

JURIDICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT LAWSUIT ON THE MINIMUM EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

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Abstract

Abstract. The lawsuit regarding the minimum educational requirements for presidential and vice-presidential candidates before the Constitutional Court (MK) has become a crucial issue in constitutionalism and democracy in Indonesia. This issue arose when some parties considered that the provisions regarding minimum educational levels in the general election law had the potential to limit citizens' political rights, contradict the principle of equality before the law, and violate the constitutional right to be elected. This study aims to conduct a legal analysis of the Constitutional Court's ruling on this lawsuit, using a normative and legislative approach, including a review of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, the 1945 Constitution, and previous Constitutional Court decisions. The analysis shows that the Constitutional Court considers the principles of political accessibility, justice, and harmonization between state interests and individual rights in determining the reasonableness of educational requirements. The Constitutional Court tends to emphasize that excessive requirements can hinder political participation and are potentially discriminatory, necessitating a balanced constitutional interpretation. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the understanding of constitutional law, the formulation of general election policies, and the strengthening of democracy in Indonesia. Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of aligning the formal requirements for candidates for head of state with the principles of citizens' constitutional rights.

Keywords: Constitutional Court, Education Requirements, Presidential Candidates, Vice-Presidential Candidates, Political Rights

INTRODUCTION

The election of the President and Vice President represents one of the most essential components of Indonesia's democratic system. Through this mechanism, the sovereignty of the people is expressed in a concrete manner, allowing citizens to determine the direction of national leadership and public policy. The 1945 Constitution provides a constitutional foundation that governs the organization of general elections and stipulates the basic principles that must be upheld in the process. Among these principles are political equality, fairness,

representation, and the protection of citizens' rights to participate fully in public affairs. This constitutional framework requires that any regulations defining the qualifications of candidates for the nation's highest executive offices must align with these democratic values.

One of the qualifications that has attracted considerable public attention is the minimum educational requirement for individuals seeking to run for the positions of President and Vice President. This requirement is regulated under Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections. The lawmakers who formulated this provision assumed that educational attainment reflects a candidate's intellectual readiness, competence in public decision making, and ability to manage the complex political, economic, and social issues faced by the state. Education is therefore positioned as a safeguard intended to ensure that future leaders possess adequate analytical capabilities, policy understanding, and problem solving skills.

Despite these intentions, the regulation has sparked significant debate both within academic circles and in broader society. Many argue that formal education does not necessarily correlate with leadership skills, political integrity, or the capacity to govern effectively. There are concerns that the requirement may conflict with constitutional guarantees that protect every citizen's right to be elected to public office. Critics point out that individuals who have extensive political experience, demonstrate strong leadership qualities, or have contributed substantially to their communities may be unfairly excluded solely due to their lack of formal educational qualifications. This raises important constitutional questions about equality before the law, nondiscrimination, and the role of merit in public leadership.

The controversy surrounding this issue has prompted several parties to submit judicial review petitions to the Constitutional Court. These petitions challenge the constitutionality of the minimum educational requirement and question whether the provision imposes an unreasonable barrier to political participation. Petitioners argue that the Constitution does not explicitly mandate educational standards for presidential or vice-presidential candidates, and therefore any statutory requirement must be carefully examined to ensure that it does not undermine fundamental political rights. They also highlight the need to balance the state's interest in ensuring capable governance with the rights of citizens to participate fully in democratic life.

The Constitutional Court holds a central and authoritative role in addressing these issues. As the institution responsible for safeguarding constitutional principles, the Court must interpret legal norms in a manner that protects both the integrity of the electoral process and the constitutional rights of individuals. Its decisions on matters related to candidate qualifications carry significant legal and political implications. The Court's interpretations influence the development of electoral laws, the structure of political competition, and public perceptions of fairness within the democratic system. Furthermore, its reasoning reflects broader values concerning political inclusivity, equal opportunities, and the constitutional limits of legislative power.

