

Qualification Standards of National Election Candidates in the Executive Department (Inputs to New Electoral Reforms)

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Abstract: *This study aims to examine and evaluate the existing qualification standards of the executive department in the level of national election. It suggests new inputs and parameters in the conduct of electoral reforms. Adequate and sufficient qualification standards is implemented in all areas, except those mandated under the 1987 Philippine Constitution, it has been the fundamental consideration and holding factor to vacancy of position. This research utilizes descriptive qualitative methodology with the application of grounded theory approach. Respondents came from distinguished citizens of the Philippines directly affected thereby. Data are collected through lawful and permissible means. The proper solicitation of informed consent and the presence of moral and ethical standards are faithfully complied with. In this light, the legislators must contemplate the fact that there is truly a need to revisit the existing qualification standards of the executive department. Considering to adopt the proper procedures of the rule of law and observing the governing rules and regulations mandated by the fundamental law of the land. The inclusion of additional and supplemental requirements of educational attainment, academic excellence and administrative experience must be considered that will generously benefit the general public in attaining effective and efficient political governance.*

Introduction

The conduct of national election has been one of the most governing issues and concerns in the aspect of political administration and leadership. Every citizen of the Philippines is designed to observe the primordial duty and responsibility to choose and elect the best presidential candidate that will genuinely serve the general public and represent the state. In Philippine contemporary laws on suffrage, it states the qualification standards of the executive department must comply with the prescribe standards. Namely, "No person may be elected President unless he is a natural-born citizen of the Philippines, a registered voter, able to read and write, and on the day of the election, a resident of the

Philippines for at least ten (10) years immediately preceding the election.

The qualifications mandated by law is within the exclusivity rule. It cannot be denied that these prerequisites pertains only to a minimum requirement. It should be revisited by the designated lawmakers and officials of the government bearing in mind the importance and gravity of the position. Almost all station, whether in public or private sector, except those mandated by law under the 1987 Philippine constitution, requires deeper screening, profound scrutiny and in-depth examination before they can qualify or eligible to a given spot. The qualifications must be suitable to every applicant that best serve the purposes of the organization and government. Ironically, the president, rank as the highest government official, represented as the chief executive, commander of the armed forces, and figure head of state possess the minimum requirements. As a rule, it is indispensable requirement to have all the qualifications and none of the disqualifications. Moreover, superficial qualities such as popularity and celebrity figure should be shunned. A new yardstick based on educational attainments, morals and principles should be the new norm in voting. This is an analysis of the coming presidential elections as gleaned from past experience and grounded on reality. The Political pundits are in general consensus that there is truly a need to amend the present constitution and avail additional qualifications pertaining to position of the executive department. In this manner, the subsequent head of states is equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, expertise and experience that will redound to the development of the country. A sustainable economic base is needed that will propel it to prosperity.

In everyday parlance, these political exercises have become the great national pastime. We love to discuss what is going on, from single chair barbershop at the far end of shanty town to the posh coffee shop of the five (5) star hotel at some central business district. The language is the same – we praise our favorite candidate to high heavens and

curse his closest nemesis (real or perceived) in a language common to the commuting public and polite society.

But there are several things we know deep down in our hearts. We refuse to accept as reality when it comes to our electoral exercises. And these two things make all the difference in elections, whether strategizing and running campaigns or voting for our top leader.

First, those voters – all voters – do not want to vote for a loser. That is, a perceived loser. That is why prior surveys and polls are key to our pre-election life because, like a horse race dividend (racing form) these surveys give us a tangible guide of a possible winner. To the ordinary person, voting for a possible loser means wasting a vote. Many times we have heard: “Why will I waste my vote on that guy, he is a sure loser anyway?” That, of course, runs counter to the very essence of a true and working democracy where we are supposed to vote for who we truly believe is qualified for the job. But no, we vote for a winner.

Even the so-called bought votes that are controlled by the local politicians spread out all over the country are ultimately set aside and commanded to cast their lot for the perceived winner. A local leader worth his mettle will not use up his political resources and capital behind a loser for it will mean sure death for his own career and power if it is known he supported a loser. Great favor will be granted by the victor when the local politician is credited delivering victory in his territory.

