. The data needed were gathered using the researcher-made Social Group Context Voting Behavior Questionnaire and Attitudinal Context Voting Behavior Questionnaire that underwent content and construct validation and reliability analysis. The statistical tools used were mean, standard deviation, t-test for independent samples, One-way ANOVA, and Multiple Regression (Enter Method). Under the social group context, voters were generally regionalistic except those who have not availed formal schooling and have reached masters' level and above that were found to be popularity-oriented and those who were earning P 10,001 to P 20,000 and Non-Roman Catholic that were found to be particularistic. For their voting behavior under the attitudinal context, voters were typically idealistic

except those who have reached elementary level that were found to be pragmatic and voters who were earning P 20,001 and above that were issue-oriented. In addition, their voting behavior under the social group context did not significantly differ when classified according to their age, sex, educational attainment, monthly income level, and religion.

**Keywords** - Voting behavior, voters, Banica, Roxas City

## INTRODUCTION

Etymologically speaking, Patterson (1993) cited that democracy was derived from the Greek words demos meaning people and kratis which means to rule. In other words, democracy is an institution of the people, by the people, and for the people. That is why Ayson and Reyes (2000) argued that the right to govern, within the context of democracy, emanates from the people through election. As a result, election is considered as one of the elements of modern democracies. Thus, the absence of election would definitely make the concept of modern democracy incomplete.

Panopio, MacDonald, and Raymundo (1995) cited that in the Philippines approximately eighty percent of the voters come from rural areas. Most of them are not directly affiliated to political parties. They often identify themselves with their barrio, poblacion, provincial and/or regional leaders who formed loose alliances and affiliations with the different political parties. As a result, there is no formal procedure of recruitment, no roaster maintenance, and no subscription issuance that is formally maintained by the political parties with the voters. Hence, winning over those votes demands highly organized, well-planned, and well-managed campaign machinery.

These phenomena can also be observed here in the Province of Capiz and in the City of Roxas. Majority of voters here do not have affiliation with the political parties and political candidates. Because of this, political parties and political candidates tap political leaders and hire political coordinators for the city, for every municipality, and for

every village in order to manage and facilitate their campaign. These tapped political leaders and hired coordinators are the one who roam around the locality to visit houses to campaign for their respective candidates.

As a result, months before the electoral period the political climate in the national level down to the village level started to heat up. The presence and intentions of individuals who have plans to run for public office can already be felt even though they have not yet expressed their candidacy. It is commonly observed that some political candidates utilized questing and/or opt to use infomercials in radio stations and television channels. Some create issues while others take their stand on issues or even ride with the issues just to catch the attention of the voters. The worst thing is that some even resort to using black propaganda in order to win their way out by destroying the credibility of other political candidates. Some start to trace their linkages with their long lost relatives and friends while others visit elite clans and businessmen to avail of their support and some even attend prayer rallies and visit religious leaders for endorsement.

Ranney (1999) cited that voting is a complex form of public opinion that is always surrounded by the unfamiliar issues and diversified opinions. According to the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (2003), these unfamiliar issues and diversified opinions have led to far clear out voting decisions of voters and has caused a sense of hopelessness in the voting behavior of voters for the last five years.

During and even after the electoral period, majority of the voters and social scientists are always puzzled with the bases of Juan de la Cruz's votes and how he charted his way out in the confusion and disorder of a typical political environment. A highly imaginative mind, according to Dannug and Campanilla (2003), always makes one to speculate when not able to ascertain, and never encourage one to ascertain when one is only speculating. Thus, the researcher was prompted to conduct this study in order to give a systematic and scientific explanation of the voting behavior of voters in Banica, Roxas City.

## FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on the theories of two voting models, namely the: Social Group Voting Model which theorized that voters vote on the bases of their social and economic groupings and the factors that are closely associated with these groupings such as social classes, education, ethnicity, religion, residency, and the like, and, the Attitudinal Voting Model that theorized that the attitude of the voters towards the effect of candidates' personality, the things that they can get out of voting, and the issues that are involved during elections are the most important factors that influence their voting preferences (Jackson and Jackson, 1997).

