

Assessment of the Election Participation of Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan: Towards Strengthened Citizens' Engagement for the Upcoming Elections

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Abstract

The researcher sought to assess the election participation of overseas Filipinos in Taiwan in terms of registration and election, as well as the challenges faced by Commission on Elections (COMELEC) and Manila Economic and Cultural Offices (MECOs), and the proposed recommendations to strengthen citizens' engagement. The researcher used a mixed method approach, specifically utilizing the Triangulation Design under the Convergence Model. This design combines elements of quantitative and qualitative research to answer the research questions. Applying purposive and snowball sampling techniques, a survey questionnaire was distributed to overseas Filipinos in Taiwan to assess their election participation. On the other hand, judgmental technique was used to gather qualitative data through series of interviews from key participants of the COMELEC and MECOs. The researcher analyzed the results using different statistical treatments, such as simple percentage, ordinal simple percentage, weighted mean, qualitative data analysis and narrative analysis. The study revealed that the factors affecting the election participation of the overseas Filipinos in Taiwan were time constraints, limited access to voting centers, lack of information, and lack of interest which contributes to the statistical gaps in the voter turnout from 2004 to 2022 National Election Overseas, with an average of seventy percent (70%) of overseas voters who did not vote. This result weakened the citizen engagement of the overseas Filipinos in Taiwan with respect to registration and election processes. The study also showed that there were additional challenges faced and encountered by the COMELEC, especially the Office for Overseas Voting (OFOV), and MECOs, such as manpower and logistics constraints, low turnout rate due to lack of awareness and information by the overseas Filipinos in Taiwan, limited locations of registration and voting centers, lack of interest to vote, unavailability of the overseas Filipinos in programs and forums, modes of voting adopted, and existing laws on in-person registration and voting requirement. This study recommended various activities, reforms and programs to strengthen the citizen engagement of the overseas Filipinos in Taiwan.

Keywords: election participation, voter's registration, Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan, citizen engagement, Manila Economic and Cultural Offices (MECOs), Commission on Election (COMELEC)



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INTRODUCTION

The participation of the public in an electoral process is crucial to the legitimacy, responsiveness, and efficiency of public administration. A purposeful attempt to include citizen in decision making processes in development public policies, programs, and services is known as Citizen Participation Intervention (CPI) can be made by governments, organizations, or communities (Palma, 2023). As a democratic nation, the Philippines permits its citizens living abroad to exercise their right to vote under Republic Act No. 9189, also known as "The Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003," as revised by Republic Act No. 10590, popularly

known as "The Overseas Voting Act of 2013." According to Section 3 of The Overseas Voting Act of 2013, eligible Filipino nationals living abroad may exercise their right to vote through the method known as overseas voting.

The Commission on Elections or COMELEC authorized to utilize and optimize the use of existing facilities, personnel, and mechanisms of the various government agencies for purposes of data gathering and validation, information dissemination and facilitation of the registration process (Section 11 of The Overseas Voting Act of 2013). To make the registration process convenient and accessible to the public, the COMELEC designated different Local

Field Registrations in the Philippines wherein it shall be in the different government agencies, such as Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Migrant Workers, COMELEC on Filipinos Overseas and Maritime Industry Authority, who provides services to Filipinos bound abroad. This is to allow Filipinos who are still processing their documents and subject for departure abroad to register as an overseas voter prior to their deployment thus making the process more convenient and accessible. The COMELEC also deputized the MECOs in Taiwan or referred as Posts (Section 2 of COMELEC Resolution No. 10833) to conduct overseas voter registration and election. The MECOs cater to the needs of overseas Filipinos in Taiwan including the system of registration and overseas voting.

In Taiwan, all offices of the MECO conducts overseas registration and voting across the country. These offices are located in Taipei, Kaohsiung and Taichung were most of the Filipinos are located. The historical data on the result and mode of voting of overseas voting in Taiwan are illustrative below:

Table 1
Statistical data on Number of Overseas Voters with Voters' Turnout and Mode of Voting in Taiwan

