Exploring the Voting Behavior of the Cebuano Electorate

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ABSTRACT

An essential tool for measuring the exercise of democracy is through looking into the factors considered by voters in choosing a candidate. This study presents how demographic factors such as age bracket, sex, educational attainment, and salary bracket affect the preferences of voters. In the process, this study also illustrates how culture and socialization affect political choices. A survey with a stratified random sampling technique was conducted across Cebu province with 606 registered voters. The survey quantitatively exhibits the patterns of the voting behavior of Cebuano electorates in the 2016 Presidential and Vice Presidential elections. It identifies elements that influenced the electorates' preference towards a certain candidate. Using the multivariate canonical correlation analysis, the study revealed that the demographic profiles of the respondents were significantly correlated with their preferred characteristics of a presidentiable and vice presidentiable. The characteristic preference of the Cebuano voters for president and the vice president differs across age bracket, sex, educational attainment, and salary bracket. The strength of such a relationship can be predicted using the model $V_i = -0.49X_{age} - 0.18X_{sex} - 0.73X_{educ} - 0.08X_{salary}$ for the presidentiable while $V_i = -0.47X_{age} - 0.21X_{sex} - 0.75X_{educ} - 0.06X_{salary}$ for the vice presidentiable. Using the multivariate correspondence analysis, the study depicts through two-dimensional perceptual mapping the preferred attributes of the Cebuano voters on the presidentiable/vice presidentiable concerning age bracket, gender, educational attainment, and salary bracket. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were also facilitated to validate and supplement the results of the survey. It probed into the generational differences in how younger respondents identified more qualities of a leader compared to fewer qualities identified by older respondents. The FGD results give further elaboration and explanation of how Cebuano political culture and socialization matters in choosing the right candidate.

Keywords: *voting, canonical correlation, perceptual mapping, multivariate models, voting preferences, presidential election*

INTRODUCTION

Cebu has always been perceived as "a province of unpredictability during elections" (Sib, 2015). Gloria Macapagal Arroyo won landslide (by over a million votes) in Cebu over the very famous actor and a hero of the masses in almost all his movies, Fernando Poe Jr." It was believed that had Arroyo lost in Cebu by a million votes in that election, history would have been different for all Filipinos" (Freeman, 2016). In the 2010 vice-presidential race, Manuel Roxas II won in Cebu by a wide margin (37.23%) over his closest rival and nationwide winner, Vice President Jejomar Binay. However, in the 2016 presidential race, Roxas lost to Rodrigo Duterte in Cebu Province. Meanwhile,

in 2013, Alan Peter Cayetano led in garnering votes in Cebu City and Lapu Lapu City in the senatorial race, but he lost in the vice presidential race in favor of Leni Robredo who won in Cebu and at the nationwide count.

Cebuanos appeared to show no specific pattern of political party loyalty. Election results indicated no specific pattern so far that would show that Cebuanos tended to favor their local incumbent leader's political party. Election results in the past appeared to show that Cebuanos based their choices on the platforms and performance of the person running for candidacy. In the 2010 election presidential race, despite it being a province of One Cebu, which openly urged Cebuanos

to support Gibo Teodoro's LakasKampi-CMD party, the Liberal Party bet Benigno Aquino III won in Cebu. In the 2016 election, most of the UNA and LP leaders and supporters turned their backs on their party's presidential bet to favor Rodrigo Duterte of the PDP-Laban party.

The Cebuano presidential and senatorial candidates gained heavy support from the Bisaya speaking regions. In 1946 presidential elections, Sergio Osmeña Sr. garnered intense backing from Region 7 the same thing compared to other regions. The same thing happened to his son, Sergio Osmeña Jr. when he runs for the vice presidency in 1961 against Emmanuel Pelaez. Osmeña Jr. defeated Pelaez in Region 7, but Pelaez got his highest win in his hometown in Northern Mindanao. In May 2016 election, Duterte won in Cebu where his father Vicente was the mayor of Danao, Cebu, and is reportedly related to the Durano and Almendras political families in the province. This cultural-linguistic affiliation was also observed in other regional choices during the national election. For instance in the 2016 election, Roxas ruled over the support of his hometown of Capiz; Poe was the top choice for president in the 16 provinces in Luzon; Binay, as expected, won in Makati City being its mayor for 21 years before he was elected vice president in 2010; Robredo won in Bicol province except in Sorsogon, the hometown of vice presidential candidate Sen. Francis Escudero.