These models developed by social scientists abroad were supported by another set of local theories that was introduced by Magno who was cited by Sorilla (2000). These theories are the Sociological Theory which stressed that the socio-economic concerns and groupings of the voters affect their voting preference and the Psychological Theory which stressed that the disposition of voters towards electoral issues, candidates' personality, their stand on the issues, and the programs advocated by the political candidate serve as the bases of their voting preference.

Macridis and Brown (1968) contended that the behavior and the way of life of the people in the society could be used as a medium of explaining the behavior of voters. This contention is supported by Sorilla (2000) who disclosed that the most appropriate approach that can be employed in studying the behavior of voters is the sociological and the psychological approach.

Using the aforementioned voting models, theories, and approaches, the researcher considered the particularistic, regionalistic, and popularity-oriented behavior as the voting behavior of voters under the social group context and the idealistic, pragmatic, and issue-oriented behavior as the voting behavior of voters under the attitudinal context.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Generally speaking, this study attempted to determine the voting behavior of voters in Banica, Roxas City, Capiz. More specifically, the study included the following objectives:

1. To describe the voting behavior of the voters in Banica, Roxas City within the social group voting context when voters are taken as an entire group and when they are classified according to their: age, sex, educational attainment, monthly income level, and religion
2. To describe the voting behavior of the voters in Banica, Roxas City within the attitudinal context when voters are taken as an entire group and when they are classified according to their: age, sex, educational attainment, monthly income level, and religion
3. To compare the voting behavior of voters within the social group context when voters are classified according to their: age, sex, educational attainment, monthly income level, and religion
4. To compare the voting behavior of voters within the attitudinal context when voters are classified according to their: age, sex, educational attainment, monthly income level, and religion
5. To identify variables which significantly predicts the voting behavior among voters

## METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive-correlational method of research. David (2002) contended that descriptive study is a method of research that describes a situation or a given state of affair in terms of specified aspects or factors and correlational study is a method of research that goes beyond the description of a situation since it tries to investigate the relationship between the variables or the factors that affect the particular behavior.

Using the formula suggested by Calmorin and Calmorin (1996), the study utilized 246 registered voters from 18 different polling precincts of Banica, Roxas City. Stratified proportional random sampling was used in allocating the number of respondents who represented their respective polling precincts. Then, lottery method with replacement was used in identifying the respondents.

This study used three sets of researcher-made questionnaires. These questionnaires were:

Voters' Characteristics Questionnaire. This questionnaire was used in gathering information about the age, sex, educational attainment, monthly income level, and religion of the voters.

Social Group Context Voting Behavior Questionnaire. This questionnaire was used in gathering information about the particularistic, regionalistic, and popularity-oriented voting behavior of voters. A five-point likert scale was used in the questionnaire. The statements in this questionnaire was culled from the ideas of Panopio, MacDonald, and Raymundo (1995), Sorilla (2000), Ateneo de Manila University Department of Political Science (1999), Lande (1996), Dannug and Campanilla (2003), Kalaw and Coronel (1992), and Bustos and Espiritu (1996). The Social Group Context Voting Behavior Questionnaire underwent content validation and item inspection. Then, the questionnaire was pilot tested and subjected to construct validation. In construct validation, South East Asian Minister of Education Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (1996) contended that items with an extraction value ranging from .30 to 1.00 are significant part of the instrument. The items in the Social Group Context Voting Behavior Questionnaire obtained an extraction value ranging from .368 to .759. The instrument also underwent reliability analysis. According to SPSS Survival Manual (2001), one of the appropriate tools for an instrument with a likert type of scale is the Cronbach alpha and for the instrument to be valid it must have a reliability coefficient of .70 to 1.00. In the case of Social Group Context Voting Behavior Questionnaire, it obtained a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .83.