Election Year	MECO Taipei			MECO Kaohsiung			MECO Taichung			Modes of Voting
	No. of OV	Turnout	%	No. of OV	Turnout	%	No. of OV	Turnout	%	
2004	6,682	2,977	44.55	3,330	2,214	66.49	1,597	833	52.16	Personal Voting, Manual
2007	9,964	1,205	12.09	4,533	612	13.50	2,770	595	21.48	Postal Voting, Manual
2010	12,225	2,227	18.22	6,009	1,133	18.86	4,451	856	19.23	Personal Voting, Manual
2013	10,772	1,200	11.14	5,165	946	18.32	5,004	699	13.97	Personal Voting, Manual
2016	12,210	4,388	35.94	11,410	5,136	45.01	7,478	3,523	47.11	Personal Voting, Manual
2019	18,017	3,761	20.87	14,088	3,026	21.48	9,355	2,526	27.00	Personal Voting, Automated Election System
2022	48,010	16,262	33.87	24,769	10,540	42.55	-	-	-	Personal and Postal Voting, Automated Election System

Source: Commission on Elections - Office for Overseas Voting and Commission on Elections Website

Based on Table 1, the studies would like to assess the factors that contributes to the low participation or engagement of overseas Filipinos in Taiwan in the electoral process even though they are given 30-day voting period pursuant to Section 3 of the Overseas Voting Act of 2013.

LITERATURES

Overseas Voting. In 1948 United Nations General Assembly, it adopted the Universal declaration of Human Rights which "recognizes the integral role that transparent and open elections play in

ensuring the fundamental right to participatory government" (United Nations, 1948). Furthermore, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Article 21 states: "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his/her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country" (United Nations, 1948).

Article 21, Item 3, of the Universal declaration states that "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedures ("Universal Declaration of Human Rights," 1948).

From this point of view, exercising the right of suffrage is considered as the basic right however not everybody has that level of appreciation on what this right really implies.

Factors Affecting Participation of Voters in Elections. Studies of political participation in the United States and elsewhere confirm the fact that those who participate in voting differ from individuals who participate in other kinds of political activity. 'As we move through our analysis, we shall see that, with respect to every single aspect of participation we scrutinize, voting is fundamentally different from other acts'. (Verba, et al (1995).

However, with the rights of voting some or most Filipino citizens are not willing to exercise their right. Akers (2016) wrote an article and stated that by not voting people are contributing to bad government. He also stated that "without competition, value tends to decline; the quality of the product or service goes down, the price goes up, or both."

Based on the study of Suranto et al. (2015) on the Factors Determine Voter's Participation in Bantul Regency Election, "election is an important element of democracy. As a consequence of a democracy, post-New Order Indonesia held four legislative elections regularly that were held in 1999, 2004, 2009, and

2014 and presidential elections in 2004, 2009, and 2014. In order to strengthen the legitimacy of local government head, Indonesia also held direct local executive election since 2005 onward. World have nevertheless admitted that the first Post-New Order 1999 was a peaceful, fair and free election, met the global democracy standard with an impressive voter's participation, reaching 92,7% of voter's turnout. The subsequent elections also performed alike, strengthen assumption that Indonesia has remarkably succeeded in making a democratic leap. (Soebagio, 2008). Unfortunately, election in Indonesia still faces challenges to tackle, which one of those is the decline in voter participation. But in the middle of national trend, Bantul booked an anomaly. Participation level in Bantul also always higher compared to the national average. Nevertheless, Bantul still face a problem of participation discrepancy. For instance, Triwidadi village booked 87.7% voter's turn out in 2014 legislative election, but in Banguntapan village only booked 74.3% of participation within the election. Considering the fact, it is important to figure out factors influencing electoral participation among the Bantulese. By identifying the factors, we might draw a certain pattern that could be a recommendation to the Bantul electoral commission to develop a right policy. The factors determine high level of voter's participation in Bantul Regency are as follows: (1) political affiliation of closest relations; (2) participation stimulus; (3) tight social control; (4) voter's mobilization; (5) The concern of societal institution. Meanwhile the factors hamper voter's participation are as follows: (1) The saturation of voters toward elections; (2) Less-frequent and less-innovative socialization; (3) less- accurate voter data gathering; (4) the lack of social bond and control; (5) pragmatism."

Recommendations on How to Strengthen Citizens' Engagement. There are various articles and conducted studies on how to increase voter's turnout. In the article "Increasing Voter Turnout: What, If Anything, Can Be Done", it suggested that candidate's personalities and electoral competitiveness affects turnout. The author emphasized that:

The recent Grand Old Party (GOP) turnout "explosion" suggests that candidate personalities and electoral competitiveness may have a much bigger effect on turnout than many structural interventions, but these factors are also high impossible to control. Nonpartisan opportunities to improve turnout among specific groups, or for specific types of elections, may offer more hope. And, to end on an optimistic note, voting is sticky: 30 to 50 percent of the people who turn out due to GOTV efforts in one election will continue to vote in future elections. Moreover, although much research has been done on the impact of individual interventions on turnout, there is no way of telling what the cumulative effect of structural reforms might be. Perhaps, more than the sum of these parts.

