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PROMOTING POLITICAL IDENTITY: AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS IN WINNING THE ELECTION

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Abstract

The study was conducted to analyze and assess the requirements for the election campaign process of a politician in winning an election. How do candidates for elective positions execute plans for victorious political pursuit?

The study covered the 4th District of Bulacan that includes the Municipalities of Sta. Maria, Marilao, Obando, and the City of Meycauayan. Respondents of the study include the Mayor, Vice-Mayor, Councilors, Barangay Captain and Councilman.

A total of six hundred eight (608) respondents were elected officials who participated in the study. The mixed method of research was used utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches in securing the responses of the study.

The study revealed that the most effective plan in winning an election included the following: house-to-house campaign remains the predominant approach followed by meeting sorties after the house-to-house campaign. Targeting of the voters also served as a good plan. Caucus, meeting and attending to weddings, the baptismal celebration also was included in the actions taken by aspiring candidates.

Political affiliations are not so much given merits. What makes them decide to run for a political position revealed personal decision to run was the highest points, followed by family, group, and political decision. Furthermore, the study revealed that family affiliations appeared the highest factor to win an election.

Concerning funds, personal funds are followed by contribution, affiliated group, and the political party that comes in political findings.

Fund allocations go to posters and flyers, food, transportation, election staff, and equipment expenses where funds are allocated. The study revealed that no vote-buying was revealed.

Election watcher was the highest numbers of workers considered in the study.

The study confirmed that the traditional strategy of the house-to-house campaign remained the political approach in winning an election and a caucus afterward followed by meeting with different groups where the best strategies to win an election.

The problems and issues during the election include the group demanding foods and liquors during the house-to-house campaign; wearing of uniforms during the campaign and election time; giving of donation during the campaign period due to fiesta and basketball event and poster's of the candidate during and before the election campaign.

Further, it was found out that family name with political history remains a big factor for recall in winning an election and it is an essential to political identity a bigger factor for winning an election.

The study recommended the following steps or procedures to win an election: determine the political position and requirements of the laws before running, the need for a political planner is a must to plan and execute the campaign; review the political landscape together with a survey in the election, and targetting of voters to determine the needed number to win.

The last recommendation is a proposal for a political campaign manual that highlights the step-by-step guide in winning an election. These include the following: (1) awareness of the election rules and guidelines, (2) assessment of the political landscape, (3) campaign goal settings, (4) targeting of voters, (5) formulation of an effective campaign message, (6) development of voters contact plan, (7) campaign and election staffing, (8) funding, (9) development of the campaign and election plans, programs and activities, (10) implementation and (11) post-election assessment.

Introduction

In the Philippines, when someone had established a name in society, this means an easy recall for a person to be known in a community, town, and association. Similarly, the person who intends a political position had an advantage already compared with persons with no position or status, the likes of Sen. Manny Pacquiao, Sen. Lito Lapid, Sen. Tito Sotto, Representative Vilma Santos-Recto, and Mayor Isko Moreno to name a few have shown that being popular is an edge.

More so, their identity is known in the public even when they are not still running for public office and on this notion, this manuscript was written to help want to be a candidate to promote the political identity that can help them win an election. The last barangay election was held on May 14, 2018, the second Monday of May as mandated in Republic Act No. 881

also known as Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines. The winning officials were to serve, originally, until June 30, 2020, but since the 2020 elections were postponed to 2022 in 2019, their terms were also extended to January 1, 2023. Under Section 39 of the 1991 Local Government Code of the Philippines, an elective official must be a citizen of the Philippines, a registered voter, a resident therein for at least one year immediately preceding the day of the election, and able to read and write. If a person has the following qualifications, then he can run for any elective position at the local level.

