

## **Women's Political Participation Survey**

*Center for Women's Resources*

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### **I. BACKGROUND**

Before women were allowed to vote and take part in politics, the 1935 Constitution only allowed male Filipino citizens aged 21 or older to vote. Like every hard-fought and earned democratic right in the country, the right for women to vote was a significant milestone in the fight for women's political participation and representation in government.

The right of women to participate in political and public life is protected both by international conventions and by Philippine law. The 1987 Constitution guarantees gender equality and affirms women's vital role in nation-building, including their right to vote and hold public office. This is reinforced by the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), which mandates the elimination of discrimination and calls for increased women's participation in leadership and decision-making.

Despite advancements, women's involvement in politics, including running for office and engaging in political dialogues and movements, continues to be a challenge. Some of these barriers include societal norms and gender roles, and stereotypes that hinder women's full participation.

According to COMELEC's Election Records and Statistics Division, of the 65.7 million eligible voters for the 2022 elections, 33.6 million are women, while 32.07 million are men. This indicates that there are 1.5 million more female registered voters than male voters. The voter turnout for women was 82.43% in 2016 and 76.16% in the 2019 elections, slightly higher than the male voter turnout at 81.43% and 75.62%, respectively.

As of the 19th Congress, there are seven women senators out of 24 (29%) and 85 women representatives out of 311 (27.3%). Out of the 13,586 elected positions in 2022, only 4,141 (30.47%) were held by women, with many being placeholders for term-limited incumbents who are male family members.<sup>1</sup> Political dynasties have often used these tactics to maintain power. The country has also elected two women presidents in the past and has had a women's party list in Congress since 2004.

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<sup>1</sup> *Women make up only 24% of elected officials in PH, highlighting gender gap in politics.* (2019).

Pids.gov.ph.

<https://www.pids.gov.ph/details/news/press-releases/women-make-up-only-24-of-elected-officials-in-ph-highlighting-gender-gap-in-politics>

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) has reported that at least 43,033 individuals have submitted their certificates of candidacy for the 2025 national elections. Among them, male candidates significantly outnumber female candidates, with 33,652 males, accounting for 78%, compared to 9,381 or 22% females.<sup>2</sup>

The situation prompts an inquiry into how women vote in the Philippines. Women's rights advocates will tell us there is no "women's vote." Thus, this survey aims to delve into how women vote, exploring the factors that influence their choice of candidate and whether they prioritize platforms that promote women's rights. It also seeks to examine the role of gender in the political process and understand what issues make up the women's agenda.

## II. OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the factors influencing women's voting and the dynamics at play during electoral processes in the Philippines.
2. To analyze patterns and trends in women's voting behavior.

## III. STUDY DESIGN

This research employed a descriptive survey design to collect quantitative data from a representative sample of women voters across various vote-rich provinces and cities in the Philippines.

### A. Population and Sample

The target population is women aged 18 and above who are registered voters in the Philippines. A sample of 506 women was interviewed using purposive random sampling, focusing on women in communities, schools, workplaces, and other settings.

SURVEY SAMPLE	
Provinces/Cities	Number of Respondents
Cavite	92
Bulacan	74
Laguna	71

<sup>2</sup> Sicat, Alice V. "Comelec Reports 43,033 Candidates for National, Local Elections - Philippine Information Agency." *Philippine Information Agency*, 11 Oct. 2024, [pia.gov.ph/comelec-reports-43033-candidates-for-national-local-elections/](https://pia.gov.ph/comelec-reports-43033-candidates-for-national-local-elections/)

Nueva Ecija	32
Batangas	21
Iloilo City	91
Davao City	27
NCR	67
Rizal	11
CAR	20
TOTAL	506

## **B. Data Collection Method**

A structured questionnaire was developed, consisting of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was pretested to ensure clarity and reliability. The survey was administered through face-to-face interviews.

## **C. Questionnaire Design**

The questionnaire was designed to cover the following key areas: (a) sociodemographics; (b) information about elections and electoral candidates; (c) influencing factors; (d) voting preferences; (e) issues and concerns; and (f) perceptions of the elections and electoral system.

## **D. Phasing**

The research was carried out in phases as follows: research design in November, pretesting in December, data gathering from January to March, and data presentation in April.