In the end, whatever one's views on whether government should be larger or smaller, an effective government remains the most viable mechanism for achieving social impact at scale, and getting Americans to vote for representatives who support their interests matters for any of the outcomes we care about. (Born, 2016).

In order to encourage more voters to participate in the elections, the accessibility and mode of voting is vital key to success. The conduct of overseas voting is done thru mail or personal appearance depending on the accessibility of the embassy to the voters. Different countries recognize the importance of overseas ballot and employed a mix of the different methods.

METHODS

The researcher used a mixed method approach, which combines elements of quantitative research and qualitative research to answer the research questions. Mixed method helped the researcher gain a more complete picture than a standalone quantitative or qualitative study, as it integrates benefits of both methods (George, 2023). In order to analyze the study's data, the researcher used a "Triangulation Design" of the Mixed Method. Also, to determine the target population, non-probability sampling technique was applied. To gather an optimal sample size,

Slovin's formula was used to calculate the minimum sample size needed to estimate a statistic based on an acceptable margin of error (Zach, 2023).

Based on the data provided by the COMELEC, there were 56,589 overseas voters in Taiwan as of 31 December 2023. Using Slovin's formula, with 10% margin of error, a total of 100 respondents were proportionately distributed to each jurisdiction of MECOs in Taiwan to achieve fair and accurate representation: 27 respondents (27.35%) from MECO Kaohsiung; 23 respondents (22.86%) from MECO Taichung; and, 50 respondents (49.79%) from MECO Taipei. Ethical consent were acquired from respondents to ensure proper and ethical gathering of data.

Table 2
Proportional distribution of respondents under the jurisdictions of MECOs in Taiwan, (N=100).

MECO	Jurisdictions	No. of Overseas Voters as of December 2023	Proportional Distribution per MECO	%
MECO Kaohsiung	Chiayi City; Chiayi County; Tainan City; Kaohsiung City; Taitung County; Pingtung County; Penghu County; Kinmen County; Lienchiang County	15,480	27	27.35
MECO Taichung	Miaoli County; Taichung City; Changhua County; Nantou County; Yunlin County	12,935	23	22.86
MECO Taipei	Taipei City; New Taipei City; Taoyuan City; Keelung City; Taoyuan County and Hsinchu County; Hsinchu City	28,174	50	49.79
Total		56,589	100	100.0

Employing a non-probability sampling, the key participants for the interview were employees of COMELEC's Office for Overseas Voting (OFOV) (n = 8) and Manila Economic and Cultural Offices (MECOs) (n = 1) who served and overseen the conduct of overseas voting and registration. Qualitative data were collected through interview. They were also chosen using a judgmental sampling technique of which their suitability for participation was determined by their qualifications and level of expertise (Fleetwood, 2020). The factors and challenges, together with the strategies and interventions regarding the study, were acquired during the interview.

In gathering the data, the researcher distributed the survey questionnaire through the assistance of COMELEC and MECO. Furthermore, the employees, serving as key participants for the interview, from the Office for Overseas Voting (OFOV) of the COMELEC and

Manila Economic and Cultural Offices (MECOs) in Taipei, Taiwan were interviewed to gather qualitative data using an interview guide. The researcher sent Letters to OFOV and MECO to request for their consent and schedule for the interview. The researcher also used document analysis to interpret secondary data such as laws, COMELEC's resolutions pertaining to overseas voting, and other related literature.

The research used simple percentage, ordinal scale of measurement, weighted mean, qualitative data analysis and thematic analysis to interpret the gathered data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presented in Table 3 are the statistics of registered and non-registered overseas voters in Taiwan. Based on Taiwan's Ministry of Labor's statistical data on the number of foreign workers in Productive Industries and Social Welfare by Nationality and Sex as of the end of December 2023, there were 149,371 Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan, 87,848 of whom were females and 61,523 males.

Table 3
Comparative statistics of registered and non-registered overseas voters in Taiwan

Category	Male	%	Female	%	Total
Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan	61,523	41.19%	87,848	58.81%	149,371
Registered Overseas Voter	16,509	29.17%	40,080	70.83%	56,589
Difference	45,014		47,768		92,782

Data is as of 31 December 2023.