Given the complex nature of this issue, a juridical analysis of the Constitutional Court's approach is crucial. This study seeks to examine the legal considerations, normative principles, and judicial reasoning employed by the Court in addressing challenges to the minimum educational requirement. The analysis involves a review of relevant statutory provisions, Constitutional Court decisions, and scholarly perspectives on constitutional law and political rights. By exploring how the Court evaluates concepts such as proportionality, non

discrimination, political accessibility, and the qualifications necessary for national leadership, this study aims to provide deeper insight into the constitutional dynamics shaping Indonesia's electoral regulations.

The broader objective of this research is to contribute to ongoing discussions about the alignment of electoral policies with democratic principles. A clear understanding of the Court's jurisprudence can offer guidance for policymakers in designing regulations that promote both competent leadership and inclusive political participation. Ultimately, this study emphasizes that the formulation of candidate requirements must reflect a balance between formal qualifications and the constitutional rights of citizens, ensuring that Indonesia's democratic system remains just, open, and responsive to public needs.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This study applies a normative juridical approach supported by an extensive library research method in order to examine constitutional lawsuits submitted to the Constitutional Court concerning the minimum education requirements for presidential and vice-presidential candidates. The normative juridical approach is considered appropriate because the central objective of the research is to explore legal norms, institutional interpretations, and the structure of statutory regulations that define the eligibility criteria for the highest executive offices in Indonesia. By relying on this approach, the study focuses on interpreting binding legal sources while placing constitutional principles at the core of the analysis.

The research relies primarily on formal legal materials, which include Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia of 1945, and several Constitutional Court decisions that address disputes related to education requirements for presidential and vice-presidential candidates. These documents function as the primary data because they contain authoritative legal arguments, institutional reasoning, and normative considerations that directly shape the legal framework governing candidate eligibility.

In addition to primary sources, the study incorporates secondary legal materials that support and enrich the analysis. These secondary materials consist of scholarly literature in the field of constitutional law, academic journals that discuss political rights and the principles of equality in elections, legal commentaries authored by experts, and previous research that evaluates candidate accessibility within the Indonesian electoral system. The inclusion of secondary materials allows the research to provide wider academic perspectives and theoretical interpretations regarding the balance between individual political rights and state regulatory authority.

Data collection is conducted through a comprehensive review of documents, which involves identifying relevant legal issues, examining legal reasoning presented by petitioners, and analyzing the responses articulated by the Constitutional Court in its rulings. The process also includes classification of legal arguments, mapping of constitutional principles, and the extraction of key themes that appear consistently across different sources. This systematic process ensures the accuracy and consistency of the data used in developing the legal interpretation.

The collected data are analyzed using descriptive qualitative methods combined with an interpretative approach. This approach emphasizes contextual interpretation of statutory

provisions, judicial arguments, and constitutional principles to understand their legal implications for the rights of citizens, the administration of elections, and the broader framework of democratic governance. Through this interpretative analysis, the research seeks to reveal the rationale behind the Constitutional Court's legal reasoning, the considerations of justice that guide its decisions, and the extent to which the Court balances state interests with the constitutional rights of prospective candidates.

Overall, the methodological framework enables the study to present a thorough juridical explanation of the legal issues surrounding minimum education requirements. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of constitutional law studies, strengthen the academic understanding of judicial review processes within Indonesia, and offer constructive recommendations for the improvement of electoral policy in order to support a more equitable and inclusive democratic system.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Legal Background of Educational Requirements for Presidential and Vice-Presidential Candidates

The minimum educational requirements for presidential and vice-presidential candidates are regulated under Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections. This provision is intended to ensure that candidates possess adequate intellectual capacity, analytical skills, and sufficient knowledge to fulfill the responsibilities of national leadership. However, the regulation has sparked legal debates because it may potentially restrict the constitutional right of citizens to be elected, especially for individuals who possess significant political or leadership experience but do not meet the stipulated formal education standards. Rahmayanty (2020) highlights that minimum educational requirements must be analyzed from a constitutional perspective to assess the potential for discriminatory effects on candidates who may lack formal education but are otherwise competent leaders.