Attitudinal Context Voting Behavior Questionnaire. This questionnaire also used a five-point likert scale in gathering information about the idealistic, pragmatic, and issue-oriented voting behavior of voters. The statements in this questionnaire were taken from the ideas of Kalaw and Coronel (1992), Kouzes and Posner (1995), Talisayon (2004), Zaide (1992), Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (2003), and Sorilla (2000). It also underwent content validation and item inspection. It was also subjected to construct validation and obtained an extraction value ranging from .404 to .862. For its reliability, the instrument obtained a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .83.

The data gathering period started from June 13, 2007 (weeks after the May 2007 Election) wherein the issue of voting and elections is still fresh in the minds of the voters and ended last July 17, 2007.

The statistical tools employed in the analysis of data were mean, standard deviation, t-test for independent samples, One-way Analysis of Variance, and Multiple Regression (Enter Method). All inferential statistics were set at .05 alpha level of significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the aforementioned specific problems, the following were the findings of the study: Within the social group context, the voters in Banica, Roxas City, when they are taken as an entire group, were generally regionalistic. This behavior may be attributed to the fact that voters who were below 36 years old and 36 year old and above; both male and female; have reached elementary level, have graduated from elementary, have reached high school level, have graduated from high school, have reached college level, and have graduated from college; had a monthly income of P 10,000 and below and P 20,001 and above; and Roman Catholic in their religious affiliation were found to be regionalistic in their voting behavior.

On the other hand, voters who have not availed formal schooling and have reached masters' level and above were found to be popularity-oriented in their voting behavior while voters who were earning P 10,001 to P 20,000 and those who were Non-Roman Catholic were found to be particularistic in their voting behavior.

Within the attitudinal context, the voters of Banica, Roxas City were typically idealistic as an entire group regardless of their age, sex, and religion including those who have not availed formal schooling, have graduated from elementary, have reached high school level, have graduated from high school, have reached masters' level and above; and those who were earning P 10,000 and below and P 10,001 to P 20,000.

On the other hand, voters who have reached elementary level were found to be pragmatic in their voting behavior while voters who were earning P 20,001 and above were issue-oriented in their voting behavior.

Within the social group context, the voting behavior of voters in Banica, Roxas City did not significantly differ when the voters were classified according to their age, sex, educational attainment, monthly income level, and religion.

Within the attitudinal context, the voting behavior of voters in Banica, Roxas City did not significantly differ when they were classified according to their age, sex, educational attainment, and religion. However, a significant difference in the voting behavior of voters was found when they were grouped according to their monthly income level—specifically with those who were earning P 10,000 and below and P 20,001 and above.

Within the social group context, the educational attainment of voters in Banica, Roxas City was found to be a significant predictor of their voting behavior. On the other hand, age, sex, monthly income level, and religion cannot significantly predict the voting behavior of voters.

Within the attitudinal context, the educational attainment and monthly income level were found to be the significant predictors of the voting behavior of voters in Banica, Roxas City. However, age, sex, and religion did not significantly predict the voting behavior of voters in Banica, Roxas City.

**Implications of the theory.** The following literature and studies below support the findings and conclusions of the present study:

1. According to Talisayon (2004), regional affiliations and factors heavily influence the voters' voting behavior. Lande (1996) cited that these factors include the sentiment of regional belongingness, personal attachment to regional leaders, ideologically induce regional nepotism, and the individual benefits that one gets for his region. That is why Panopio, MacDonald, and Raymundo (1996) believed that Filipinos primarily think more of themselves as Visayan, Ilocano, Tagalog, Bicolano, and secondarily as Filipino. As a result, Lande (1996) contended that the only certainty that a political candidate can count on during election is the heavy support that his region or place may give.

However, Talisayon (2004) also found out that there are instances that the voters may deviate from regionalistic pattern because of the cross-regional boundaries brought by the high popularity rating of a

political candidate in other regions. It simply shows that popularity-oriented voting behavior exist in the Philippines. That is why Ateneo de Manila University Department of Political Science (1999) disclosed that Philippine Election is a proof of popularity contest among families or personalities who are competing for the possession of power and prestige.