On the other hand, the COMELEC also maintains data on Overseas Filipinos who are registered as overseas voters. As of the end of December 2023, there were 56,589 registered overseas voters, 40,080 of whom were female and 16,509 males. Below is the comparative statistical table of overseas Filipinos in Taiwan and registered overseas voters.

There was a statistical gap of 92,782 or 62% of Overseas Filipinos who are not yet registered overseas voters, and it is evident that there were more Female overseas Filipinos and overseas voters than males.

Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, years in Taiwan and registration status. Based on the findings above, eighty percent (80%) of Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan who participated in the study were aged 28 to 43, while twelve percent (12%) were aged 44 to 59, and eight percent (8%) were aged 18 to 27. This signified that they were qualified to register as overseas voters and exercise their right of suffrage.

Most of the participants were female, comprising fifty-five percent (55%) in the study, which means a majority of overseas Filipinos in Taiwan were female. Also, forty-four percent (44%) were male, and one percent (1%) preferred not to divulge their gender. This result is not new since there was fifty-nine percent (59%) female while forty-one (41%) were male based on the total population of overseas Filipinos in Taiwan.

Table 4

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, years in Taiwan and registration status, (N=100).

Category	Frequency	%
Age		
18 to 27 years-old	9	8.00%
28 to 43 years-old	80	80.00%
44 to 59 years-old	12	12.00%
Total:	100	100%
Gender		
Male	44	44.00%
Female	55	55.00%
Prefer not to say	1	1.00%
Total:	100	100%
Educational Attainment		
High School Graduate	21	21.00%
Vocational Course Graduate	19	19.00%
Undergraduate	17	17.00%
College Graduate	42	42.00%
Doctorate Degree Holder	1	1.00%
Total:	100	100.00%
Years of Stay in Taiwan		
below 1 year	1	1.00%
1 to 3 years	26	26.00%
3 to 6 years	32	32.00%
more than 6 years	41	41.00%
Total:	100	100%
Registration Status	Frequency	%
Registered Overseas Voter	58	58.00%
Not Registered Overseas Voter	42	42.00%
Total:	100	100.00%

Most of the Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan were College graduates, comprising forty-two percent (42%) in the study, emphasizing that the majority of college-graduate Filipinos were still

looking for better opportunities in a foreign land. Twenty-one percent (21%) high school graduates, nineteen percent (19%) vocational course graduates, seventeen percent (17%) did not finish their degree, and one percent (1%) earned a doctorate degree. None of the respondents reached primary education, while only 1% reached a master's degree. According to the Ministry of Labor in Taiwan, the foreign workers for special professions or technical assignments in Taiwan by the end of April 2024 mostly graduated junior college sixty-six percent (66%) and few were in senior school, graduated in master's and doctorate with nineteen percent (19%), eleven percent (11%) and three percent (3%) respectively. This evidently supports the findings of the study that most of the Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan are College graduates.

Most of the Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan were College graduates, comprising forty-two percent (42%) in the study, emphasizing that the majority of college-graduate Filipinos were still looking for better opportunities in a foreign land. Twenty-two percent (22%) high school graduates, nineteen percent (19%) vocational course graduates, sixteen percent (16%) did not finish their degree, and one percent (1%) earned a doctorate degree. None of the respondents reached primary education, while only 1% reached a master's degree. According to the Ministry of Labor in Taiwan, the foreign workers for special professions or technical assignments in Taiwan by the end of April 2024 mostly graduated junior college sixty-six percent (66%) and few were in senior school, graduated in master's and doctorate with nineteen percent (19%), eleven percent (11%) and three percent (3%) respectively. This evidently supports the findings of the study that most of the Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan are College graduates.

Based on the findings, eighty percent (80%) of Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan participated in the study aged 28 to 43, while twelve percent (12%) were aged 44 to 59, and eight percent (8%) were aged 18 to 27. This signified that they were qualified to register as overseas voters and exercise their right of suffrage. This result is

evident to the records of the COMELEC's OFOV as of 31 December 2023 that eighty-three percent (83%) actual overseas voters in Taiwan aged 28 to 43 years old. There were also a few actual overseas voters aged 44 to 59 years old and 18 to 27 years old, with thirteen percent (13%) and three percent (3%), respectively.