# **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

## **A. Socio-Demographic Profile**

### **a.1. Age of Respondents**

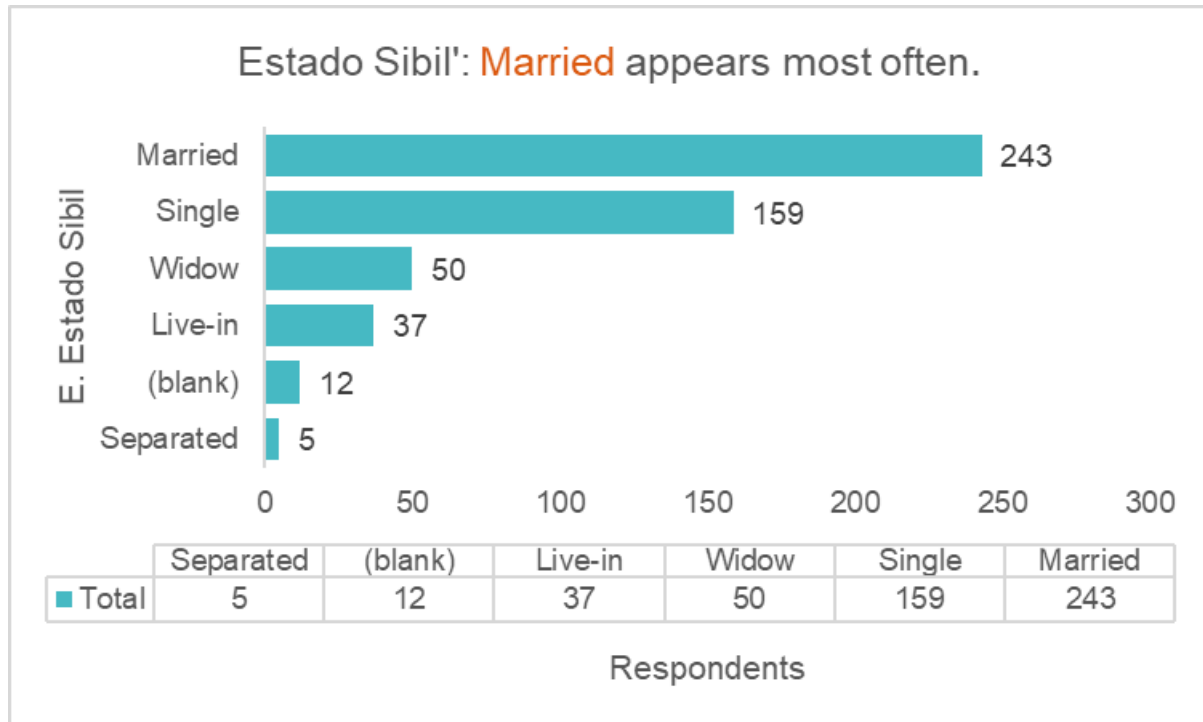
The majority of respondents are over 60 years old, comprising 17.2% of the total, followed closely by those aged 33–39 at 16%. The age groups 18–25 and 26–32 each make up 14.5% of the respondents. This shows a relatively well-distributed age representation overall.

AGE OF RESPONDENTS	
Age Group	Percent Share
18-25	14.5
26-32	14.5
33-39	16.0
40-46	11.1
47-53	13.3
54-60	13.3
Above 60	17.2
TOTAL	99.98

#### a.2. Civil Status

Married individuals constitute the largest group, with a total of 243 counts. The next largest group is single individuals, with 159 counts. Widows make up the third largest group, with 50 counts.

CIVIL STATUS		
Civil Status	Frequency	Percent Share
Married	243	48.0%
Single	159	31.4%
Widow	50	9.9%
Live-in	37	7.3%
Separated	12	2.4%
No answer	5	1.0%
TOTAL	506	100.0%



