#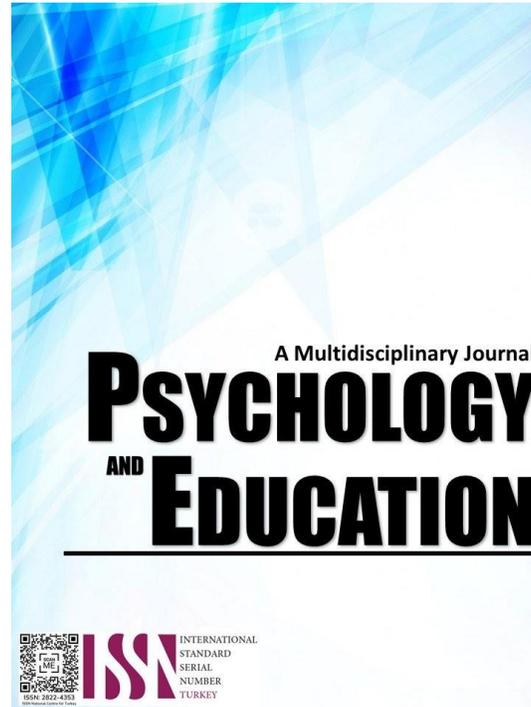 LEVEL OF PERCEPTION TOWARDS WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AMONG PERSONNEL AND STUDENTS OF A CATHOLIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Level of Perception Towards Women Political Participation Among Personnel and Students of a Catholic Senior High School

Arianne Angel R. Pillai,* Emerson B. Cumarat, Luiza V. Arellano, Frank Jaylord R. Felix,
Aizy Jerima P. Calantas, Lady Valen Charon A. Dela Peña, Humprey Ian O. Sagabaen,
Eloisa C. Barbieto, Mary Joy S. Mendoza
For affiliations and correspondence, see the last page.

Abstract

Filipino women have played notable roles, from revolutionaries challenging colonial powers to politicians advocating for social change. Despite progress in women's rights and political participation, challenges persist, as evidenced by instances of gender-based abuses during certain periods. This study aims to explore the level of perception of personnel and students in a Catholic Senior High School regarding women politicians. Specifically, it seeks to determine their perceptions and investigate significant differences based on gender, age, and religious affiliation. A mixed-method approach was applied, utilizing both quantitative questionnaires and qualitative short-response questions. The adapted questionnaires included items on the limits, characteristics, reasons, and factors influencing perceptions of women politicians. Results showed that staff and students generally have a favorable perception of women's participation in politics, with the majority viewing it as a positive and transformative change for society. Additionally, the study found a significant difference in perceptions when respondents were grouped by age. However, in terms of gender and religious affiliation, no significant difference was found, highlighting varied viewpoints on women in political leadership. These findings may serve as a foundation for promoting gender equality and related programs within the university and the broader community.

Keywords: *perception, women, politics, senior high school*

Introduction

Role of Women in Filipino Society: A Historical Perspective

The role of women in Filipino society has changed a lot over time, shaped by different social, political, and cultural influences. From the pre-Hispanic period to today, women have made important contributions to the country in many ways, even though they have faced challenges and shifting gender expectations. In the past, Filipino women held key roles in leadership, war, and government (Roces, 2011). However, when foreign colonizers arrived, they brought new ideas about gender roles, which led to changes in how women were viewed and treated in society. These changes created a mix of traditional roles and new expectations for women.

Pre-Hispanic Era

In pre-Hispanic Filipino society, women held significant positions as healers, priestesses, and even leaders and warriors. They had the power to inherit property, participate in business and trading, and control their own lives. Women enjoyed the same status as men, with equal rights and privileges. When the Spanish arrived in the 16th century, however, they imposed their own ideas of women's roles and suppressed them. Women's roles and status varied across different ethnic groups and regions in the Philippines during this time (Cequina, 2021).

Spanish Rule

In order to restore the rights of every Filipino, notable women have proven to men that women also have the abilities and right to fight for the country and serve as leaders of the nation in bloodshed wars. The notable women revolutionaries were: "Henerala" Gabriela Silang, the leader of the revolution in the Ilocos Region in 1763; Gregoria de Jesus, who is also known as Lakambini ng Katipunan; Melchora Aquino, who is also known as "Tandang Sora" (Alindogan, 2022); Trinidad Tecson who was the first Filipina who took part in the sacred blood pact or Sandugo and was given the title "Ina ng Biak-na-Bato" and fought with five Filipino generals namely Emilio Aguinaldo, Gregorio del Pilar, Isidoro Torres, and Mariano Llanera (Tomacruz, 2020); and Agueda Kahabagan y Inquinto, who was also known as "Heneral Agueda", who was the only officially listed female revolutionary general of the Philippine Revolution of 1896-1898 and the Philippine-American War of 1899-1902 (Vergara, 2019).

American Era

During the early 20th century struggle for Philippine independence from the United States, women actively participated through various movements, organizations, and uprisings, which ultimately led to the end of US colonial rule in the Philippines. They engaged in activism, including rallies, boycotts and armed resistance, while also contributing to propaganda campaigns against colonialism. Women's involvement extended to education and society, with increased access to education and active roles in social and humanitarian work. Notable figures like Trinidad Tecson and Pura Villanueva-Kalaw emerged as influential leaders advocating for women's rights and education.(Studocu, 2022). Their contributions paved the way for greater gender equality and empowerment. Recognizing and

honoring women's roles during this period was essential for promoting gender equality and empowering women in Philippine history and society

Japanese Occupation

In 1941, the Philippines was subjected to oppression, injustices, and inequalities during the regime of the Japanese. Violence was rampant. Women were raped, degrading their dignity. They were tortured, killed, and even made sex slaves to comfort men. It was a time of devastation where everybody sought to look for hope in overcoming the challenges they experienced every day. Women tried to dirty themselves in hopes of not being subjected to any form of violence, killing, and rape. Nevertheless, Filipino women learned to fight for the country. During the period of Japanese occupation, guerrillas were a group of people with an aim to liberate the land from the Japanese occupation. Women were provoked to participate. Some also became soldiers (Cura, 2019).