Second, we tend to overlook the reality that we are limited to voting for those who are fielded during elections. Come election-day we do not have much of a choice except cast our vote for whoever is officially running – even if the list reveals that they are the lowest of the low. If we are to take our right and duty in suffrage seriously, we have to vote who we feel is best qualified regardless of winnings, and find that candidate from the limited list given to us. It is in this context that the researcher decided to conduct this study for a change in order to upgrade the qualifications of the National Leaders of the land. The qualification standards at present are no longer applicable to the times and problems are becoming more complex. This is one of the solutions for us to improve our economy and uplift the lives of our countrymen.

The President of the Philippines is the number one official of the land. He or she is both the head of state and head of government. The appointment to all departments in the Cabinet can only be done by him or her. And he appoints all the fifteen justices of the Supreme Court, all the justices of the Court of Appeals and all judges and prosecutors of all regional trial courts, city and municipal courts and all

special courts all over the land, including the Sandiganbayan. The President appoints all Philippine ambassadors and consuls to all nations with whom we have diplomatic relations, and receives all envoys from all such countries

Theoretical Framework

The Liberal Democratic Theory of Representation: The essential principles of a liberal democratic theory of representation which the Philippines claims to observe, are the following:

First Principle: The importance of the individual's rights, specially his property, and the necessity of limiting the powers of government to protect those rights.

Second Principle: The principle of rationalism, under which it is argued that humans are creatures of reason. It is argued that humans are able to identify their own interests and their own opinions, and are aware of the wider claims of the community. Therefore, according to this argument, the individual will use his vote in an intelligent fashion, and is consequently entitled to share in the selection of representatives. This argument would be correct, if the voter and the voted are educated. But in our country, the masses tend to vote for the people whom they most often see either in movies or on television. They apply only a visual test to candidates. If the candidate often plays the role of champion of the poor, then the uneducated poor will vote him to office for this reason only. Thus, they are voting for actors. Accordingly, when some of these TV and film personalities win in the elections, they continue their acting in the legislature. Some of them are acting as senators or congressmen, merely relying on their legislative staff to feed them with the proper things to say during the sessions of Congress. In effect therefore, they are little better than talking dummies. And in addition, they might be more susceptible to the pressures exerted by lobby groups and other interest groups funded by the rich. According to Thomas Jefferson, there should be a clear emphasis on the importance of an educated majority. Indeed, this must be a prerequisite for Philippine representative government.

Third Principle: Sovereignty of the people, which is expressed through universal suffrage. The implicit goal of our electoral system is: "One person, one vote, one value." it must be emphasized that this principle is observed in an educated society. But if, as in the case of our country, the majority of the voters are not educated, then there is no reason why one vote should be equal to another vote. Not all votes are equal.

Research Methodology

This research utilize the descriptive qualitative methodology with the application of grounded theory approach. The latter move beyond description and generate or discover a theory based on data and experiences from the participants who share the same process, action or interaction. Grounded theory also emphasizes the understanding of social interaction, social process and social change from the participants' perspectives. The questionnaire was the main instrument used in gathering the needed data for the study. The researchers prepared the questionnaire in the English language and the questions was a combination of the mixed alternatives and open-ended type of questions that enable the respondents to answer them easily by choosing their desired answer or by writing their answers provided for them.

Population and sample

The primary key to excellence in grounded qualitative inquiry pertains both to data collection and analytical conceptualization. The aim of the study is to gain understanding about the construct of trust from the individual voter's experience and perspective in relation to the qualifications of candidates for this national elections in the country that can be possibly an input to new electoral reforms. In order to inductively develop theoretical categories, a purposive sampling was used initially to recruit participants.

In order to inductively develop theoretical categories, a purposive sampling was used initially to recruit participants. Participants were selected through purposive sampling and included sixteen young voters, school administrators and teachers. This sample reflects the view that parental influence plays an important role in political socialization and to gain intergenerational perspective between parents and their children.

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted by semi structured interviews. The interview was set up as conversation to gain a description of the respondent experience in their everyday lives such as their hobby, school, work, life, travelling experience, or socialization with friends and family. The interview also discussed local, national and international issues which are important and have influence in their life; as well as how and where they obtain the information. It can be from newspaper, television, internet, other media or conversations with family and friends. Further information that was collected and gathered in this research is more specific to political issues on administration. Thus, the next discussion in the interview is aimed at understanding voters' perceived criteria of a good

politician, their electoral participation, as well as to explore the changes in their trust over time and the reason for those changes and preference of selecting candidates eligible for position..