Table 5

Frequency and percentage distribution of registered voters in terms of age, gender, educational information, years of stay in Taiwan, registration place, voting experience, frequency of voting exercise and election years, (N=58).

Category	Frequency	% or Rank
Age		
18 to 27 years-old	3	5.17%
28 to 43 years-old	51	87.93%
44 to 59 years-old	4	6.90%
Total:	58	100%
Gender		
Male	24	41.38%
Female	34	58.62%
Total:	58	100%
Educational Attainment		
High School Graduate	14	24.14%
Vocational Course Graduate	9	15.52%
Undergraduate	13	22.41%
College Graduate	21	36.21%
Doctorate Degree Holder	1	1.72%
Total:	58	100%
Years in Taiwan		
1 to 3 years	19	32.76%
3 to 6 years	22	37.93%
more than 6 years	17	29.31%
Total:	58	100%
Registration Place		
MECO Taipei	26	44.83%
MECO Kaohsiung	15	25.86%
MECO Taichung	17	29.31%
Total:	58	100%
Voting Experience		
Voted	24	41.38%
Did not Vote	34	58.62%
Total:	58	100%
Frequency of Voting Exercise		
3	2	8.33%
2	6	25.00%
1	16	66.67%
Total:	58	100%
Election Years*		
2022 National Elections	17	1 st
2019 National Elections	13	2 nd
2016 National Elections	2	3 rd
2013 National Elections	1	4 th
Total:	58	100%

Most of the overseas voters' respondents in Taiwan were college graduates, comprising thirty-six percent (36%) in the study, emphasizing that the majority of college-graduate Filipinos were more interested in participating in the electoral process. There were twenty-four percent (24%) high school graduates, twenty-two percent (22%) did not finish their degree, fifteen percent (16%) vocational course graduates, and two percent (2%) earned a doctorate degree.

Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the participants have been in Taiwan for more than three (3) years, followed by below three (3) years with thirty-three percent (33%), and at least less than six (6) with twenty-nine percent (29%). This indicates that those Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan with contracts that overlapped in the registration and election periods were registered as overseas voters, thus having higher chances of elector engagement.

Among these registered overseas Filipino voters in Taiwan, forty-five percent (45%) were voters registered in MECO Taipei. The jurisdictions under the area of responsibility of MECO Taipei include Taipei City, New Taipei City, Taoyuan City, Keelung City, Taoyuan County, and Hsinchu County Hsinchu City. Twenty-six percent (26%) were voters registered in MECO Kaohsiung, which jurisdictions in Chiayi City, Chiayi County, Tainan City, Kaohsiung City, Taitung County, Pingtung County, Penghu County, Kinmen County, Lienchiang County. Twenty-nine percent (29%) were registered in MECO Taichung, with jurisdictions in Miaoli County, Taichung City, Changhua County, Nantou County, and Yunlin County. This suggested that Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan were still willing to register and participate in elections. Further, data indicated that a greater proportion of Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan were close to MECO Taipei than to MECOs Kaohsiung and Taichung.

Their decision to engage in the electoral process resulted in forty-one percent (41%) participating in the Philippine Elections Overseas, while the majority did not participate with fifty-nine percent (59%). This is not new

since, based on the historical data provided by the COMELEC's OFOV, the average election turnout of overseas voting in Taiwan from 2004 to 2022 National Elections Overseas is only thirty percent (30%) of all the registered overseas voters. This signifies a weak participation in the electoral process. The weak participation of the Overseas Filipinos was influenced by different factors, which will be presented in Table 6. In terms of their frequency of voting exercise, the majority only participated once in the Philippine Election Overseas with sixty-seven percent (67%) and few participated twice and thrice in the election with twenty-five percent (25%) and eight percent (8%) respectively. Most of them participated in the recent 2022 National Elections Overseas or Presidential Elections as they carry the highest weight in terms of significance or relevance. This indicates that the respondents consider the 2022 National Elections to be the most important or impactful since the election for overseas voting was conducted. This signifies that due to the high mobility of overseas Filipinos and their length of stay in the foreign land, they can only experience at least one Philippine election overseas and disenfranchisement, leading to weak participation in the electoral process. While the impact is low for the 2019 National Elections Overseas or Midterm Elections, 2016 National Elections Overseas, and 2013 National Elections Overseas or Midterm Elections.

Table 6 lists down the factors and challenges perceived by the respondents and key participants in terms of registration and elections.