Up until now, the exact basis of preferences of Cebuano voters in choosing among those running for political national positions is still unspecified since Cebuanos, as most critics say, think differently compared to other Filipino linguistic groups. They can be one's allies in one moment and may be out of one's league the next time around. As observed there is a need to look into the specifics of Cebuano voter's preferences. The researchers believe that this study will greatly help those who opt to run for the presidency or vice presidency, in their strategic planning on political campaigns. Likewise, this study also benefits the political analysts on their understanding and views on Cebuano electorates' mind that looks into these specific preferences for those seeking the top two positions in government. Considering the huge number of active registered voters in Cebu, its impact upon those who need to win their votes cannot be overemphasized.

This study determined the pulse of the Cebuano electorates of different age, economic status, educational background, and sex; and in effect being able to understand how Cebuanos think and manifest behavior that greatly speaks their culture and political orientation.

This study attempted to present quantitatively the pattern of the voting behavior of the Cebuano electorates in the presidential and vice-presidential elections. It aimed to examine the attributes of the variables laid down that investigated the voting behavior of the Cebuano electorates. It characterized and explained the canonical relationships among variables. It determined the pulse of the Cebuano electorates across age brackets, economic status, educational levels, and sex.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In a study by Teehankee (2010), the Filipino voting patterns in the presidential and senatorial elections were identified using Pearson's product-moment and partial correlations. He disclosed that Filipino voters disregarded party affiliations of presidential candidates, thus having no party identification

According to Benoit and Hansen (2017), exposure to media coverage has significantly influenced the voters' preferences. However, studies of Valentino, et al (2004) revealed that exposure to political advertising was informative but it had nothing to do with voters' preferences. Thus, in the end, it is the voters' positive assessment of the candidates that matter. The candidate's character is more significant than having to belong to a political party and having media machinery (Quimpo, 2007).

A study by David and Atun (2015) voting for celebrity politicians was associated with key independent variables such as voter's education, television exposure and residence in the capital city. Also, according to Jackson and Darrow (2005), celebrity endorsements also influenced the candidate preference of voters. These endorsements made unpopular statements more appealing to the public while increasing the level of agreement with already popular opinions regarding the candidate.

Another influencing factor in choosing a candidate is religion. The endorsement of candidates by

religious officials has a significant impact on voters' preferences. Through the work of different religious and political scholars, using multinomial logistic regression analysis, a study indicated that the degree of belief and practices in a religious organization were key predictors in choosing presidential candidates (Bradberry, 2016).

Interests in other factors influencing voters' preferences were also manifested. In the 2014 mayoral elections survey in Taipei, participants were asked about their party identification, political party preference, ethnic identity and motive in voting.

The study showed the impact of voting preferences across different cultures. The effect was that individuals need to process information more cautiously when deciding whom to vote. Voters may likely vote for candidates from their same ethnic group (Teehankee, 2010).

On the role of social media in influencing voters' preferences, a study of Spierings & Jacobs (2014) used the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression analyses to test the impact of social media on the preference votes. It revealed that the candidates were eager to use social media. However, the effect appeared to be relatively small.

In 2015, a study conducted by the Institute for Political and Electoral Reform (IPER) determined the factors that define the votes of Filipinos. To identify the underlying voting behavior, Factor Analysis was employed for the 18 variables that served as indicators to measure what determined the vote. The study used a Likert scale of 1 to 5. Based on the results of the study, the factors were reduced to just four key factors that determined the vote of a Filipino. These are the benefit factor (characteristics that can be of benefit to the voter), political machinery, popularity, and endorsement of a traditional network.

More relevant studies ventured into determining the factors influencing voters' preferences. That is, in a study by Macapagal (2006), the way Filipinos perceived political candidates were affected by the candidates' gender and social status. With this, quota sampling was used to choose 40 respondents per group, where the participants were randomly assigned to receive either male or female politicians. The main instrument used was Shah's scale which is a scale

patterned after Shah's instrument, which is the attitude scale based on trait adjectives. A three-way ANOVA was used for the overall traits then a chi-squared test was conducted per trait to determine significant differences of each trait on the three independent variables. Results showed that the female respondents from the lower social classes believed that female politicians were more attractive, emotional, intelligent and religious but male politicians were more corrupt. Also, females tended to view female politicians more positively than men.