Types and Data Collection Methods

The following are the steps undertaken by the researches in data gathering:

First, the questionnaire formulated by the researchers was presented to the thesis adviser and research specialists for consultation, editing and final approval. Second, a dry run was conducted for validation to stakeholders who were not respondents to ascertain the reliability of each item, third, a formal letter of request was sent to the organization/institution seeking permission to allow the researcher to distribute questionnaires for the respondents. Fourth, upon the approval of request, copies of the questionnaires were produced. Then the researcher administered the questionnaires to the nominated respondents observing informed consent, proper moral and ethical standards of research protocols. Fifth, the retrieval was made by the researcher after giving ample of time to study, analyze and answer the given questionnaires. Lastly, the data was collated, collected and organized into tables and subjected for statistical treatment.

4.0 Results and Discussions

4.1 Showing the respondents distribution

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents

| Respondents | Population | Sample | % |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Student | 1,100 | 230.00 | 20.91 |
| Faculty | 270 | 53.00 | 19.63 |
| Administrator | 60 | 13.00 | 21.67 |
| Total | 1,430 | 296.00 | 20.70 |

The table shows the distribution of respondents. A total of 296 samples were drawn from the total population of 1,430 or 20.70%.

4.2 Showing the respondent's age.

Table 2: Age of the respondent

| Age: | Admin | Teachers | Students | % |
|-------------|-------|----------|----------|-------|
| 46 – 50 | 1 | | 1 | 0.34 |
| 41 – 45 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1.01 |
| 36 – 40 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 3.04 |
| 31 – 35 | 3 | 37 | 17 | 5.74 |
| 26 – 30 | | 184 | 18 | 6.08 |
| 21 – 25 | | | 64 | 21.62 |
| 15 – 20 | | | 184 | 62.26 |
| Grand Total | 13 | 230 | 296 | 100% |

Generally, there was only 1 or 0.34 percent who was 46 – 50 years, there were 3 or 1.01 percent who are 41 – 45 years, 9 or 3.04 percent who are 36 – 40 years, 17 or 5.74 percent who are 31 – 35 years, 18 or 6.08 percent were 26 – 30 years, 64 or 21.62 percent were 21 – 25 years and 184 or 62.16 percent are 15 – 20 years.

4.3 Showing civil status of respondents

Table 3: Civil Status

| Civil Status: | Admin | Teachers | Students | % |
|---------------|-------|----------|----------|-------|
| Single | 2 | 40 | 228 | 91.22 |
| Married | 11 | 13 | 2 | 8.78 |
| Grand Total | 13 | 53 | 230 | 100% |

A shown in the table, most of the administrators are married with 11 or 84.62 percent and only 2 or 15.38 percent were single. Of the 53 teachers, 40 or 75.47 were single and 13 or 24.53 percent were married. Among the students, 228 or 99.13 percent were single and only 2 or 0.87 percent were married. In general, there 270 or 91.22 who were single and 26 or 8.78 percent were married

4.4 Showing gender of respondents

Table 4: Gender

| Gender: | Admin | Teachers | Students | % |
|-------------|-------|----------|----------|-------|
| Male | 3 | 29 | 89 | 40.88 |
| Female | 10 | 24 | 123 | 59.12 |
| Grand Total | 13 | 53 | 230 | 100% |

As noted from the table, the administrators have 3 or 23.08 percent were male and 10 or 76.92 percent were female. On the other hand, the teacher have 29 or 54.72 percent who were male and 24 or 45.28 percent were female. The students have 89 or 61.30 percent male and 141 or 38.70 percent were female. All in all, there were 121 or 40.88 percent who were male and 175 or 59.12 who were female.

4.4 Showing Respondents Educational Attainment

Table 4: Educational Attainment

| Gender: | Admin | Teachers | Students | % |
|------------------|-------|----------|----------|-------|
| | f | f | f | 8.45 |
| Graduate Studies | 9 | 7 | 9 | 90.45 |
| Bachelors Degree | 4 | 46 | 213 | 4 |
| High School | | | 3 | 1.01 |
| Grand Total | 13 | 53 | 230 | 100% |

As observed in the table, the administrator respondents have 9 or 69.23 percent are in the graduate studies and 4 or 30.77 percent with Bachelor’s Degree. For the teachers, 7 or 13.21 percent are in the graduate studies and 46 or 86.79 percent were Bachelor’s Degree. As for the students, there were 9 or 3.91 percent are in the graduate studies, 218 or 94.78 percent have Bachelor’s Degree and 3 or 1.31 percent were high school. Generally, there were 25 or 8.45 percent with graduate studies, 268 or 90.54 percent were Bachelor’s Degree and 3 or 1.01 percent were high school.