The factors identified by the respondents and key participants in the registration and election processes were similar. In the middle levels of the spectrum of public participation, the limited access to registration centers and difficulty in the registration process hinder overseas Filipinos from providing input or feedback in the registration and electoral process. Their involvement may be limited due to these barriers. In terms of collaboration, collaborative efforts be made between the COMELEC and MECO and overseas Filipinos to

provide better access to registration centers and election venues, simplify the registration and election process, and disseminate information effectively could enhance overseas Filipinos' engagement in the electoral process.

Table 6
Factors and challenges as perceived by the respondents and key participants in terms of registration and elections

Registration Factors and Challenges			
No	Factors perceived by the Respondents	Challenges of the Institutions from the Citizens	Challenges of the Institution
01	Time constraints due to work or personal commitments	Unavailability due to time constraints	In-person registration process as a requirement of the law Location of the registration centers In-person registration process as a requirement of the law
02	Registration centers are too far from place of residence	Limited access to the registration centers	Logistical concerns in setting up registration centers, conducting outreach campaigns, and organizing voter education sessions Conduct of limited awareness and information campaigns
03	Lack of information on the registration process	Lack of awareness and information	Logistical concerns in setting up registration centers, conducting outreach campaigns, and organizing voter education sessions
04	Difficulty in the process of registration as an overseas voter	Educational attainment and skills Unavailability of mailing address in Taiwan Last minute decision to register	In-person registration process as a requirement of the law No real-time data sharing of Overseas Voters database Lack of manpower
05	Not interested at all	Lack of interest Political interest	Statistical gaps Conduct of limited awareness and information campaigns
Election Challenges			
No	Factors perceived by the Respondents	Challenges of the Institutions from the Citizens	Challenges of the Institution
01	Time constraints due to work or personal commitments	Unavailability due to time constraints	Modes of voting adopted
02	The polling centers or voting venues are too far from my place of residence	Limited access to the voting centers	Limited locations of the registration centers
03	Lack of information on National candidates and issues	Lack of awareness and information	Conducted limited information dissemination Statistical gaps
04	Not interested at all	Lack of interest Limited term of work contracts Political interest	Conducted limited information dissemination Modes of voting adopted Limited locations of the registration centers

Table 7 presents the initiatives of the key participants to address the factors in terms of Registration and Elections. To address the factors enumerated for the registration process, the key participants conduct satellite registration in the different agencies offering the PDOS in addition to the Field Registration Center. They also conduct outreach and mobile registrations in the different dormitories and churches in Taiwan. During the said registration activities, the key participants discuss the importance of voting, which is a form of voter education. To make the registration lenient to the availability of Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan, MECOs are open every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. Strengthened partnerships with other agencies and civic organizations and conduct of

dialogues with Filipino Communities are also implemented. A voter care center via email and messenger of both institutions is available to promptly address the concerns of all overseas Filipinos. A recent move to lift the fee of voter certification was also implemented as a government incentive.

Table 7
Measures and initiative of the key participants to address the factors perceived by the respondents in terms of Registration and Elections

Registration				
No	Factors	Measures employed by the COMELEC and MECO	Measures the believed by the Respondents	Additional Insights of Key Informants
01	Time constraints of overseas Filipinos	Conduct of outreach or mobile registrations MECO is open every 1 st and 3 rd Sundays of the month Strengthened partnership with other agencies and civic organizations	Online registration	Embed overseas voting registration to other services for Overseas Filipinos
02	Limited access to the registration centers	Conduct of outreach or mobile registrations Conduct of dialogues with Filipino Community leaders	Online registration More accessible registration and election venues	Embed overseas voting registration to other services for Overseas Filipinos
03	Lack of information	Conduct of massive voter education, information campaigns and awareness, and infomercials Conduct of "MECO live" every Friday Strengthened partnership with other agencies and civic organizations	More Voter Education & Awareness Activities Provision of Government Incentives	Use of audio-visual guides All year-round conduct of voter education Incorporation of voter education to different orientation of Filipinos bound abroad
04	Difficulty of the registration process	Availability of Voter Care Center via email and facebook messenger	Easy and Convenient Registration and Voting Process Provision to Allow Overseas Voters Vote Local Candidates	Revisit the registration period vis-à-vis period of filing of candidacy
05	Lack of interest	Issuance of Voter Certification for Free	Mandate all Overseas Filipinos to Register and Vote	Revisit the registration period vis-à-vis period of filing of candidacy
Election				
No	Factors	Measures employed by the COMELEC and MECO	Measures the believed by the Respondents	Additional Insights of Key Informants
01	Time constraints	New mode of voting - Online Voting	Easy and Convenient Registration and Voting Process	
02	Limited access to the voting centers	New mode of voting - Online Voting	More accessible registration and election venues	Adopt best practices
03	Lack of information	Improved voter education, information campaigns Availability of Online Portal Strengthened partnership with other agencies and civic organizations	More Voter Education & Awareness Activities	Use of audio-visual guides Ensure that no fraudulent links for online voting All year-round conduct of voter education Incorporation of voter education to different orientation of Filipinos bound abroad
04	Lack of interest	New mode of voting - Online Voting Improved voter education, information campaigns	Provision to Allow Overseas Voters Vote Local Candidates Provision of Government Incentives Mandate all Overseas Filipinos to Register and Vote	Reform of Elections Laws: Allow Overseas Voters Vote Local Candidates