METHODOLOGY

This study used Descriptive and Correlational research designs. Descriptive, presents and describes the traits and characteristics of the respondents particularly the demographics (age, sex, educational attainment, and income). For Correlational, it explored the relationships and association between two or more variables (Kumar, 1996). It established and statistically measured the relationships of variables using techniques of statistical analysis. Multivariate analyses such as Correspondence Analysis and Canonical Correlation were used in this study using licensed IBM SPSS version 22.

Quantitative and qualitative research methodologies were employed in the conduct of the study. For the quantitative, a survey was conducted among respondents who had access to the internet while for the qualitative, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were facilitated among respondents.

The quantitative aspect of the study was focused on respondents with access to the internet since a large percentage (44.2%) of Filipinos was internet users. Among those Filipinos who used the internet, about 40 million were active on social media. Social media were believed to be one of the venues of exposure for candidates vying for public office to campaign and get votes.

The sampling methodology used was stratified random sampling where the strata were the urban and rural areas. Simple random sampling was done to obtain the sampled cities and towns/municipalities. The sampling units were the households. The sample size was computed and increased to 606. Using proportional allocation, 225 households in municipalities were surveyed while a total of 381 households were surveyed in the three chartered cities of Cebu.

For the qualitative aspect of the research, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted and the participants were voters from different cities and municipalities of Cebu province and were divided into two batches. The first batch consisted of Cebuano voters' age between 18-34 years old while the second batch consisted of Cebuano voters above 35 years old. Each batch had an equal distribution of male and female, monthly salary bracket and educational attainment. A follow-up FGD session was conducted among students from different universities to validate further the survey results for the Cebuano young voters.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondents' Profile

There was an equal distribution of respondents (about 21%) across age bracket above 25 years but respondents of ages 18-24 there were just about 16% of the total sample size percentage of the respondents. The frequencies/percentages of male and female respondents involved in the survey were almost the same (about 50%). The majority of the respondents (about 86.5%) were either high school or college graduates. Only very few were graduates of vocational course or finished a postgraduate degree. As to the economic status of the respondents, those who indicated that they did not have an income comprised the highest percentage of the respondents. They were, actually, students and full-time housewives. The majority of the sampled registered voters had a monthly income of below 20,000 pesos. Overall, the profile of the respondents that were based on proportional allocation sampling is reflected in this result. That is, there is an almost equal representation based on age and sex. However, the educational background component varies among respondents.

Frequency of Respondents' Preferences on the Characteristics of Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates of Cebu Electorate

The first five traits of presidential candidates preferred by the Cebuano electorate were the following: 1) a president who has a heart for the poor and the needy (98.2%); 2) a president who can provide occupation (97.0%); 3) a president who has a good personality/character (96.4%); 4)

a president who has good platforms (95.0%) and 5) a president who has no issue of corruption (94.2%). On the other hand, their least preferred were the following: 1) a president who can give money during campaign (81.2%); 2) a president who supports gay marriage (78.1%); 3) a president who had not held an office in politics yet (76.7%); 4) a president who allows divorce (71.8%); and 5) a president who is dictated by their religious group leader (68.8%).

Similar to IPER's study in 2015, the ranked traits of the candidates were the ones beneficial to the respondents. The respondents were idealistic in searching for a candidate with good standing which can eventually meet their needs. The respondents exhibited conservative preferences on candidates that promoted controversial issues e.g. divorce & gay marriage. Belonging to a strong religious organization is another least preference factor as it dilutes the political agenda of the candidate towards the interest of the organization. Generally, just as cited by Quimpo in his study in 2007, the candidates' characteristics are far more important than belonging to a prestigious party with complete machinery.

The Cebuano voters preferred a vice president with the following characteristics: 1) good family reputation and track record; 2) whose personality would match with the president; 3) have good communication skills; 4) can push through the mandate of the president. Their vice president may be of different political party affiliation from the president. The second characteristic of a vice-president, deliberated from the FGDs, was having the same political behavior as that of the president. Others would say that the degree of flexibility of the vice president to work well and have harmonious working relations with the president. Belonging in the same political party is one factor to achieve a successful political tandem. However, in reality, this rarely happens in Philippine politics.