Post-War

Following the Philippines' independence from the United States in 1946, the country faced the formidable task of rebuilding its war-torn infrastructure and pursuing economic growth. The devastation caused by the war had left a significant impact, necessitating extensive rehabilitation efforts to restore both basic services and infrastructure. It was during this era that Filipino women began to play an increasingly active role in society, breaking free from traditional gender roles and engaging in various aspects of society, including attending political meetings and participating in sports. This resulted in significant progress in women's status in the Philippines, with some even holding elective office. Despite the gains made by the women movement in the Philippines in terms of economic, political, and social equality, challenges persisted, such as inequality in political representation and economic opportunities. Patriarchals continued to fuel aggression and violence against women (Hega, et al., 2017).

Martial Law

In 1972, President Ferdinand E. Marcos imposed martial law in the Philippines through Proclamation No. 1081. While the regime reduced urban crime and repressed communist insurgencies, it also led to widespread human rights violations (Divinagracia, 2020). The first recorded murder victim under martial law was student activist Liliosa Hilao (Hilao, 1973). During this period, women endured significant suffering, including rape, torture, and death. Despite these challenges, women played crucial roles in the anti-dictatorship movement, challenging cultural norms and asserting their rights as human beings equal to men (Mendoza, 2014).

After the martial law era, Filipinos voted for a woman president, Corazon "Cory" Aquino, who became the first female president of the Philippines in 1986. Her election marked a significant shift in gender dynamics and political representation in the country (Aquino, 1986; Pineda, 2024).

Post-EDSA

The Post-EDSA was the period of transition after the 1986 People Power Revolution. It was the demonstration that was not distinguished by gender or social class. It was also called "People Power" as it united the people of the Philippines against a major political force, The Marcos Dictatorship . This period was the turning point for the feminist movement. Corazon Aquino, June Keithley, Delia Regidor, and Yolanda Lacuesta were women who stood up for their rights and the rights of every woman in the nation. Back in the 1980s, Corazon Aquino was the symbol of the revolution and the most prominent and accessible icon for feminist organizations (Bichara, 2014). Aquino's turn to presidency attracted a huge amount of international and local funding for development projects, especially for women's organizations, and funding sources that emphasized the inclusion of a Women-in-Development (WID), component in any development project. The Post EDSA was also the period wherein several organizations for women were established namely Concerned Women of the Philippines, Women's Caucus, GABRIELA, and Lakas ng Kababaihan which was spearheaded by PILIPINA (Valte, n.d.). In 1992, Aquino also signed into law Republic Act No. 7192 or Women in Development and Nation-Building Act to promote the integration of women as full and equal partners of men in development and nation-building. This act was authored by Santanina Tillah Rasul, a former female senator.

Women's Participation in Philippine Politics

Right to Suffrage

Section 1, Article V of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides: ''Suffrage may be exercised by all citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law, who are at least eighteen years of age, and who shall have resided in the Philippines for at least one year, and in the place wherein they propose to vote, for at least six months immediately preceding the election. No literacy, property, or other substantive requirement shall be imposed on the exercise of suffrage."

Only men enjoyed the right of suffrage in the Philippines until 1937. This was because Section 1, Article V of the 1935 Constitution under the heading "Suffrage" originally provided that: "Suffrage may be exercised by male citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law, who are twenty-one years of age or over and are able to read and write, and who shall have resided in the Philippines for one year and in the municipality wherein they propose to vote for at least six months preceding the election."

The same section stated that "the National Assembly shall extend the right of suffrage to women if, in a plebiscite which shall be held

for that purpose within two years after the adoption of this Constitution, not less than three hundred thousand women possessing the necessary qualifications shall vote affirmatively on the question." The National Assembly passed the necessary amendment to the 1935 Charter through Commonwealth Act No. 34 on September 30, 1936. It provided for the plebiscite to be held on April 30, 1937. As a result of the amendment, Filipino women have been granted the right to vote and to be voted in office. It has so far resulted in the election of two women presidents since 1986. They were former Presidents Corazon C. Aquino (February 25, 1986-June 30, 1992) and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (January 21, 2001-June 30, 2010)(Samonte, 2022).

Notable Women Politicians

The first-ever woman senator of the First and Second Congress in the country was Geronima T. Pecson who served in the Senate of the Philippines from 1947 to 1953. She was also the first Filipina and the first woman elected to the executive board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1950 (Isleta, n.d.). The table below presents a list of women who served as senators of the Republic of the Philippines.

There were 22 women senators from the first congress up until present. They are Geronima T. Pecson (1st-2nd Congresses), Tecia Ziga and Maria Kalaw-Katigbak (5th-6th Congresses), Magnolia Antonio, Helena Z. Benitez and Eva Estrada (6th-7th Congresses), Nina Rasul (8th-9th Congresses), Leticia Ramos Shahami (8th-10th Congresses), former Vice-President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (9th-10th Congresses), Nikki Coseteng (9th-11th Congresses), Miriam Defensor-Santiago (10th-11th and 13-16th Congresses), Tessie Aquino-Oreta (11th-12th Congresses), Loi Ejercito (12th-13th Congresses), Jamby Madrigal (13th-14th Congresses), Sen. Loren Legarda (11th-12th, 14th-17 and 19th Congresses), Sen. Pia Cayetano (13th-16th and 18th-19th Congresses), Cynthia Villar (16th-19th Congresses), Sen. Nancy Binay (16th-19th Congresses), Sen. Grace Poe (16th-19th Congresses), Sen. Leila Delima (16th-18th Congresses), Sen. Risa Hontiveros (17th-19th Congresses), and Sen. Imee Marcos (18th-19th Congresses).

Across time, there were hundreds of women who held elective positions in the national. The first woman president of the Republic of the Philippines was President Corazon Aquino who served from 1986 until 1992 (Britannica, 2014). After nearly a decade, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo became the second woman President of the Philippines who held the office from 2001 until 2009. She was also the country's first female Vice President. Women Vice President

Other Filipino politicians are currently in the Senate, the House of Representatives, and Local Government Units nationwide. Filipino women also have already been empowered to serve in the Judiciary and other major branches of the national government, including the Civil Service Commission, Commission on Elections, and Commission on Audit.