### a.3. Economic Participation

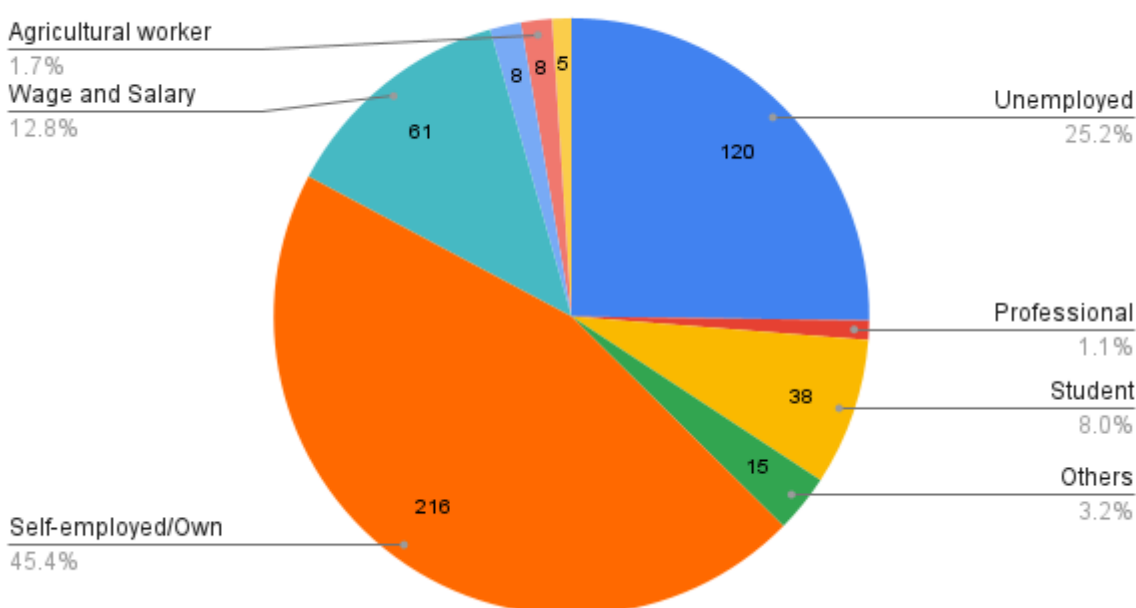
Most respondents are self-employed or own-account workers, making up 45.4% of the total. The unemployed, at 25.2% and wage and salary workers, at 12.8% follow this group.

The data suggests that a lack of formal employment opportunities may be pushing people into self-employment or informal work, which might explain the high percentage of own-account workers.

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION		
Type of work/livelihood	Frequency	Percent Share
Self-employed	216	45.4%
Unemployed	120	25.2%
Wage and salary worker	61	12.8%
Student	38	8.0%
Agricultural worker	8	1.7%
Government worker	8	1.7%

Professional	5	1.1%
Kasambahay	5	1.1%
Others	15	3.2%
No answer	30	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Trabaho/Kabuhayan



### a.4. Household Income

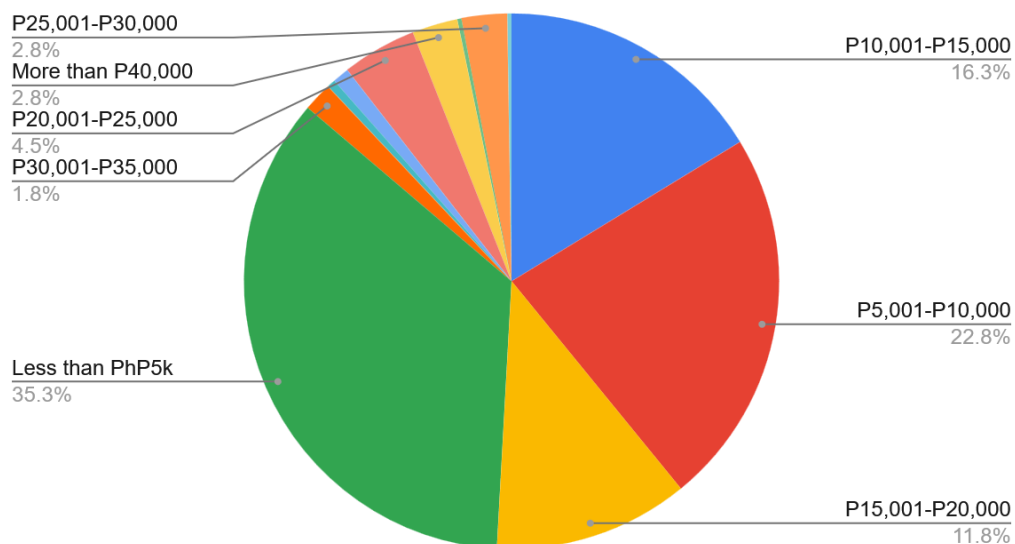
Job and livelihood insecurity of the respondents is also reflected in their income.

The majority of respondents shared that their combined family income is less than PHP 5,000 a month, representing a significant 35.3% of the total. This is followed by those earning between PHP 5,000 and PHP 10,000 a month at 22.9%, and those earning between PHP 10,000 and PHP 15,000 a month at 16.3%. Together, these three income brackets account for a total of 74.5% of the respondents.

This income distribution highlights a key challenge—most respondents fall below the official poverty threshold for a family of five, which is PhP13,873, according to the 2023 Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) poverty statistics. This indicates that a significant portion of respondents may struggle to meet basic needs.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	
Household Income	Percent Share
Less than PHP 5,000	35.3%
PHP 5,001 - PHP 10,000	22.8%
PHP 10,001 - PHP 15,000	16.3%
PHP 15,001 - PHP 20,000	11.8%
PHP 20,001 - PHP 25,000	4.5%
PHP 25,001 - PHP 30,000	2.8%
PHP 30,001 - PHP 35,000	1.8%
More than PHP 40,000	2.8%
Others	1.9%
Total	100.0%

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#### a.5. Education

Seven out of ten respondents did not reach the tertiary level of education. The majority either completed or reached only the elementary level (19.0%) or high school level (46%).