The least preferred traits of vice presidentiables were the same as that of the presidentiables except that their fifth least preferred was a vice-president who was a wife, husband, sister/brother, daughter/son of a politician. More than half (about 59.7%) of the Cebuano electorate would vote for a vice president that was not necessarily in the same party of the president they voted. This result validated Teehankee's claim in 2010 that Filipino voters disregard party affiliation of the candidate in their choice of whom to

vote. For Cebuano respondents, party membership is not a major criterion for selecting a candidate.

The outcomes of the Focus Group Discussions added characteristics of a presidentiable/vice presidentiable such as capable of protecting the country from national and international threats and having the same cultural-linguistic affiliation with them. Those above 45 years old preferred someone who had these traits like strong personality, credible, reliable, good plans for the next 6 years and least evil among the candidates.

The Cebuano voters exhibited optimism in their choice of presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Older Cebuano voters (above 45 years old) have higher qualifications in candidates than the younger ones (45 below). The older voters preferred candidates with good academic achievements and a good personal character while the younger ones preferred the popular candidates coming from influences of media, popularity and political background. Though Spierings and Jacobs in their study in 2014 stated that the effect of social media is relatively small, the young Cebuano acknowledged the influence of social media such as Facebook and Twitter as an influential factor towards choosing their candidate. It presents another stage of soliciting for votes by the candidates and swaying the views and opinions of voters.

The respondents observed that social media has affected the voters' choice of candidates. One can easily access and manipulate political views using social media. For the respondents, Facebook played an extensive role in choosing a president/vice president. Reading the comments, opinions, views, and news in Facebook helped them decide which among the candidates they had to vote

The respondents considered the presidential and vice-presidential debates aired in TV stations as a major influential factor towards choosing and voting a candidate in the 2016 presidential election. In fact, according to the study of Benoit and Hansen in 2017, exposure to media coverage influences voter preferences.

Other factors that influenced their choice of president and vice president were the following: 1) debt of gratitude (utang na loob); 2) family; 3) friends; 4) teachers and classmates; 5) social media like Facebook; 6) advertisements; 7) candidate's

background; 8) platform; and 9) candidates' lifestyle. Factors 1-4 indicate the strong ties among social institutions towards influencing the voters' partialities towards one candidate over the others. The candidate's personal information (Factors 5-9) promoted through social media can also persuade voters. These mentioned factors are constant facets of political socialization.

Cebuano voters considered a presidential/vice presidential candidate who could serve and implement social reforms i.e. solving the crimes, ending the contractualization of laborers/ employees, improving the medical services and infrastructures and output-oriented government services. By character, Cebuano voters claimed that they are keen and sensitive on political issues, observant, inquisitive, wise and firm on their choice of a candidate to vote. Hence, defining it as the Cebuano vote.

Canonical Correlation Analysis

Tables 1 and Table 3 reveal the relationships between the demographic profile of the respondents and their preference for presidentiable and vice presidentiable. On the other hand, Table 3.2 reveals the relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and the political party affiliation of the vice presidentiable as a factor considered by the Cebuano electorate in voting him.

Table 1. Canonical Correlation Coefficients of Preferred Characteristics of a Presidential and the Respondents' Demographic Profile

Independent Variables	Significant Value	Eigenvalues	Correlation Coefficient of Preference Across Variables
Age Bracket	0.000	-0.49	-0.62719
Sex	0.003	-0.18	-0.52310
Educational Attainment	0.000	-0.73	-0.60271
Monthly Salary Bracket	0.006	-0.08	-0.35006

It appeared in Table 1 that all the demographic profiles of the respondents were significantly correlated with their preferred characteristics of a presidentiable. It means that the characteristic preference of the Cebuano voters was different across the age bracket. Similarly, the characteristic preference of the Cebuano voters is different across

sex, educational attainment, and their monthly salary bracket.

The degree of their relationships were different: age bracket and educational attainment that had a correlation coefficient of about -62.72% and -60.27%, respectively, means that they have good relationship with the characteristic preference of a presidentiable; sex had a moderate relationship, and monthly salary bracket had a weak relationship with the characteristic preference of a presidentiable. The effect of the negative correlation coefficient in the interpretation is as follows: as the Cebuano voters got older, their standard characteristic preferences lessened; and as the educational attainment and monthly salary bracket increased, the standard characteristic preferences of the Cebuano voters lessened.