Aside from the regionalistic and popularity-oriented voting behavior, Jocano as cited by Panopio, MacDonald, and Raymundo (1995) found out that Filipinos also give importance to their social and economic groupings that is usually composed of immediate family members, relatives, friends, colleagues, associates, and affiliates that generally influence the decision making of Filipinos. That is why Jocano pointed out that the concept of "tayo-tayo" among Filipinos is also very strong.

2. Intelligent and responsible voting is starting to be evident in the Philippines, according to Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (2003), because Filipinos are starting to be desperate and hopeless with their political experiences that have been badly affecting their lives. Panopio, MacDonald, and Raymundo (1995) also added that Filipino society is starting to be guided by their principles in making political decisions. Hence, the idealistic pattern of behavior is starting to be evident in the Philippines.

On the other hand, Kalaw and Coronel (1992) observed that to a certain extent Filipino voters are still pragmatic in their voting behavior. They insist what they want to those who need their votes because they know that they will be favored. This contention was supported by the findings of Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (2003) who revealed that a political candidate could win through money and political machinery alone. Panopio, MacDonald, and Raymundo (1995) also added that money, jobs, services, political demands, and other concessions were bartered for votes during election. Furthermore, Kalaw and Coronel (1992) also observed that free transportation to polling places, financial assistance, and even grocery items are given to the voters as a bribe in exchange for their votes. That is why pragmatic voting behavior can be observed on voters who really need or enjoy the support that is given by the political candidates.

Aside from the idealistic and pragmatic voting behavior, Alejo (1996) observed that the question of who will become "nasa kapangyarihan" is an issue that is also being engaged by Filipino voters. This is because voters are aware that the platform of government of the winning political candidate will affect their lives and their other plans (Watson, 1998). That is why voters are oriented with the issues concerning the program priorities of the political candidate.

3. According to Panopio, MacDonald, and Raymundo (1995), people who belong to a particular community have a tendency to define reality based on the culture and value of the community that they are part of. That is why similarities in the behavior, orientation, and perspective of the people who are living in a particular community occur.

4. According to Panopio, MacDonald, and Raymundo (1995), every echelon of a particular economic or income group usually share similar economic, political, and cultural interests as well as needs. As a result, they share common patterns of behavior but in some instances may somewhat differ from one echelon to another. To illustrate further, Santiago (2003) observed that voters with low income level are enticed by the personality projected by the political candidates like good looks, nice smiles, broadcast voices, or even just frequency of television and radio exposure while Barnes as cited by Sorilla (2000) believed that voters with high income are more likely to be enticed by the profession or career of a particular political candidate.

5. Sorilla (2000) contended that the higher the educational attainment of the voter, the more favorable his vote will be because of the following reasons: (a) education develops and increases the voters cognitive skills that will help them understand politics and gather the necessary information in making political decisions, (b) education makes the person feel that they have strong sense of civic duty to vote, and (c) education helps one to understand the registration requirements and give him confidence in overcoming the bureaucratic hurdles of voting. Therefore, it is safe to say that educational attainment of voters can significantly predict the voting behavior of voters.

6. According to the article uploaded last 2003 in <http://www.emergingdomocraticmajorityweblog.com/donkeyrising/archives/001209.php> the voting behavior of voters can significantly

be predicted by their monthly income that is also predicted by their educational attainment implying that the higher the educational attainment of the voter, the higher his monthly income level is. Based on the contention of Sorilla (2000), as the educational attainment of voters increases the more favorable his voting behavior is. Thus, it would be safe to say that monthly income and educational attainment of voters go hand-in-hand in significantly predicting the voting behavior of voters.

**Implications for practice.** Based on the aforementioned findings, conclusions, and implications for theory, the following implications for practice in general were posted:

Voting is one of the most important features of a democratic country. It is through voting where voters select political candidates whom they believed fit to hold the lever of the country. These selected individuals that they have voted for can either make or break the country, the lives of the future generations, and even the very own lives of the voters. That is why everything is laid in the hands of the voters as they write the names of political candidates in their ballots during election.