On the other hand, the data of the Philippine Halalan 2022 election on the incumbent leaders was organized into three categories: the number of male and female governors and vice governors in the Philippines, the number of male and female mayors and vice-mayors in independent cities in the Philippines, and the number of male and female mayors and vice-mayors in the National Capital Region (NCR).

The Philippines is composed of 82 provinces and is divided into 13 regions . In total, there are 67 incumbent male governors (81.71%) and 15 female governors (18.29%) in the Philippines which represents a gender imbalance with male leaders dominating provincial governance. Partly, there is also a clear indication of male domination in provincial leadership in the position of vice-governor, to be exact, there are 64 incumbent male vice-governors (78.05%) and only 18 incumbent female vice-governors (21.95%) won in the election. This clearly shows that most of the provinces per region are governed by male leaders compared to females which represents a male domination in politics.

Similarly, the Philippines is composed of 20 independent cities which are led by Mayors and Vice-mayors. Overall, there are 15 (75.00%) male incumbent mayors, and only 5 (25.00%) are female mayors. However, in terms of the incumbent vice-mayors, there are 14 (70.00%) male vice-mayors and only 6 (30.00%) are female vice-mayors. Therefore, the independent cities in the Philippines are predominantly led by male mayors.

In the National Capital Region (NCR) which is composed of 17 cities, there are also more male mayors which consist of 9 (52.94%) and 11 (64.71%) vice-mayors who won in their respective positions. Nevertheless, the percentage of incumbent women politicians is greater in the NCR compared to that in the provinces and the independent cities, there are 8 (47.06%) female mayors and 6 (35.29%) vice-mayors.

According to Wong (2022) in an article, the reason why most Filipinos vote for male leaders are all due to their masculine-like characteristics; being assertive, decisive, and competitive which allow them to have more representation in the political arena. Women running for a position will only be elected if they project masculine behaviors. In the case of Leni Robredo presidency in 2022, she displayed a mother-like figure of leadership which fits into Philippine conceptions of what a woman should be. Thus, the data presented above reflects that Filipinos favor male political candidates over female candidates, if at all females are given opportunities and are empowered to run for the above-mentioned positions.

Perception Towards Women in Politics

Women encounter numerous challenges compare to their male counterparts. Women are underrepresented in Politics. This

marginalization begins at home, where women are sometimes excluded from political discourse and decision-making processes. Unfortunately, this exclusion often leads to decisions that negatively impact women's lives women are underrepresented in Politics. This marginalization begins at home, where women are sometimes excluded from political discourse and decision-making processes (Benson, 2023). Additionally, it provides that women are commonly raised differently than men. It is common in certain regions and societies to limit the female responsibility to household and children, and to look at her as weak and dependent; accordingly, she is treated as less capable and at times finds herself in abusive situations. (UNDP, 2021).

According to Lund (2021), women sitting in political positions are seen as "political disappointment." They are pertained as politicians who neglect to address grievances especially towards women. However, even though they are viewed in a negative way, women are likely perceived as less corrupt than men (Barnes & Beaulieu, 2019). Women in positions are believed to be stronger who advocate for the welfare of elderly and children and are responsible in directing the public funds for improving education, childcare, healthcare, poverty, and women's issues (Mulder et. Al, 2019; O'Brien, 2019).

According to Thorner (2024), the patriarchal system of the Philippines still predominantly causes the lack of representation of women and continuously negatively affects the perception of the voters. In the 2022 election, the electorate perceived to vote for female politician due to the embodied masculine traits or characteristics that satisfy their perception. In an international setting conducted by Horowitz & Goddard (2023), both the Republicans and Democrats have the same perception that it will take time before women can get a seat and represent themselves in the political arena. Similarly, both also agree that there are few women in politics.

Incumbent: Representation and Participation

Enhancing women's participation and representation across all sectors is crucial for their empowerment and for achieving holistic social development. Despite comprising half of the population, women hold only about one-fifth of elected government positions, highlighting a significant gap in representation. Nevertheless, women in leadership roles have demonstrated their effectiveness and capability in decision-making. While men contribute to gender-responsive initiatives, they may not fully represent women's diverse needs and experiences. Increasing women's representation in elected bodies fosters equal resource access and development outcomes for all genders. Despite progress, women's political representation falls short of the "critical mass" needed for significant influence. Factors like patriarchal norms, gender stereotypes, and resource constraints hinder women's political engagement (Philippine Commission on Women, 2019).

Barriers and Challenges in Women Political Participation

Political, economic, and cultural barriers hinder women's participation in Philippine politics. The electoral system, with its "first-past-the-post" setup, favors male candidates, while the lack of strong political parties further restricts women's inclusion. Gender norms still dictate perceptions of women's roles in society, impacting their political involvement. Economic empowerment does not always translate to increased political participation for women, as seen in low female labor participation despite high education levels. Violence against women in politics, exacerbated during the Duterte administration, deters women from entering politics. Media bias and gender stereotypes perpetuate obstacles for women candidates, both online and offline. Additionally, electoral polling lacks gender-disaggregated data, hindering targeted outreach to female voters. Political institutions often reinforce gender biases, but initiatives like women's caucuses and gender-responsive training materials offer potential solutions. Effective implementation, however, requires institutional integration and cultural shifts. The Philippines consistently ranks high in global reports for gender equality and women's empowerment, with significant representation in leadership roles and innovation.(Franco, et al., 2023). Despite this, challenges remain, including gender biases and disparities exacerbated by the pandemic, such as job losses and increased incidents of domestic violence. While legal frameworks support women's rights, further reforms are needed to address remaining gender gaps and ensure full equality

Research Questions

This study aimed to assess the Levels of perception among personnel and students of a Catholic Senior High School towards women political participation. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of perception of the respondents on the:
   1.1. limits to women in Philippine politics;
   1.2. characteristics associated with Filipino women politicians; and
   1.3. reasons for women participation in Philippine politics?
2. What is the respondents' overall perception on women political participation?
3. Is there a significant difference in the level of perception on the limits to women in Philippine politics, characteristics associated with Filipino women politicians, and reasons for women participation in Philippine politics when respondents are grouped according to:
   2.1. gender;
   2.2. age; and
   2.3. religious affiliation?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level perception toward voting female candidates when respondents are grouped according to:

   3.1. gender;

   3.2. age; and

   3.3. religious affiliation?