On the other hand, to address the factors enumerated in terms of election participation, the key participants approved the implementation of an online mode of voting in Taiwan for the 2025 National Elections. Improved voter education and information

campaigns will be conducted through partnerships with different agencies sharing the same clientele and other civic organizations.

There were also measures that should be implemented to strengthen citizens' engagement. These are (1) embedding overseas voting registration and its voter education and awareness campaigns to services offered by other government agencies sharing the same clientele through a Memorandum of Agreement or Understanding which can mandate all Overseas Filipinos to register as an overseas voter, (2) provision of free shuttle services to register and vote at MECOs, (3) use of audiovisual guides and incorporation of voter education in the PDOS, (4) filing of candidacy for national positions within the registration period, and (5) reforms in the law to allow online registration through data sharing agreement with DFA and APO and expanding the voting rights until local elective positions.

Conclusion. In conclusion, this study provides insights about the engagement of Overseas Filipinos in Taiwan in the election participation for Philippine Elections Overseas. Through thorough analysis of literature and data gathered from surveys and interviews, the study provides valuable insights into the demographic profile, engagement in registration and election campaigns and activities of Overseas Filipinos, and challenges faced together with the strategies and interventions implemented by the COMELEC's OFOV and MECO in facilitating overseas voting.

The demographic profile revealed that most respondents were within the millennial age group, predominantly females, with a bachelor's degree or college graduate education level, and residing in Taiwan for more than 6 years. While a significant portion were registered as overseas voters, a lower percentage exercised their right to vote, mainly in the 2022 National Elections.

The factors identified by the respondents and key participants in the registration and election processes are similar. In the middle levels of

the spectrum of public participation, the limited access to registration centers and difficulty in the registration process hinder overseas Filipinos from providing input or feedback in the registration and electoral process. Their involvement may be limited due to these barriers. In terms of collaboration, collaborative efforts be made between the COMELEC and MECO and overseas Filipinos to provide better access to registration centers and election venues, simplify the registration and election process, and disseminate information effectively could enhance overseas Filipinos' engagement in the electoral process. This concludes that the factors identified have a significant influence on weak citizens' engagement.

The COMELEC and MECO also employed strategies to address the factors enumerated, such as the conduct of satellite registration in the different agencies offering the PDOS in addition to the Field Registration Centers, the conduct of outreach and mobile registrations in the different dormitories and churches in Taiwan, MECOs are open every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. Strengthened partnerships with other agencies and civic organizations and conduct of dialogues with Filipino Communities are also implemented. A voter care center via email and messenger of both institutions is available to promptly address the concerns of all Overseas Filipinos. A recent move to lift the fee of voter certification was also implemented as a government incentive. The COMELEC also approved the implementation of an online mode of voting in Taiwan for the 2025 National Elections. Improved voter education and information campaigns will be conducted through partnerships with different agencies sharing the same clientele and other civic organizations. Additionally, plans for future improvements include introducing online voting, enhancing voter education through social media platforms, launching real-time data sharing of overseas voter information and status, embedding overseas voting registration to other government services for overseas Filipinos, revisiting the registration period, and reforming overseas voting laws.

Finally, this study emphasizes the importance of continuous efforts to promote citizens' participation in the electoral process among overseas Filipinos in Taiwan. By understanding their demographics, preferences, and challenges, targeted interventions can be devised to ensure a more inclusive and accessible electoral system, fostering a stronger connection between Filipinos Overseas and their homeland and achieving strengthened citizens' engagement in the electoral process.

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