Using the eigenvalues in Table 1, the model that will predict the characteristics of a presidentiable preferred by Cebuano voters is given by

$$V_i = -0.49X_{age} - 0.18X_{sex} - 0.73X_{educ} - 0.08X_{salary}$$

Table 2. Canonical Correlation Coefficient between the Political Party Affiliation of the Vice Presidential as Factor Considered by the Cebuano Electorate in Voting Him and the Respondents' Demographic Profile

Independent Variables	Significant Value	Correlation Coefficient of Preference Across Variables
Age Bracket	0.899	-0.68346
Sex	0.033	-0.22734
Educational Attainment	0.394	-0.76470
Monthly Salary Bracket	0.324	-0.26550

Table 2 shows that only the sex variable of the Cebuano voters was significantly related to the choice of a vice president who has the same or not the same political party as the president chosen. It means that female Cebuano voters had different preferences as that of the male. But the strength of the said relationship was weak.

Table 3. Canonical Correlation Coefficients of Preferred Characteristics of a Vice Presidential and the Respondents' Demographic Profile

Independent Variables	Significant Value	Eigenvalues	Correlation Coefficient of Preference Across Variables
Age Bracket	0.000	-0.47	-0.65104
Sex	0.024	-0.21	-0.51831
Educational Attainment	0.000	-0.75	-0.56864
Monthly Salary Bracket	0.012	-0.06	-0.32948

Table 3 shows that the demographic profiles of the respondents were significantly correlated with their preferred characteristics of a vice presidentiable. It means that the characteristic preference of the Cebuano voters was different across age bracket, sex, educational attainment, and their monthly salary bracket.

Only the age bracket had a good relationship with the characteristic preference of a vice presidentiable. Sex and educational attainment had a moderate relationship while the monthly salary bracket had a weak relationship with the characteristic preference of a vice presidentiable. Furthermore, as the Cebuano voters got older, their standard characteristic preferences of a vice presidentiable lessened; and as the educational attainment and monthly salary bracket increased, the standard characteristic preferences of a vice presidentiable lessened also.

Using the eigenvalues that can be found in Table 3, the model

$$V_i = -0.47X_{age} - 0.21X_{sex} - 0.75X_{educ} - 0.06X_{salary}$$

predicts the characteristics V_i of vice presidentiable given their demographic profile.

Correspondence Analysis

The two-dimensional perceptual map was used since two dimensions were enough already to explain the total variance of the data. The first perceptual map shows the mapping of the characteristics of a presidentiable with the age brackets while the perceptual map beside the first one shows the mapping of the characteristics of a vice presidentiable with the age brackets.
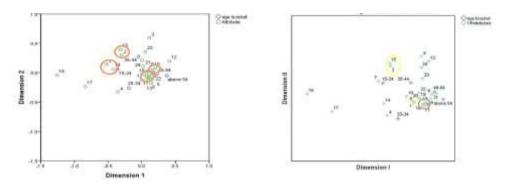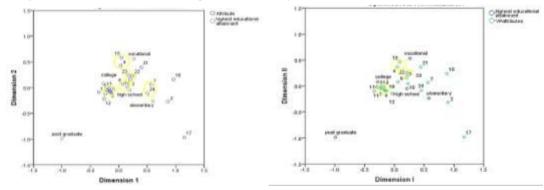
Figure 1. Perceptual Map of the Attributes of the Presidential /Vice Presidential with respect to Age Bracket

Figure 1 shows that the Cebuano voters age 45-54 and above 54 years old seemed to have the same preferences of a presidentiable while age brackets 15-24, 25-34 and 35-44 formed another group with the same preferences. The characteristics of a president preferred by the Cebuano electorates above 45 years old were of Attribute 1 (has good communication skills), Attribute 5 (graduated college), Attribute 6 (from prestigious university like UP, Ateneo or De La Salle), Attribute 8 (has served as a senator or congressman or any other position in politics), Attribute 9 (has good platforms), Attribute 10 (a candidate of a party that they were supporting), Attribute 11 (no issue of corruption), Attribute 13 (does not blame others for his/her mistakes), Attribute 19 (has a good personality or character) and Attribute 22 (is a relative). On the other hand, the characteristics of a president/vice president) preferred by the Cebuano electorates of age 15-44

were the following: Attribute 2 (a tv/radio personality), Attribute 4 (from military), Attribute 7 (wife/husband/sister/ brother/daughter/son of a politician, Attribute 14 (somebody to be feared of) and Attribute 15 (allows divorce).