  5. What factors influence the respondents' perception toward women participation in Philippine politics?

Methodology

Research Design

The study used quantitative and qualitative research to gather data on the level of perception toward women participation in Philippines politics and the factors affecting it. Descriptive-comparative design will be utilized since inferential questions are present in the study. It will be used to identify the impact of the demographic profiles on the attitude of the personnel and students towards women political participation. It is quantitative in nature as it uses Likert scales. On the other hand, it will also use qualitative design to elaborate the factors affecting the respondents' attitude with open-ended questions.

Participants

The study took into account the staff and students of the Senior High School Department of Saint Mary's University as the respondents. 82 staff and students were selected through the use of purposive sampling. Other factors, such as the respondents' demographic profiles, influence the respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward women's participation in the Philippine government.

Table 1. *Demographic Profile*

Profile		Frequency	Percentage
Gender			
	Male	36	43.9
	Female	36	43.9
	LGBTQ	10	12.2
Age			
	Below 18	29	35.4
	18 and above	53	64.6
Religious Affiliation			
	Catholic	64	78.05
	Iglesia Ni Cristo	4	7.32
	Born Again	6	4.88
	Methodist	6	7.32
	Others	2	2.43
Total		82	100

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents and the total number of those who participated. The respondents' gender, age, and religious affiliation were considered. Males and females were equal in terms of numbers compared to LGBTQ respondents. There were more respondents aged 18 and above compared to those below 18. Majority of the respondents were Catholics, while others belonged to Born Again, and Methodist Churches, Iglesia ni Cristo, and others.

There are several implications of the foregoing demographics. The balanced gender representation ensures that the perception towards women's political participation are not focused towards one gender. However, the under-representation of LGBTQ respondents means their unique perspectives on this issue might not be fully captured. The findings are likely more reflective of adult perception towards women's political participation. The views of respondents aged 18 below years old are less prominent being that there are only some registered voters among students compared to the staff.

Additionally, the Catholic respondents have the highest percentage because the study was conducted in a Catholic school in which the respondents' who participated are heavily influenced by their Catholic teachings or norms. However, the minority of the respondents belonging to other religious affiliations were not strongly represented in the study.

Instrument

The study used a survey questionnaire adapted from Women's Participation in Politics and Decision Making in Albania (United Nations Women-Europe and Central Asia, 2012-2013). The adapted questionnaire followed a four-point Likert scale in which the questionnaire consisted of the following components: I.) the perception of the respondents on the limits of women's political participation in the Philippines; II.) the perception of the respondents on the characteristics associated with Filipino women politicians; III.) the perception of the respondents on the reason for women participation in Philippine politics; IV.) reasons to vote for a female candidate; and V.) an open-ended question about the factors that influence the respondents' perception towards women in Philippine politics.

The table shows the reliability test results for a survey measuring perceptions toward women politicians. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess internal consistency. The alpha score of .877 indicates excellent reliability. The standardized alpha score of .898 similarly shows strong internal consistency. The test included 45 items, reflecting the total number of questions or statements in the survey.

Table 2. *Result of Reliability Test for Perception towards Women Politicians*

Measure	Value
Cronbach's Alpha	.877
Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	.898
N. of Items	45

Procedure

This study used an adapted questionnaire from Women's Participation in Politics and Decision Making in Albania from United Nations. To begin with, the adapted questionnaire underwent content validation and reliability test before it was approved. The researchers sought permission from relevant authorities including the Principal of the school to allow the researchers to float their questionnaires and be able to gather the data. The floated questionnaires were collected and the responses were tallied. After this, the data were analyzed and interpreted.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected through survey questionnaires, the study used quantitative and qualitative analysis. The treatment of data used for quantitative analysis were:

Frequency Count and Percent Distribution. It was used to analyze the data on the respondents' profile variables on the questionnaires. This is where the population of the respondents' regarding their demographic profile are determined for Overall Comparison. It was also used on the open-ended question to determine the key ideas written by respondents' regarding women political participation.

Mean and Standard Deviation. It was used to analyze data on the level of perception of women in politics and perception toward voting female candidates. This is where the perception of the respondents are determined whether the statement on the questionnaire regarding women political participation are favorable or unfavorable based on the mean and standard deviation and its mean range.

One-Way Analysis of Variance (One-Way ANOVA). It tests the significant difference in the respondents' level of perception on women in politics and their level of perception towards voting for female candidates, with respect to gender, age, and religious affiliation. With multiple variables, One-Way ANOVA was used to compare the respondents' perception in different demographic aspects toward woman political participation.

For the quantitative data:

Thematic Analysis. This was used to determine the respondents' perception towards women political participation through answering an open-ended question that asks for their stand about women participating in politics. This was also used to compare and determine the common answers of the respondents' and was grouped based on their topic or idea. Thematic Analysis was also used to determine which has the highest number of participants regarding a thought in answering the open-ended question along with frequency count and percentage distribution.

Table 3. *Likert Four-Point Scale of Interpretation of Perception towards Women Politicians*

Mean Range	Scale	Interpretation
3.50 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	Very Favorable Perception
2.50-3.49	Agree	Favorable Perception
1.50-2.49	Disagree	Unfavorable Perception
1.00-1.49	Strongly Disagree	Very Unfavorable Perception

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results, discussions, and implications of this study.

Table 4. *Factors that Contribute to Women Political Participation*

	Components	Mean	SD	QD
1.	Women have enough free time despite responsibilities and duties they have in family.	2.26	0.89	Unfavorable
2.	Women are given enough chances.	2.17	0.86	Unfavorable
3.	Women have confidence in their capabilities.	3.09	0.80	Favorable
4.	Women are characterized by aspiration to involve in politics.	2.76	0.96	Favorable
5.	Women have the necessary skills and qualities.	3.45	0.77	Favorable
6.	Women are as competitive as men in terms of career.	3.32	0.81	Favorable
7.	Women have sufficient financial resources to cover election campaigns.	3.21	0.83	Favorable
8.	Women have enough experience in politics.	3.02	0.93	Favorable
9.	Gender biases do not prevent women to be involved.	2.15	0.98	Unfavorable
	Overall Perception on the Factors that Contribute to Women Political Participation	2.82	0.53	Favorable

Table 4 presents the reversed and restated factors that contribute to women political participation.. As showcased in the table, the overall perception on the factors that contribute to women political participation were interpreted according to the qualitative description as favorable, with a total mean (x̄) of 2.82 and a total standard deviation (S) of 0.53. Women have the necessary skills and qualities to participate in politics, with x̄=3.45 and a =0.77, interpreted as an agreeable statement. Followed by x̄=3.32 and S=0.81, it is also favorable that women are as competitive as men in terms of careers. However, it is unfavorable that gender biases do not prevent women from being involved in political participation with x̄=2.15 and S=0.98.