The qualifications stated in the Local Government Code are simple and easy to understand and do not require a candidate's competency in terms of the level of knowledge and expertise in effective governance. Primarily because the Philippines is predominantly a democratic society, it has been the confirmed observation that the voter's preference tends to dictate the outcome of the electoral process as even the unqualified candidate is voted to office despite his academic deficiencies and incompetence. Based on this consideration, it can be surmised that democracy can sometimes be a convenient term to use. Oftentimes it can be a tyranny of the majority not because of what is right or what is good for the people. It all boils down to serving the self-interest of a few through the manipulation of the majority.

Faced with this reality, one who is aspiring to an elective post, be it at the national or local level, must take this into account and make sure that he has a clearly defined political identity before throwing his hat into the political arena. The term Political Identity has been interpreted in many ways. One that comes to mind is that Political Identity refers to specific political party affiliation or partisan identity. A partisan affiliation signifies membership in a group that espouses a popular issue and a core set of values. Political parties benefit from a political identity of this kind as it makes for very loyal and reliable voters. The parties seek to cultivate partisan loyalty among their members. The clan or tribe, or the economic class as well as geographical origin as contributing elements that can also shape one's Political Identity which can be capitalized on and included as components to achieve a favorable image to sway and influence the voter's preferences.

While the Filipino electorate had so many people to choose from, each candidate had a political party of his own, perhaps some may have founded only to become tactical parties only for their use during elections. This is true for much of the political parties here in the Philippines.

The post-Marcos era saw the political families of the country dividing it among them. We see the same last names when we elect leaders – this is most especially true in the provinces. Given the historical life span of dynasties in the country, when they fall, the dynasty of another rival family takes its place.

Political families become political parties in themselves because they are composed of men and women with a strong grassroots mass base. With the presence of political families in some areas of the country, the political party loses its very essence. The majority of the voters are easily swayed by popularity hence the abundance of celebrity politicians, which makes it that much harder for a qualified and honest candidate to ever cut.

To date, there are forty-two thousand and forty-six (42,046) barangays in the Philippines and five hundred sixty-eight (568) or 1.35% of which is in Bulacan composed of twenty-one (21) Municipalities and three (3) component cities; and politically subdivided into five congressional districts: Districts 1, 2, 3, 4 and the Lone District of the City of San Jose Del Monte (see Appendix I).

This study dwelled on the barangay local electoral process, as it is the smallest government administrative division in the Philippines. Being the smallest Local Government unit, it is further divided into *sitios or puroks*. The term *sitio* is usually clusters of households in a more disperse setting and *purok* is often applied to a neighborhood with a dense population. Although these communities do not have leaders elected in formal elections, these areas are still comprised of voters, which may be tapped by a local government aspirant and may include as an additional mass-based supporter especially if the coverage of the prospective nominee's sustainable platform of governance extends to the constituents' immediate interests and bidding. It has been established that the constituents elect representatives who can exercise good judgment and who have shown the commitment to bind themselves to do their constituents' bidding.

Although the law provides that elected barangay officials must be non-partisan or should not belong to, nor support any political party and to be neutral in the way they provide services to their constituents, this may not be the case in the current state of things. The barangay elections are perceived to be the extension of the kind of national politics our country has. Being the basic political unit in the whole government machinery, the total number of barangays throughout the country currently makes up the foundation of the national government. It becomes the machinery for the implementation of policies and programs of the central administration.

Political patronage is very much ingrained in the basic political unit of the country's system of governance, as traditional politicians know well that the mass base of their political machinery is the barangay official. Barangay election is an opportune time wherein patronage pays well. Political supporters at the local barangay level including ward leaders, community leaders are mobilized to build the machinery of political dynasties and are rewarded for their past support.

Based on the foregoing scenarios, the context of this study undertook to address the question of as to whether an aspirant's political identity is a significant factor in his bid for an electoral seat in the local election particularly the concluded Barangay Elections last May 14, 2018.

In the pursuit of political victory, these facts are laid out to shed light on the real conditions and circumstances which political aspirants should anticipate to understood and comprehend the battle to wage as they set their sights on the possibility of winning an electoral seat in the local elections.