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		
Level	Frequency	Percent Share
High school graduate	134	26.5%
College level	100	19.8%
High school level	99	19.6%
College graduate	50	9.9%
Elementary level	48	9.5%
Elementary graduate	48	9.5%
Technical Vocational Course	18	3.5%
Iba pa	5	1.0%
None	1	0.2%
No answer	3	0.6%
TOTAL	506	100.0%

#### a.6. Religion

The majority of respondents identify as Roman Catholic, comprising 81% of the total. This is consistent with national statistics in the Philippines, where Roman Catholicism remains the dominant religion. Born Again Christians follow with 9.3%.

RELIGION		
Religion	Count	Percentage
Roman Catholic	410	81.0%
Born Again Christian	47	9.3%



Iba pa (Aglipay, Rizalista, Protestante, etc.)	23	4.5%
Iglesia ni Cristo	15	3.0%
Islam	7	1.4%
No answer	4	0.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## B. Information About Elections and Electoral Candidates

A significant majority of respondents, 93.3%, intend to vote in the upcoming elections. Their primary motivation for participating is a desire to exercise their rights as Filipinos and support their chosen candidates. Additionally, many are concerned about the possibility of being removed from the voters' list, which could prevent them from accessing government programs and assistance.

In contrast, only 2.8% of respondents stated that they would not be voting. The reasons given included an inability to return to their home province where they are registered, a lack of faith in the elections, and simply not wanting to participate.

<b>DECISION TO VOTE IN THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS</b> (Question: <i>Ikaw ba ay boboto sa darating na eleksyon?</i> )		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent Share</b>
Oo	472	93.3%
Hindi	14	2.8%
Undecided	12	2.4%
No answer	7	1.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

When seeking information about elections and electoral candidates, the majority of respondents turn to conventional media, accounting for 31.8% of those surveyed. Conventional media includes traditional platforms such as television, radio, and newspapers. Social media is also a significant source, with 27.5% relying on it. Additionally, 10.8% obtain their information from their communities, while 10.5% get it from their barangay officials.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON THE ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL CANDIDATES (Question: <i>Saan ka kumukuha ng impormasyon kaugnay ng eleksyon at mga kandidato?</i> (multiple responses))		
Source of Information	Count	Percentage
Conventional Media	266	31.8%
Social Media	230	27.5%
Komunidad	91	10.8%
Barangay	88	10.5%
Kapamilya	54	6.5%
Organisasyon	47	5.6%
Kaibigan	30	3.6%
Iba pa	30	3.6%
TOTAL	836	99.99

### C. Influencing Factors

When asked about the influences on their voting decisions, the majority of respondents (73%) stated that they rely on their judgment to identify the rightful candidates. This was followed by family or clan influences at 10.4%, and organizational influences at 5%.

While 10.4% of respondents acknowledge being influenced by family or clan, this indicates that cultural or generational preferences still play a role in shaping political choices.

<b>INFLUENCES ON VOTING DECISIONS</b> <b>(Question: <i>Sino ang pinapakinggan mo sa pagpili ng kandidato?</i>) (multiple responses)</b>		
Responses	Count	Percentage
Sarili	424	73.35%
Angkan/pamilya	60	10.4%
Samahan/Organisasyon	29	5.0%
Simbahan	21	3.6%
Kaibigan	21	3.6%
Politiko	9	1.6%
Iba pa	9	1.6%
Barangay	5	0.85%
TOTAL	578	100

## D. Voting Preferences

### d.1. Factors Considered When Choosing a Candidate

Platforms Matter Most (46.12%) – Nearly half of the respondents said that what matters most to them are the candidates' platforms. This shows that many voters are looking for substance in political campaigns—they want clear plans and concrete proposals, not just personality or party ties.

However, the issue with platforms is that there is no way to determine if a candidate is genuinely committed to their promises until after they win the election and actually fulfill them. A candidate can promise anything the people need to win the elections.

Track Record (23.7%) – Coming in second, voters also place high value on a candidate's track record. They want to see real accomplishments, relevant experience, and a history of effective leadership, indicating a preference for those who have already proven themselves in public service.