This implies that women do not lack skills, or qualities including experiences to participate actively in politics like decision-making, leading, contributing to communities, and even creating projects that support their people. And at the same time, women can also do things that men can do like being competitive in politics. But this does not mean that gender bias issues have been fixed or have been taken off because gender biases still prevent women from political participation which greatly affects the perception of society towards women and the perception and performance of women towards society.

According to Women for Women International (2021), when women are in leadership positions, they tend to give solutions and resolve problems by focusing on social issues that help communities at large in different aspects such as education, and healthcare sectors, and are less likely to influence and create violence in conflicts. However, women were found to be limited and were less willing to participate in office if they faced criticism from voters and the media due to their characteristics, such as gender, race/ethnicity, and appearance (Kanthak & Woon 2015).

Table 5. *Characteristics of Filipino Women Politicians*

Components	Mean	SD	QD
Women:			
1. are able to take responsibilities.	3.52	0.59	Very Favorable
2. are more sensitive on the citizens' needs.	3.38	0.58	Favorable
3. are open to debate.	3.49	0.69	Favorable
4. are tolerant.	3.26	0.78	Favorable
5. are firm and secure to represent.	3.40	0.63	Favorable
6. have good knowledge on community problems.	3.52	0.59	Very Favorable
7. represent a good model of woman in politics.	3.49	0.65	Favorable
8. are not corrupted.	3.09	0.83	Favorable
9. are approachable.	3.27	0.79	Favorable
10. keep promise.	3.11	0.75	Favorable
11. are committed in solving community problems.	3.21	0.72	Favorable
12. are not often characterized by aggressive behavior.	2.52	0.92	Favorable
13. have the required experience in decision-making.	3.02	0.75	Favorable
14. have calmed political climate in the Philippines	2.95	0.72	Favorable
15. work hard.	3.50	0.69	Very Favorable
Overall Perception on the Characteristics of Filipino Women	3.25	0.45	Favorable

Table 5 presents the characteristics of Filipino Women Politicians with some reversed and restated statements. The overall perception on the characteristics of Filipino Women were favorable with x̄=3.25 and S=0.45. In the table, two statements both resulted x̄=3.52 which states that women are able to take responsibilities and have good knowledge on community problems which were interpreted as very favorable perception. The lowest was x̄=2.52 with a S=0.92 states that it is unfavorable that women are not characterized by aggressive behavior.

This implies that women can take on both light and heavy responsibilities, especially for the community. They are even viewed as having good knowledge of community issues like being aware and making solutions that will aid the issues of a community. However, they are also viewed as people with aggressive behavior.

According to Estigoy et.al. (2022), during the pandemic, Filipino women politicians are covered by the mainstream media as emotional, empathetic, compassionate, communicative/interactive, sympathetic, and sensitive to the crisis in the country. However, while they are educated and are employed, women still take most of the household and familial responsibilities that are not just about chores, childcare, etc. (Germano 2021). Even if they try to do these responsibilities, there is research about cyber aggression that suggests women are more aggressive but Reed (2023) Are Women Just as Aggressive as Men? Article posted on Psychology Today, aggression should not be confused with physical violence because not all physical violence is aggression some are self-defense, and not all aggression is physically violent. Reed (2023) also stated that there were three different types of aggression which were physical, direct verbal, and indirect also involve manipulation of others and even gaslighting. Also stated on Reed's article, "female aggression should be recognized as a normal part of their behavior as it is important for developing theories of aggression that do not suggest reasons for aggression in males and females."

Table 6 shows the reasons for women's political participation. It includes mean scores, standard deviations (SD), and qualitative descriptors (QD). The highest mean score is for "Inequality between men and women should be eliminated" (Mean = 3.71, SD = 0.58), which indicates strong agreement. The lowest score is for "Women are less likely to become corrupted" (Mean = 2.65, SD = 0.93),

showing less agreement. Overall, the mean score for reasons supporting women's political participation is 3.10, categorized as "Favorable."

Table 6. *Reasons for Women Political Participation*

Components	Mean	SD	QD
1. Inequality between men and women should be eliminated.	3.71	0.58	Very Favorable
2. Women help more effectively to solve problems related to women.	3.49	0.63	Favorable
3. Women are more intelligent.	3.10	0.68	Favorable
4. Women are more successful.	2.65	0.82	Favorable
5. Women mitigate conflicts between political parties.	3.00	0.72	Favorable
6. Women are capable as men.	3.48	0.74	Favorable
7. Women emancipate power.	2.84	0.71	Favorable
8. Women would give priority on solving sensitive community issues.	3.28	0.61	Favorable
Overall Perception on the Reasons for Women Political Participation	3.10	0.51	Favorable

The data suggests a generally positive view of women's involvement in politics. The strong agreement on eliminating gender inequality reflects a belief in the need for equal representation. However, the lower score for women's integrity in politics indicates some uncertainty. This suggests that while many support women's participation, there are still doubts about specific qualities accredited to women.

The data highlights a favorable perception of women in politics, especially regarding the belief that gender inequality should be addressed. Maclean and Groves (2024) argue that removing barriers is crucial for increasing women's participation. Additionally, the score for "Women mitigate conflicts between political parties" shows that people see value in women's roles in promoting peace in politics. This aligns with research indicating that more women in political positions can lead to less corruption (Springer, 2020). However, the lower agreement on "Women are less likely to become corrupted" reveals ongoing doubts about women's integrity. Pelnus (2020) discusses how negative stereotypes can limit women's political roles. Despite these challenges, women can still be strong leaders and make a positive impact in public life.