4.5 Showing the present qualifications of candidates to national election of the executive department

Table 5. Summary Table

| Criteria: | Weighted Mean | Composite |
|------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Constitutional requirements | 4.72 | Strongly Agree |
| 2.Educational attainment | 3.45 | Agree |
| 3.Administrative experience | 4.35 | Strongly Agree |
| 4.Requisite prior holding position | 4.22 | Strongly Agree |
| 5.Citizenship requirement | 3.72 | Agree |
| Grand Total | 3.72 | Agree |

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based from the relevant data gathered, the salient findings of the study are as follows:

1. As to the Basic Constitutional Requirements for the Qualifications of Candidates to National Election particularly for President and Vice-President; rank no. 1 is “Present constitutional requirements,” which was rated Strongly Agree as reinforced by the composite weighted mean of 4.72. Rank no. 2.5 are “Administrative experience,” and “Best requisite for prior holding position of President and Vice-President,” were both rated Strongly Agree as proven by the composite weighted mean of 4.22. Rank no. 4 is “Citizenship,” which was rated Agree as confirmed by the composite weighted mean of 3.72. Rank no. 5 is “Educational Attainment,” was likewise rated Agree as affirmed by the composite weighted mean of 3.45.This resulted to an overall composite weighted mean of 3.72 (Agree).

2. On the Perception of the Respondents of the Qualifications of the National Candidates rank no. 1 is “Personal Qualifications,” which was rated Strongly Agree as evidenced by the composite weighted mean of 4.42. Rank no. 2 is “Educational

Attainment,” also rated as Strongly Agree as proven by the composite weighted mean of 4.25. Rank no. 3 is “Expertise,” which was rated Agree as affirmed by the composite weighted mean of 4.07. Rank no. 4 is “Experience,” likewise rated Agree as verified by the composite weighted mean of 3.78. This resulted to an overall composite weighted mean of 4.13 (Agree).

3. Personal Qualifications of the National Candidates and Best Requisite Prior Holding Position as President and Vice-President, were found to have significant difference as stated by their F-computed values of 9.529 and 12.79 which were both greater than their F-critical values of 3.89 and 3.55 respectively. This resulted to the rejection of the hypotheses of the two variables. The other variables, educational attainment, administrative experience and citizenship obtained F-computed values of 0.537, 0.172 and 0.435 which were less than the F-critical values of 4.26, 3.55 and 5.14 hence, there were no significant difference in the perceptions of the respondents as to the aforementioned variables.

Conclusions

In accordance with the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The respondents agreed that the present national requirements of the candidates be included in the qualifications, with additional requirements such as administrative experience and best requisite prior holding position as President and Vice-President.
2. On the perception of the respondents, most of them agreed that personal qualifications like character and integrity be considered, likewise, educational attainment, expertise and administrative experience may be included in the list of qualifications.
3. The Respondents views personal qualifications and best requisite prior holding the position of President and Vice-President as important and may also be included in the basic requirements for the qualifications of the highest official of the land. Educational attainment, administrative experience and citizenship were equally considered as substantial qualities.
4. Based on the perception of the Respondents on having educational attainment for the candidates to the National election, specifically on the President and Vice President, they believed that the presidency is a position of statesmanship and leadership calling for the highest degree of political competence and expertise in national and international affairs.
5. As to the Basic Constitutional Requirements for the Qualifications of Candidates to National Election particularly for President and Vice-President, Respondents views the opinion that every candidate for President and Vice President respectively must be educated to some extent at least which is mandatory

in the process of developing country in attaining political stability and economic sustainability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions presented, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. One of the members of the House of Representatives may sponsor for the Bill amending the Law on the present Qualifications of the President and Vice-President.
2. In order to strengthen the present qualifications of the President and Vice-President, it may include the educational attainment, administrative experience and expertise of the national candidates.
3. Qualified voters may lobby in the House of Representatives and the Senate for the immediate reading of the Bill regarding the inclusion of other qualifications.
4. In exercising their freedom to elect or be elected, Filipinos must give more weight to competence, physical fitness and moral integrity.
5. Candidates for the national post must have a college degree. It should be a requirement to be enshrined in the Constitution for elected official
6. Professionalize important local and national offices by imposing academic qualifications. It will help our country compete on the international level and global competitiveness. The reason being education is considered and will always be a powerful constraint against narrow parochialism and will become a gateway to ideas that can change communities.

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