Statement of the Problem

The general problem of the study is: "How do candidates for elective positions execute plans for victorious political pursuit?"

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What plans should the candidate be able to craft?
2. What are the campaign processes that must be considered in relation to:
 - 2.1 party affiliations,
 - 2.2 funding, and
 - 2.3 strategy?
3. What socio-cultural factors must be considered in promoting the identity of a candidate?
4. What problem and issues should the political candidate be ready to expect and provide solutions during the election period?
5. What recommendations may be posited based on the outcome of the study?

Integrated Review of Related Literature and Studies

Nwoka (2012) presents a unified theory explaining several conflicting empirical observations in the politics of campaign finance. It identifies those circumstances that foster or frustrate the enactment of financing laws that increase the competitiveness of elections. It was argued that the competitiveness of financing laws is a result of these strong incentives when they operate in a differently structured party system. First, lawmakers have an incentive to make laws to protect their incumbency from competitors. This incentive generally overwhelms the incentive to enact popular, competition-enhancing reforms. Secondly, lawmakers when they act through political parties have an incentive to cooperate with rivals to reduce the costs of political defeats, and lastly, lawmakers seek to enact reforms that are consistent with their normative goals. These incentives combine with several party system variables to determine when

campaign finance reform is likely to occur and how it will impact the competitiveness of elections.

The financing law stated above is welcome legislation and it can be a great development if such law will be passed in the Philippines. It will open an opportunity for real people to enter politics, for we know the source of funds is one of the problems on why potential candidates cannot join the race to an elective position.

Gera (2016) stated in her paper that the good governance argument for diversity in civil service is based on the notion that creating a bureaucracy that represents the diverse communities it serves strengthens government accountability and legitimacy. It was further argued that ethnic representation in national bureaucratic governance in the Philippines primarily constitutes a means for political reallocation of space, as it is embedded in the government's framework of asymmetric political autonomy. Thus, instead of facilitating equitable voice in the bureaucratic governance, such as policy framework could only hold ordinary indigenous and minority ethnic communities captive in the elite-dominated interethnic struggle for representation.

The study relates in this paper for political identity supports the diversity in the public service regardless of age, gender, economic status of life, or religious belief as long as the candidate was true to a served and genuine love for public service.

Battala (2016) in his paper mentioned that there were concerns that the economy might be adversely affected by the expected political volatility of the Rodrigo Duterte's presidency. Since the start of the campaign season, Duterte had been rocking the establishment through controversial pronouncements and outbursts, attracting the enmity of leaders of the Catholic Church, the United States, and the United Nations. Based on a review of recent political and economic performance, it argued that unless there are significant changes in the major sources of macroeconomic growth and stability, the Philippine economy would likely withstand the impact of a "Duterte Shock". The concerns cited above is valid for the direction of the country greatly depends on the Captain of the Ship, with all the economic downfall, the rise in the unemployment rate, the independent foreign policy of the government, corruption continues up to high places and the image of the country in the international community.

Reyes (2018) said in his inquiry on the impact of electoral engineering reforms through synchronized automated elections in a Philippine context suffering from systematic corruption. The May 2010 elections heralded a watershed in the electoral processes and practices. Results of local (congressional) and national (senatorial, vice president, and presidential) elections were obtained nearly overnight. The elections dramatically altered the mode of Philippine elections: typified by arduous and onerous delays in announcing results stretching to several months after the election. Although violence still marred the elections, it

was relatively one of the more peaceful elections ever experienced. The manuscript attempts to explore the impact of this unprecedented electoral reform on political competition, allegations of corruption, and the perseverance of patron-clients networks, the influence of media, and the political fortunes of candidates who supported electoral automation. The inquiry proposes analytical models in understanding changes and continuities in election reforms and corruption in determining outcomes that are individual votes garnered during the elections.