Table 7. *Reasons for Voting Female Candidates*

Components	Mean	SD	QD
1. If she will be representative of the political force that I belong to support.	3.23	0.74	Favorable
2. If she will have a good reputation.	3.57	0.57	Very Favorable
3. I believe in women value.	3.45	0.55	Favorable
4. If she is known as a good professional.	3.57	0.55	Very Favorable
5. Women are more likely sensitive on economic and social problems.	3.35	0.65	Favorable
6. If I know her from personal/familiar or social relation.	2.79	0.89	Favorable
7. Women are more communicative.	3.21	0.73	Favorable
8. Philippine politics needs more women.	3.26	0.75	Favorable
9. Women are less corrupt.	2.71	0.87	Favorable
10. Women are firmer and achieve more results.	3.04	0.81	Favorable
11. Women are more efficient in work.	3.20	0.82	Favorable
Overall Perception on the Reasons for Voting Female Candidates	3.22	0.50	Favorable

The data presented in Table 7 explores the reasons why individuals choose to vote for female candidates. Each reason is accompanied by a mean score, standard deviation (SD), and qualitative descriptor (QD). The overall mean score of 3.22 is categorized as "Favorable," indicating a generally positive perception toward female candidates.

The strongest agreement among respondents was noted for the statements "If she will have a good reputation" and "If she is known as a good professional," both scoring 3.57 and classified as "Strongly Agree" (SA). This suggests that voters prioritize reputation and professional qualifications when considering female candidates. In contrast, the statement "Women are less corrupt" received the lowest mean score of 2.71, which, while still categorized as "Agree" (A), indicates a level of skepticism about this belief.

The findings shows that voters hold a favorable view of female candidates, particularly emphasizing their reputation and professionalism. This aligns with the research by Dahlerup (2020), which highlights that increased female political representation contributes positively to policy outcomes, especially in areas such as education and health. This underscores the significant role women play in leadership and governance. Further supporting these observations, the study on gender stereotypes by Bauer et al. (2012) reveals that voters perceive women as more competent in "compassion" issues, while men are often seen as better suited for military and defense matters. This perception reflects broader cultural stereotypes that can influence voter decisions, aligning with the high regard for professional achievements noted in the current data. Moreover, the research on female leadership competencies emphasizes that women's success in traditionally male-dominated fields is influenced not only by their professional expertise but also by their interpersonal skills (Kram & Bragar, 2017). This correlates with the lower mean score for personal connections as a reason to vote for female candidates, indicating that professional attributes are more valued in this context. Lastly, the study on public perceptions of women's inclusion suggests that when voters believe in adequate female representation, it enhances their feelings of political efficacy (Schmidt, 2020). This relationship highlights the potential for increased female representation to foster greater engagement among

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voters, further enriching the political landscape.

Table 8. *Overall Level of Perception on Women Political Participation*

Components	Mean	SD	QD
Factors that Contribute to Women Political Participation	2.82	0.53	Favorable
Characteristics of Filipino Women Politicians	3.25	0.45	Favorable
Reasons for Women Political Participation	3.10	0.51	Favorable
Reasons for Voting Female Candidates	3.22	0.50	Favorable
Overall Perception on Women Political Participation	3.10	0.37	Favorable

Table 8 shows the overall level of perception on women political participation. Based from the table, the characteristics of Filipino Women Politicians bagged the highest mean score of 3.25 among the rest followed by the reasons for voting female candidates with a 3.22 mean score, and reasons for women political participation with a mean score of 3.10. However, the factors that contribute to women political participation has the least mean score of 2.82. Yet, they fall into the favorable overall perception on women political participation.

This implies that the respondents' demographics: age, gender, and religious affiliation have an overall favorable perception towards women political participation.

In the 2023 Global Gender Gap Index, the Philippines ranked 16th globally and 1st in the entire Southeast Asia to practice gender equality. Historically, the Philippines only had two women presidents and two women vice-presidents, denotes that there is lack of representation of women in politics. Stereotypes against women have hindered them to be seen in political arena. However, due to the acceptance, awareness, and knowledge of the electorate towards women, it paved the way for a rising participation of themselves. Based from the study if Lundgren and Petrosiute (2024), the electorate view women positively in political participation and representation. Women is said to be more competent as men in political field due to their experiences that could benefit citizens. In addition, according to the study of Los, et al,. (2024) the electorate negative view towards women in politics shifted to positive. Women are said to be intelligent, rational, analytical, ambitious and moral that therefore, made the electorate distrust men. Surprisingly, women gained a ground for leadership, surpassing men politicians. Women therefore are viewed as more competent, emphatic, and who upholds integrity.

Table 9. *Comparison of Respondents' Level of Perception on Women Political Participation in terms of Age*

Factors	Groups	f	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Factors that Contribute to Women Political Participation	Below 18	51	2.76	0.51	-1.350ns	.181
	18 and above	31	2.92	0.55		
Characteristics of Filipino Women Politicians	Below 18	51	3.17	0.47	-2.025	.046
	18 and above	31	3.37	0.38		
Reasons for Women Political Participation	Below 18	51	3.02	0.42	-1.801ns	.075
	18 and Above	31	3.23	0.61		
Reasons for Voting Female Candidates	Below 18	51	3.10	0.46	-2.830	.006
	18 and Above	31	3.41	0.50		
Overall Perception on Women Political Participation	Below 18	51	3.01	0.36	-2.738	.008
	18 and Above	31	3.23	0.34		

Table 9 shows the comparison of respondents' level of perception on women political participation in terms of age. Based on the table, it shows that there is a significant difference in terms of age between 18 below and 18 and above. The factors that contribute to political participation of women had the highest p-value with 0.181 followed by the reasons for women political participation with a p-value of 0.075, characteristics of Filipino women politicians with a p-value of 0.046, and the least but still shows a significant difference is the reasons for voting female candidates with a p-value of 0.006. Nevertheless, there is an overall 0.008 attained perception by the 18 below and 18 and above which infers that there is a significant difference.

This infers that significantly the 18 and above respondents had more perception towards women in Philippine politics, which can be said to mean that they as registered voters are more knowledgeable and aware in their perception towards women politicians. On the other hand, since the below 18 respondents achieved a favorable perception, it could mean that are becoming more engaging, participating, and knowledgeable in terms of the issue of underrepresented women in Philippine politics.