Comparing the results of the FGDs that were conducted by age groups reveals diverse views toward the qualities of a political leader. The younger generation pays more attention and detail to the educational background of the candidate. They are conscious of the candidates' cognitive advantage as well as his awareness of political and social issues. While the older respondents were not so conscious on the scholastic background of the candidates but were much concerned on how the candidate will perform once elected and deliver his promises as stated in his platform; and how a candidate would relate to people from all walks of life especially the needy.

Figure 2. Perceptual Map of the Attributes of the Presidential/Vice Presidential with respect to Educational Attainment

Figure 2 shows that the Cebuano voters who were high school and college graduates had the same preferences of characteristics of a

presidentiable/vice presidentiable. These preferences were of Attribute 3 (introduced himself/herself through advertisements in TV), Attribute 6 (from

prestigious universities like UP, Ateneo or De La Salle), Attribute 10 (candidate of a party they were supporting), Attribute 22 (a relative) and Attribute 23 (endorsed by their religious group leader). Preferences of Cebuano voters who were vocational graduates were Attribute 4 (from the military) and Attribute 15 (allows divorce). Those who were elementary graduates Cebuano voters preferred Attribute 7 (wife/husband /sister/brother/daughter/son of a politician) and Attribute 24 (dictated by their religious group leader).

Both groups agreed that popularity had nothing to do with their choice of candidates. In fact, in the 2004 presidential election, Fernando Poe Jr. did not win in Cebu against Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Cebuano voters thought that GMA had superior characteristics in terms of educational attainment and experience in politics.
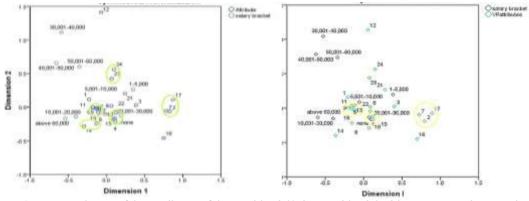

Figure 3. Perceptual Map of the Attributes of the Presidential/Vice Presidential with respect to Salary Bracket

Figure 3 shows that the Cebuano voters with no salary or the monthly salary bracket 20,001 to 30,000 pesos had the same characteristics preference of a presidentiable/vice presidentiable. These were Attribute 4 (from the military), Attribute 10 (candidate of the party they were supporting) and Attribute 15 (allows divorce). Cebuano voters with salary brackets 5,001 to 10,000 pesos had the following preferences: Attribute 23 (endorsed by the religious group leader) and Attribute 24 (dictated by their religious group leader). While those receiving salary between 10,001 to 20,000 pesos preferred Attribute 5 (graduated college), Attribute 9 (has served as a senator/congressman/any other positions in politics) and Attribute 13 (does not blame others for his/her mistakes).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Generally, Cebuano voters have distinct characteristics as that of other cultural/regional voters. They are unpredictable. They are looking at the quality of the candidates running regardless of religion and party affiliation. They used social linkages in developing and molding a Cebuano vote.

The Canonical Correlation Analysis concludes that there is a significant relationship between the preferred characteristics of a presidentiable/vice presidentiable and all demographic profiles of the respondents. The degree of relationships was different across the demographic profile. That is, there is a strong relationship between the age bracket and preferences. Also, there is a strong relationship between preferences and educational attainment. The relationship between preferences and sex is moderate while the relationship between the salary bracket and preferences is weak. It concludes also that sex is the only variable that differs significantly in choosing a Vice President who has the same or not the same political party as that of the President.

Correspondence Analysis concludes which of the preferences belong to the demographic profile. Older respondents had different preferences compared to younger respondents. Higher levels of educational attainment had different preferences against respondents with lower levels of educational attainment. Cebuano voters with no salary (referring to full-time housewives and high school students) and high salary brackets have different preferences from those with low salary brackets. Being male or female Cebuano electorate has no bearing at all in the characteristic preference of a candidate.

This study did not take into account the political dynasty and celebrity endorsement as factors that influence the votes of Cebuano. These factors can be explored in another study.

To further explore how the Cebuanos votes, another study will be conducted on the voting behavior towards the selection of senators and local government candidates such as the mayor/vice mayor, governor/vice governor and district representatives.

Since the population frame considered in this study is just the residents of Cebu Province, Cebuano-speaking voters from other provinces of Region 7 such as Bohol, Negros Oriental and Siquijor will be included.

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