Armandotirr (2019) found out that successful political co-brands create and develop identities tailored to their constituency, often distinct from the corporate-political brand, and developed several years before electoral success at the ballot box. Also, the study reveals that political co-brands are dichotomous in terms of strategically managing a degree of alignment with the corporate political brand yet maintaining a degree of independence.

Furthermore, the study has implications for brands beyond the world of politics. Brands can adapt the political co-brand identity framework developed as a pragmatic tool to investigate internally created co-brand identity and explore alignment with the corporate brand identity. It can be mentioned that candidate political identity can be compared to product branding that you need to build over time to make a household name. Potential candidates need to co-brand to political leaders with good reputations to promote the identity. In the Philippines, senator-elect Bong Go rides in the popularity of President Rodrigo Duterte for he is not known in the political arena until he became the Special Assistant to the President (SAP). From thereon, he capitalized it and co-brand with President Duterte to make his name known in the public and that made him elected to the Senate.

The above study is a spin-off of the manual elections still happening during the barangay elections; though there are electoral reforms that happen in issues like vote-buying and vote-selling still exist in the countryside.

Hornsey (2019) stated that Donald Trump is the first US President to be on the record as having anti-vaccination attitudes. Given the enormous reach and influence, it is worthwhile examining the extent to which allegiance to Trump is associated with the public's perception of vaccine safety and efficacy. In the history of the United States of America, the Presidents are the foremost carriers of the administrative direction and policies through a strong political identity. It can make or break a country depending on how strong the leader's personality. In the Philippines, President Rodrigo Duterte won primarily because the message was conveyed to the voters how strong the personality and voters identified themselves with that strong political campaign messages.

Kreiss (2020) studied the concept of identity ownership to explain how, in the course of electioneering, candidates perform their own identities to align with the groups whose support they seek. A communication perspective frame was developed media are increasingly central sites for constructing and conveying the identity of candidates and the groups of constituents they seek to represent. In developing this model, it seeks to bring the identity-based framework more to the fore in communication research, as well as place communication at the center of studies of social identity. It was argued that seeing political identities as dynamic and actively performed provides an opportunity to analyze communications based not only on their informational value but also on their identity value.

Methodology

In the conduct of the study, the researcher used the mixed methods research that is combining qualitative and quantitative research. Creswell (2008) defined mixed methods as a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analyzing, and integrating quantitative and qualitative research in a single study or a longitudinal program of inquiry. The purpose of this form of research is that both qualitative and quantitative research, in combination; provide a better understanding of a research problem or issue than either research approach alone.

Though mixed methods research approach, this study was able to address the promotion of political identity as a requisite of the electoral campaign process. The mixed-methods design was used, and it is a design in which one data set provides a supportive secondary role in the study based primarily on the other data set. The primary purpose of this study used the survey instrument to test the theory of system that predicts that campaign processes like party affiliation, funding, legal basis, and strategy will positively influence a victorious political pursuit at the Municipality of Santa Maria, Bulacan.

The qualitative data used in the study were semi-structured interview questions given to the winners of the local election in all the City and Municipalities in the Fourth District of Bulacan and another set of questionnaires were given to the same respondents. These interview questionnaires were developed after a focus group discussion with the target respondents and with the help of the researcher's advisee. Once completed, each answer in the interview questions was collated and group; the same was done to the questionnaires. The researcher supplemented the study by making an observation, analysis of documents, and other sources like the internet, newspaper, magazines, and journals.

Significant Findings

Respondent's Political Postion

Respondent's Position	Frequency	Percentage
Mayor	1	0.52%
Vice Mayor	2	1.05%
City/Municipal Councilor	11	5.76%
Barangay Captain	20	10.47%
Barangay Councilman	143	78.87%
SK Chairman	14	7.33%
Total	191	100%

Table above presents the distribution of respondents according to their political position, Study showed that the majority of the respondents were Barangay *Kagawads* comprising 74.87% or representing 143 respondents. Meanwhile, the respondents from the position of Barangay Chairmen were pegged at 10.47% which was equivalent to 20 respondents. SK Chairmen represents 7.33% accounting for 14 respondents. Members from the Municipal/City Council at 5.76% corresponded to 11 respondents. There were 2 respondents in the position of Municipal Vice Mayor figured at 1.05% while only 1 Municipal Mayor reckoned at 0.52%.