In the study of Merck (2019), about young voters ranging from 18-24 years old. Since voting is a prerequisite, his study implies the right to vote is an opening to be heard from society. In addition, Badua (2024) states that historically only two women presidents were elected, former President Cory Aquino and former President Gloria Arroyo. For Vice President, Leni Robredo and Sara Duterte. Since 2019, women have made up 29% of the Senate and 28% of the House of Representatives. Voters ranging from 18 and above perceived women politicians based on their contrasting characteristics that influence and to elect the more masculine woman rather than a feminine one based on their perception. Significantly, through practicing voting they influence more young people to participate to exercised their right and be heard. In connection, according to Ang (2022), her study found that an andocentirc view towards women's participation in politics is not prevalent amongst Gen-Z, whereas the majority of the Gen-Z are more likely freely accept women in

politics.

Table 10. *Comparison of Respondents' Level of Perception on Women Political Participation in terms of Gender*

Factors	Groups	f	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Factors that Contribute to Women Political Participation	Male	38	2.75	0.64	.603	.550
	Female	34	2.89	0.41		
	LGBTQIA+	10	2.88	0.44		
Characteristics of Filipino Women Politicians	Male	38	3.05B	0.42	8.281*	.001
	Female	34	3.40A	0.38		
	LGBTQIA+	10	3.49A	0.47		
Reasons for Women Political Participation	Male	38	2.85B	0.47	11.526*	.000
	Female	34	3.29A	0.46		
	LGBTQIA+	10	3.43A	0.32		
Reasons for Voting Female Candidates	Male	38	3.03B	0.53	5.273*	.007
	Female	34	3.37A	0.45		
	LGBTQIA+	10	3.38A	0.33		
Overall Perception on Women Political Participation	Male	38	2.92B	0.35	10.128*	.000
	Female	34	3.24A	0.32		
	LGBTQIA+	10	3.29A	0.28		

Table 10 shows the comparison of the respondents' level of perception of women's political participation in terms of gender where there is a significant difference along with the overall perception(p-value: .000). It implies an easier assessment in determining the difference between genders' perception. Factors with a p-value of .000 stand for statistically significant results.

The data result shows dissimilarity in the means of not sharing subscripts for only the factors that contribute to women's political participation among genders has no significant difference and it may suggest that a higher sample size may help to determine the difference of the respondents' perception according to their gender while the rest of the factors having determined that there is a significant difference among genders level of perception on women's political participation regarding the women politicians characteristics, the reason for political participation, the reason for voting female candidates of the respondents and the overall perception on political participation of women politician thus the result implies that different factors can affect the level of perception of different genders towards women politicians considering the ideology and mindset between genders affecting their perception or view towards women politicians.

The study of Van Der Pas et al. (2022), indicates that depending on the position on the spectrum of political perception affects one person's perception towards women in politics. Whereas, significantly the study found out that leftist "wants change" are LGBTQ members and women who want to see more women in politics. However, men are classified as rightists who "do not want change, or conservative." Therefore, denotes that they do not want women in politics. The article of Yolmo and Basnett (2024) outlines the gender differences in political awareness and political participation and the reasons for them, according to respondents. The results showcase that there was a significant gender difference in political awareness and political participation.

Table 11. *Comparison of Respondents' Level of Perception on Women Political Participation in terms of Religious Affiliation*

Factors	Groups	f	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Factors that Contribute to Women Political Participation	Catholic	62	2.85	0.53	.624	.647
	Iglesia Ni Cristo	4	2.92	0.25		
	Born Again	7	2.70	0.37		
	Methodist	5	2.51	0.98		
	Others	4	2.92	0.19		
Characteristics of Filipino Women Politicians	Catholic	62	3.28	0.42	1.236	.303
	Iglesia Ni Cristo	4	3.42	0.42		
	Born Again	7	3.22	0.41		
	Methodist	5	2.96	0.79		
	Others	4	2.95	0.39		
Reasons for Women Political Participation	Catholic	62	3.12	0.53	.264	.900
	Iglesia Ni Cristo	4	3.15	0.53		
	Born Again	7	3.09	0.45		
	Methodist	5	2.90	0.44		
	Others	4	3.00	0.37		
Reasons for Voting Female Candidates	Catholic	62	3.26	0.49	1.674	.165
	Iglesia Ni Cristo	4	3.27	0.46		
	Born Again	7	3.27	0.55		
	Methodist	5	2.80	0.57		
	Others	4	2.84	0.28		
Overall Perception on Women Political Participation	Catholic	62	3.13	0.35	1.305	.276

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Iglesia Ni Cristo	4	3.19	0.28
Born Again	7	3.07	0.38
Methodist	5	2.79	0.62
Others	4	2.93	0.21

The data gathered above shows that there is no significant difference towards the comparison of the respondents' level of perception on women political participation for the p-value computed was greater than 0.05 in terms of religious affiliations. The overall perception on women political participation (p-value: .276). The data also shows the result of every variable having a mean score higher that 2.50 but not higher than 3.42 which can be interpreted as "favorable" perception.

The data suggest that the comparison of respondents' level of perception on women political participation in terms of religious affiliation cannot be determined as the result gathered shows that there is no significance in between considering the mean of each which can be interpreted as" favorable" and the data shows no significant variation of results to highlight that helps determine differences among the different religious affiliations perception towards different factors. This implies that all different religious affiliation stated seems to be not different when it comes to factors that may affect their level of perception even though that respondents may base their perception towards women in Philippine politics on what mostly their religion believes. Likewise, in accordance with the study of Holman & Podzarik (2018), their study found out that religions have significantly impacted and influenced the perception of the people in terms of voting women in politics because of the imposed religious beliefs and what or who they recommend to support. As a result, religion plays a vital role in the representation of women in politics.According to Ainley and Schulz (2024), no strong or consistent relationships between religious background and expected political participation among lower-secondary students, findings suggest that young people's endorsement of religious influence in society depends strongly on their religious background and in turn shows associations with expected active political participation.