Rational voting is the only chance where we would be assured that those who are elected in the public office are indeed fit to that position; therefore, a country to be strong and stable needs educated and vigilant citizens. Vigilance of the citizens will somewhat intimidate politicians to engage in electoral malpractices. Thus, the incidence of electoral fraud will be reduced or even eradicated in due course of time. In addition, the members of the mass media may send reporters to further ensure transparency and somehow erase doubts in the electoral processes and election results.

Church leaders may also use their moral influence by providing guidelines in the righteous selection of political candidates that deserve to hold public office. They may also warn their followers to be vigilant of the possibility that electoral fraud may happen.

Lastly, the state should encourage local independent bodies like the National Movement for Free Elections and Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting as well as the international independent bodies like the United Nations and the diplomatic representatives of other countries to observe the processes and the system that is being

practiced by the political candidates, voters, and Commission on Elections during the electoral period and give viable suggestions for the improvement of the country's electoral system.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were formulated:

The tendency of majority of the voters to consider political candidates' place of residence, place of birth, ancestral origin, and language or dialect used when they are about to cast their votes may explain their regionalistic voting behavior. As a result, political candidates who happen to come from the region or place with the most number of voters will have a bigger chance of being elected into office.

Aside from the regionalistic factors, voters who have not availed of formal schooling are influenced by popularity factors brought by political candidates' membership to an affluent family or association to show business, sports, and/or media institutions while voters who have reached masters' level and above are influenced by the popularity factors brought by the political candidates' lawful profession (i.e. lawyer, medical doctor, teacher, and the like).

In addition, voters who are earning P 10,001 to 20,000 and those who are Non-Roman Catholics are also influenced by the nature of relationship that they have with political candidates or by those who endorse the political candidates, which include friendship, social group affiliation, and kinship.

The admiration of the majority of voters on the personal characteristics or the image of the political candidates like those who are courageous and have political will, those who are intelligent and expert in running the government, those who are principled and righteous, those who have high educational attainment, and those who are caring and nurturing when they are about to cast their votes explains their idealistic voting behavior. When voters are convinced that a certain political candidate has the characteristics that they are looking for, they will eventually sympathize with the political candidate. The sympathy that the voters give to the political candidate will serve as an assurance that they will more likely vote that political candidate when election comes.

Aside from the idealistic factors, the consideration of voters who have reached elementary level rest on the material and non-material things that they get during and even after the electoral period like jobs, financial assistance, money, free transportation to polling places, rice, canned goods, groceries, infrastructure projects in their locality and other favors may have resulted to their pragmatic voting behavior.

Furthermore, the concern of voters towards the program priorities or platform of government that is being advocated by a particular political candidate such as the improvement of educational system, health and medical services, infrastructures, livelihood in agriculture and fisheries, and the environment may explain the existence of issue-oriented voting behavior like those are observed in voters who are earning P20, 001 and above.

Similarities in the voters' orientation and perspective on electoral issues brought by the membership or affiliation of political candidate or those who endorse the political candidate to a particular social and economic group may be attributed to the culture that voters commonly share as members of the society. These culture prevalent in the society somewhat regulate their actions and behavior. That is why they share similar voting behavior when social groupings and factors related to political candidates and those who endorse them are considered.

Every stratum of a particular economic group or income group usually share common perceptions about the personality projected by the political candidates, the things that they can get from voting, and the issues that are involved during the election. These perceptions are usually unique in each stratum. As a result, there are variations or differences in the voting behavior of voters as far as monthly income level is concerned—just like with the voters who were earning P10, 000 and below monthly who were found be “idealistic” in their voting behavior and voters with a monthly income of P20, 001 and above who were found to be “issue-oriented” in their voting behavior.