1 . What plans should the candidate be able to craft?

Period of respondent's crafted their political campaign. For the local Election, 65.45% of the respondents have prepared six months, followed by 12 months at 22.51%, 36 months at 6.28%, and 24 months have 5.76%.

Crafting Political Campaign. The majority of the respondents mentioned that the family, friend, and relatives, which totaled 65.45% crafted their political campaign, followed by the political party at 28.27% and lastly by the affiliated groups at 6.28%.

Plan Implemented. At Rank No. 1, respondents are employing the house to house campaign; Rank No. 2, are attending meeting sorties; Rank No. 3 are caucus; Rank No. 4 is attending wedding, baptism, and wake; and at Rank No. 5 is the targeting of voters.

2. What are the campaign processes that must be considered in relation to:

2.1 Party Affiliation

Member of a Political Party. 50.26% of the respondents are members of a political party and 49.74% are not.

Importance of being a member of a political party. 78.01% of the respondents answered it is important and 21.99% mentioned that it is not important.

Influenced or convinced the candidate to run for public office. 56.03% of the respondents mentioned that they decide to run, followed by the respondent's family at 18.32%, then by a political party at 13.61% and lastly by the respondent's affiliated group at 12.04%

2.2 Funding

Sources of Funds. The majority of the respondents at 51.83% have used their funds to finance their election campaign, followed by contributions from family members at 34.55%, then by the affiliated group at 7.85% and lastly by the political party at merely 5.76%.

Funds Allocation. The majority of the respondents ranked first that funds went to posters, second to food, third on transportation, fourth on the allowances of election staff, fifth to other expenses and last is for the equipment rental.

Funds allocation for vote-buying. The majority of respondents at 97.90% mentioned that they do not have funds for vote-buying to ensure victory in the election.

Type of Volunteers during the election campaign. Respondents mentioned that ranked first is for volunteers that served as election watchers, the second type of volunteers are election coordinators, third is the election watchers and came, at last, is the election employee.

Allowances for the volunteer staff. The majority of the respondents at 71.73% are not giving allowances to the volunteer staff and only 28.27% mentioned that they are giving allowances to their volunteers.

Allocating funds for individuals or groups who asked for assistance. 59.16% of the respondents answered that they are not allocating any funds for individuals or groups and 40.84% mentioned that they have indeed made some allocations.

Funds allocated for election campaign posters. 86.39% of the respondents mentioned that there are funds allocated for the campaign posters and 15.18% said they have none.

Election campaign posters are in right dimensions, 2 ft x 3 ft or 3 ft x 2 ft. The majority of the respondents at 98.95% mentioned that the posters are complying with the Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines and only 1.05% is non-compliance.

Election campaign posters are placed in the COMELEC designated common poster areas. The majority of the respondents at 89% mentioned that the posters are placed in the COMELEC

designated common poster areas and only 11% mentioned that they are not following the designated common areas.

2.3 Strategy

Effective Strategy. The majority of the respondents mentioned that the most effective ways to election campaign are still house-to-house campaign at ranked 1, second by having caucus, third by meeting with different groups and came, at last, is the meeting with the different clan.

Information about the voters. The information got from the political caucus meeting was ranked 1, followed by the data from the past election at ranked 2, then at ranked 3 by meeting with different groups and lastly at ranked 4 was the information from the political party.

Targeting of Voters. The majority of the respondents ranked 1 were the meeting the family members or families with the biggest clan to get their support, followed at ranked 2 was meeting the different groups to get their support and at last at ranked 3 was the information that they can get from the database.