Table 12. *Personal Criteria based on Respondents' Perceptions of Women's Political Participation in the Philippines*

Themes	Example Quote	Frequency n (%)
Credentials accessible via online web	"Credentials or professional excellence and moral excellence. They possess all of these; I would perceive them as great political leaders." "Credential and Philosophical belief speaks everything." "The appropriate qualifications."	23.17
Capability and performance provided by credible polls	"Women are skillful and can do multitasking." "There's a lot of factors in my perception about women's' participation in Philippine politics like they know how to solve problems and also they are equal to men in terms of works, knowledge, and also they are the one who can maintain balance in terms of decision and in completing other circumstances of the politics." "I think that women are more capable of doing the job done rather than man. Women are more empathic. Women knows how to consider other peoples' point of view."	18.29
Advocacies and causes that these politicians support	"Women's right. People who belittle women like Robin Padilla who have a very dirty mind. More women should be part of politics. The Philippines would be better." "Corruption in the Philippines." "Because of lack of representation on women. Discrimination against women also."	18.29
Characteristics	"Women are more easy to be educated and disciplined this having women in politics like Sen. Risa Hontiveros would be a great achievement."	13.41
None	"None because man are more capable but I support women politician." "For me, there are no problems/factors that have influenced my perception regarding the participation of women in politics because everyone, whether it's a woman or a man, has the ability to enter politics because we have our own characteristics to help the community." "Nothing."	9.75
Social media	"The influences I know of is through the use of social media." "The social media based from what is prevalent that people see in social media."	6.09
Rarity	"We must be fare, let's give each other opportunity to participate in politics. I do believe women can also give a good contribution here in the Philippines politics."	3.65
Confidence	"Their confidence in socializing to other people and their critical thinking skills."	3.65
Environment	"The leadership of our mayors in the municipality."	3.65
Negative perception	"Weak leader not flexible."	3.65
Other candidacy	"The factors that influence us towards women participation in the Philippine politics are the candidacy of Leni Robredo and Risa Hontiveros or government."	2.43
Literacy	"Political literacy."	2.43
Women's Right	"Women empowerment, equality that women are capable in leading like-wise men."	1.21
Technique	"Only in the way that matters, how they run for positions and how effective it is."	1.21
Ordinances, laws, and policies approved and implemented	"...if women shows significant result assures my vote for them."	1.21

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Table 12 illustrates the factors that influence the respondents' perception of women's political participation in the Philippines. It is shown in the qualitative data that the most prevalent factor that affects their perception is the credentials of a candidate running for a position (Frequency*=23.17). Meanwhile, the lowest factors by frequency recorded are the result of a candidate's action, the technique or way of how they manage themselves, and respectively, women's rights (Frequency*=1.21).

This implies that voters look for a candidate's qualifications and achievements that women have accumulated throughout their careers. This emphasis on credentials might be especially important for female candidates, who frequently need to establish their capability and proficiency more explicitly than their male rivals to overcome gender biases and stereotypes. This focus on credentials may appear to be more in handy for female candidates who, in most cases, must make it more explicit about establishing their competence and expertise over and above everyone else for them to overcome gender-related issues they face. With that, a solid track record can help candidates earn voters' trust and credibility by showcasing that they have the necessary experience and skills for the position. Highlighting their service qualifications may help eliminate any concerns about their capacity to operate effectively in the post.

Equality and good governance are two of the most pervasive themes in development debates in recent times. They come together in the growing body of literature and thought around gender, democracy, and good governance (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2021). Additionally, Zheng et al. (2021) explained the four acts women do to manage their power and help the community which have four major parts;' 1Demanding yet caring, 2Authoritative yet participative, 3dvocating for themselves yet serving others, and 4Maintaining distance yet being approachable. The role of empowering women and achieving gender equality in sustainable development is vital. It has been concluded that unless women are empowered and gender equality is achieved so that women can play their role in economic, social, political, and environmental areas, the country will not achieve sustainable development with the recognition of only men's participation in all these areas and show their full potential for change. According to Bayeh (2016), women constitute half the entire population of the country making empowering them to be an active part of all development initiatives in the country a compelling circumstance. Hence, this paper calls for the strong commitment of the government to empower women and utilize all the potentials of the country to bring about sustainable development.

Conclusions

The data gathered in this study demonstrates that women possess the necessary skills for active political participation; however, gender biases persist. Moreover, they effectively manage community responsibilities and are perceived as knowledgeable. Additionally, demographic data indicates favorable perceptions of women in politics, with older respondents demonstrating greater awareness. Conversely, religious affiliation does not significantly influence perceptions. Furthermore, voters prioritize qualifications, which is crucial for female candidates to overcome biases and establish credibility.

The study focuses on perceptions of women's political participation among personnel and students of a Catholic senior high school, emphasizing the influence of educational and religious contexts. Nevertheless, the scope is limited to this specific demographic and location. Consequently, the methodology should transparently detail participant selection, data collection tools, and statistical methods to ensure the findings' reliability and validity. Ultimately, this research contributes to understanding gender dynamics in political engagement within educational and religious settings.

Recommendations include using non-demographic variables in future studies, including non-registered voters for broader perspectives, ensuring respondents answer questionnaires seriously, and encouraging universities to create programs that challenge traditional gender roles and showcase women's achievements.

The researchers recommend the future researchers who will continue this study to use non-demographic variables on their survey questionnaires.

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend to include non-registered voters for wider perception towards women in political participation.

The researchers recommend that the respondents should answer the questionnaire seriously with integrity.

The researchers recommend that the university create a program designed to challenge traditional gender roles and to showcase women's achievements, encouraging students to think beyond outdated expectation

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Affiliations and Corresponding Information

Arianne Angel R. Pillai
Saint Mary's University – Philippines

Emerson B. Cumarat
Saint Mary's University – Philippines

Luiza V. Arellano
Saint Mary's University – Philippines

Frank Jaylord R. Felix
Saint Mary's University – Philippines

Aizy Jerima P. Calantas
Saint Mary's University – Philippines

Lady Valen Charon A. Dela Peña
Saint Mary's University – Philippines

Humprey Ian O. Sagabaen
Saint Mary's University – Philippines

Eloisa C. Barbieto
Saint Mary's University – Philippines

Mary Joy S. Mendoza
Saint Mary's University – Philippines