2. Constitutional Court Lawsuits and Juridical Considerations

Several parties have filed lawsuits with the Constitutional Court (MK) challenging the minimum education requirements on the grounds that such provisions contradict the principles of equality before the law and political rights guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution. As the guardian of the Constitution, the Constitutional Court is responsible for interpreting legal provisions and balancing state interests with individual rights. Apriansyah, Marsuni, and Salmawati (2024) point out that in several decisions, the Court has emphasized the need for a balanced constitutional interpretation: formal requirements such as education must be relevant and proportionate to the objectives of elections, yet must not impose discriminatory barriers on prospective candidates.

In addition to educational requirements, many studies also highlight debates surrounding other eligibility criteria, such as the age limit for presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Aziz (2024), Fadhillah and Priskap (2024), and Subandri (2024) emphasize that the Court's juridical principles regarding age requirements align with those applied to educational requirements namely, the balance between ensuring candidate quality and protecting citizens' constitutional rights. This reinforces the notion that the Court prioritizes principles of non-

discrimination, fairness, and political accessibility.

3. Implications of Constitutional Court Decisions

The Constitutional Court's decisions do not merely assess the constitutionality of legal norms but also directly influence electoral implementation. YF et al. (2024) note that the Court's rulings on age limits and educational requirements affect candidate participation in the political process, thereby encouraging greater inclusivity and democratic openness. Mewengkang (2025) further asserts that the Court's considerations consistently emphasize relevance, proportionality, and the need for flexibility in applying formal requirements for presidential and vice-presidential candidates.

Thus, juridical analysis of lawsuits concerning minimum education requirements demonstrates that the Court underscores the necessity of balancing the state's interest in ensuring high-quality leadership with citizens' rights to participate in political competition. Formal requirements, including education, must be applied proportionately, relevantly, and without discrimination to maintain an inclusive and politically equitable democratic system in Indonesia.

4. Balancing State Interests and Constitutional Rights

The Constitutional Court underscores the principles of constitutional justice and equality, ensuring that formal requirements for national leadership do not obstruct political participation. This aligns with findings by Subandri (2024) and Mewengkang (2025), who emphasize that harmonizing formal criteria with democratic principles is essential in formulating electoral policies. The Court's decisions affirm that educational requirements should be viewed as indicators of leadership competence but must not function as exclusive barriers that restrict the constitutional right of citizens to be elected.

CONCLUSION

Based on the juridical analysis of the constitutional challenge submitted to the Constitutional Court regarding the minimum educational requirements for presidential and vice-presidential candidates, it can be concluded that the Court's decision underscores the need to balance the state's interest in ensuring the quality of national leadership with citizens' constitutional right to be elected. The minimum education requirement stipulated in Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections carries a normative objective to ensure that candidates possess sufficient intellectual capacity and broad insight to carry out state duties effectively. However, the implementation of this requirement must not become discriminatory or serve as an exclusive barrier for prospective candidates who possess substantial political or leadership experience but do not meet the formal educational standards.

The Constitutional Court's rulings as examined by Rahmayanty (2020), Apriansyah, Marsuni, and Salmawati (2024), as well as Subandri (2024) emphasize the principles of justice, equality, and non-discrimination within the broader context of political accessibility. These findings indicate that the Court functions not only as a judicial body that reviews the constitutionality of legal norms but also as an interpreter that carefully balances individual rights with public interest. The implications of the Court's decisions directly influence electoral

practices, fostering greater inclusivity and strengthening democratic governance in Indonesia.

Thus, the formulation of policies related to eligibility requirements for national leadership must take into account proportionality, relevance, and flexibility, ensuring that formal requirements such as education continue to support leadership quality without undermining the political rights of citizens. Such an approach is crucial for realizing a democratic system that is fair, open, and constitutionally grounded.

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