Victory Party. The majority of the respondents at 57.59% are hosting and/or giving victory party after the election and 42.41% are not giving a party to their supporters and followers.

3. What socio-cultural factors must be considered in promoting the identity of a candidate?

Among the socio-cultural factors, is the family affiliation rated extremely relevant with a mean value of 4.32, followed second by group affiliation at very relevant and with a mean score of 3.99, the last three variables are all rated somewhat relevant namely: popularity, economic status and religion with a mean score of 3.46, 3.40 and 3.32 respectively.

4. What problem and issues should the political candidate be ready to expect and provide solutions during the election period?

The problems and issues raised by the respondents during the election campaign period are the usual problems encountered by every candidate during election like pre-election campaigning, the influx of individuals and groups asking for a donation in cash or in-kind, campaign violations like posters in non-common areas, and group's color coding and the election day problems as to the voter's list and the number of poll watchers.

These are all covered by the guidelines specified in the Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines directed by the Commission of Elections (COMELEC) and any violations thereof can be filed before the COMELEC so that candidates who habitually violated the elections guidelines will be disqualified from running any public office.

Political Campaign Guide

The researcher proposed a political campaign guide to help candidates in winning the election, that is:

1. Awareness of Election rules and guidelines for candidates;
 - 1.1 Know the date and coverage of the Election
 - 1.2 Know the Commission on Election (COMELEC) requirements for candidates
2. Assessment of Political Landscape;
 - 2.1 Determine the area and/or political boundaries
 - 2.2 To identify voters
 - 2.3 To know the past election results
 - 2.4 Make an evaluation of other Candidates
 - 2.5 Determine the viable Opponents
3. Campaign Goal Setting;
 - 3.1 Determine the area and population
 - 3.2 Determine the total number of voters
 - 3.3 Base on past election, find the expected turnout
 - 3.4 To know the number of votes to win the election
 - 3.5 To get the total number of households
4. Targeting of Voters;
 - 4.1 To understand the need to target the voters
 - 4.2 To find ways on how to target voters
 - 4.3 To analyze voters Profile
5. Formulation of an effective campaign message;
 - 5.1 To determine what voters care about
 - 5.2 To build a strong characteristics of a good message
 - 5.3 To deliver the campaign message effectively
6. Development of Voter Contact Plan;

6.1 To identify the resources (time, money, and people)

6.2 To determine the types of voters and their contact activities

7. Campaign and Election Staffing;

7.1 Establishment of Political group planner

7.2 Creation and staffing of political and campaign chart/group

7.3 Task orientation

8. Funding;

8.1 Over-all projected expenses

8.2 Sources

Development of Campaign and Election Plans, Programs and Activities;

Implementation of Campaign and Election Plans, Programs, and Activities; and

Post-election assessment.

Conclusion

With all the results and findings of the study, the researcher, therefore, concluded that a satisfactory political name or identity is one of the essential elements that can help a candidate win in an elective position.

Recommendations

The recommendations are based on the results of the study. Political candidates need to adapt to the changing political trends to be successful in their chosen political endeavors. Thus, the following recommendations exhibit high importance:

1. The candidate must determine the target position and the requirement of the law;
2. A political planner maybe considered by the candidate to manage the political activities. The political planner helps the candidates in planning, programming, implementation and evaluation of the campaign and election process. It synchronizes all election activities to assure effective and efficient results;
3. The candidate must review the political landscape together with a survey before the election;

4. The candidate must apply targeting of voters to determined the needed number of votes to win the election on a position;
5. The candidate with the assistance from the political planner must develop of campaign strategy – political vision and branding;
6. The candidate must have adequate fund to sustain and win the election;
7. The political planner must effectively implement the campaign and political plans, programs and activities; and
8. The political planners need to make post-assessment and evaluation regardless of the election outcome.

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