As the voters' educational attainment increases the more favorable his vote is. His education have somehow helped him understand the complex and diverse issues that are presented before him like the nature of relationship, the regional connection, and the popularity factors that is existing between him and the political candidates or their endorsers. Thus, educational attainment of voters can significantly predict their voting behavior within the social group context.

The educational attainment of a particular voter usually goes with his monthly income level. It simply implies that voters with high educational attainment are usually voters that have a high monthly income level. Thus, the higher his educational attainment the higher the monthly income level that the voter usually has and the more favorable his behavior will be when the effect of candidates' personality, the things that he can get from voting, and the issues involved during elections are presented to him. That is why educational attainment and monthly income of voters can significantly predict their voting behavior.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the aforementioned findings, conclusions, and implications the following recommendations were posted, that if given consideration, will ensure a desirable outcome in due time:

1. A more responsive and effective voters' education program should be organized in order to help the voters realize that the needs and concerns of the country are far important than regional needs and concerns because the citizens' standard of living is very dependent on the stability of the country.

Many approaches can be adopted in order to have a responsive and reflective voters' education program in educational institutions as well as in the community. Some of these are:

For the instruction in educational institutions, one of the approaches that can be used is the political historical approach in teaching social science. Social science teachers may integrate historical facts in making their students understand the need of giving emphasis on the welfare of the nation as a whole rather than the region where they belong. For example, the social science teacher can cite the reasons why the Philippine Revolution against the Spaniards failed and relate these reasons to voting and elections. Then, the teacher will help the students perceive the possible consequences that might happen if the voters are more concerned with their regions rather than their country. This approach will somewhat convince the students, who will later become voters or who are currently registered as voters, that the needs

and concerns of the country is far more important in order to have a strong and stable country.

The community, the church, mass media, non-governmental organizations, and interest groups should work hand-in-hand or interdependently in convincing the voters to be more concerned with the needs and concerns of the country rather than their regional needs. As a result, these agencies will create rife effort. The voters will learn the advantages of giving importance to the needs of the country when they will be voting during election.

2. The Commission on Election should strictly implement the existing statutes, rules, and regulations governing Philippine elections and should see to it that there is a speedy disposition of cases and that severe punishment be imposed to those who are involved in electoral malpractices. Through this, idealistic voting behavior of the voters will not be influenced by politicians who intend to corrupt the electoral processes of the country and the pragmatic voting behavior will eventually be reduced or even eradicated because politicians will be hesitant to engage in electoral malpractices.

3. There should be a venue for a more effective and efficient political dialogues or discussions with emphasis on the selection of candidates based on merits, qualifications, and the ability to run for public office using similarities in their behavior as bases in formulating strategies that will be used in the dialogues or discussions.

4. Since every echelon of economic or income group have the tendency to define reality from the point of view of their group, values education with emphasis on responsible voting may be integrated by educational institutions and social science teachers in their curriculum and in their outreach program so that responsible voting will be able to penetrate in the mainstream of the community and eventually become part of the voters' value system.

5. Since the educational attainment of voters can significantly predict their voting behavior within the social group context, a separate subject on Philippine electoral system and electoral reform, if feasible, may be included as an elective or special topic in the curricula of political science and social science majors in the tertiary level.

For non-political science and non-social science majors, the topic on Philippine electoral system and electoral reform may be integrated in

Philippine History, Politics and Governance, and Society and Culture subjects in the General Education Curriculum.

For the basic education, the issue about Philippine electoral system and electoral reform may be injected in the MAKABAYAN subjects and/or in their civics and culture subjects.

Lastly, Graduate Schools should consider the possibility of offering Philippine electoral system and electoral reform, as one of cognate subjects in the social science program or the integration of these topics in the lessons in social science courses.

6. Since educational attainment and monthly income level of the voters can significantly predict their voting behavior within the attitudinal context, the state, private sectors, and interest groups should work hand-in-hand in educating and developing, either through formal education or through informal education, civic values and political consciousness towards good and responsible citizenship. In this manner, majority of the voters regardless of their educational attainment and monthly income level will eventually have a favorable behavior in voting and in election.

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