Additionally, voters might consider tangible support, such as providing assistance (ayuda), as a valid basis for their voting decisions, as it demonstrates personal connections. However, the cultural norm of "utang na loob" (debt of gratitude) can be exploited to secure votes, perpetuating a cycle of dependency and patronage.

Candidate Characteristics (22.1%) – While not as highly ranked, personal qualities like integrity, leadership style, and relatability still matter to voters. These characteristics can help build trust and connection, even if they're not the top priority.

<b>FACTORS CONSIDERED WHEN CHOOSING A CANDIDATE</b> <b>(Question: <i>Kapag pumipili ng kandidato, ano ang inyong tinitingnan o binibigyan ng halaga?</i>) (multiple responses)</b>		
Factors	Count	Percentage
Plataporma	327	46.12
Track Record	168	23.7
Katangian	157	22.1
Iba pa	48	6.8
Kasikatan	7	0.98
Yaman	2	0.28
Total	709	100

#### d.2. Qualities Voters Dislike in Candidates

When examining the qualities of candidates that women voters disfavor, the respondents have identified key traits that are most off-putting in candidates:

Corruption (31%) – This being the most cited factor reflects a strong public demand for transparency and ethical governance. It underscores how deeply corruption erodes trust in leadership.

Unfulfilled Campaign Promises (19.9%) – Nearly one-fifth of respondents are disillusioned by candidates who fail to deliver on their commitments, emphasizing the importance of accountability and follow-through.

Dishonesty (11.8%) – Traits like lying, hypocrisy, or being untrustworthy rank third, showing that personal integrity is a critical factor in voter perception.

<b>QUALITIES VOTERS DISLIKE IN CANDIDATES</b> <b>(Question: <i>Ano naman ang ayaw mong katangian ng isang kandidato?</i>) (multiple responses)</b>		
Katangian	Count	Percentage
Corrupt, magnanakaw sa kaban ng bayan	200	31.10
Hindi tumutupad sa pangako; puro salita, walang	128	19.9

<b>QUALITIES VOTERS DISLIKE IN CANDIDATES</b> <b>(Question: <i>Ano naman ang ayaw mong katangian ng isang kandidato?</i>) (multiple responses)</b>		
nagawa		
Sinungaling, pakitang-tao, hipokrito	76	11.8
Mayabang, hambog, mapagmataas, matapobre	54	8.4
Gahaman, buwaya, makasarili, self-serving	40	6.2
Political dynasty	10	1.6
Trapo	15	2.3
No answer	40	6.2
Iba pa	48	7.5
Tuwing eleksyon lang nakikita	13	2.0
Mamamatay-tao, pasista, kriminal, sindikato	19	3.0
Total	643	100

While the results show that women voters prioritize platforms, track record, and character—and express strong dislike for corruption, unfulfilled promises, and dishonesty—past electoral processes have nonetheless yielded less-than-ideal outcomes.

When voters are presented with limited options and when their primary source of information is conventional media—which candidates with greater resources can maximize—they often end up choosing candidates they already know, have heard of for a long time, or frequently see in the media. Strategic candidate packaging, and even misinformation and disinformation, can also play a role in making a candidate's image appear more desirable.

In addition, “*utang na loob*”, or the sense of debt of gratitude, plays a big role in how many people decide who to vote for. In many impoverished communities, when someone receives *ayuda* or any kind of help from a candidate, especially during tough times like a crisis, there is often a feeling that they should return the favor by supporting that person at the elections. It is not always seen as vote-buying in the usual sense, but more like repaying kindness to someone who showed care or gave even a little something, whether it was food, cash, or any kind of support.

### **d.3. Women Voters' Preference for Women Candidates**

When asked “*Kung babae ang kandidato, iboboto mo ba siya?*” (If the candidate is a woman, would you vote for her?) responses revealed a generally open attitude toward women's political leadership, though many voters remain conditional in their support.

Around 47.6% (241 respondents) answered “*Depende*” (It depends) while 46.4% (235 respondents) answered “*Oo*” (Yes). This shows that a significant portion of the respondents is supportive of women running for elective positions.

A small percentage, 1.8% (9 respondents), explicitly said “*Hindi*” (No). This could signify a minimal resistance to women candidates, while 4.2% (21 respondents) did not provide an answer.

<b>WOMEN VOTER PREFERENCE FOR WOMEN CANDIDATES</b> (Question: <i>Kung babae ang kandidato, iboboto mo ba sya?</i> )		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent Share</b>
Depende	241	47.6%
Oo	235	46.4%
Hindi	9	1.8%
No answer	21	4.2%
Total	506	100.0%

#### **d.3.1. Factors Influencing Conditional Support for Women Candidates**

Of those who answered “it depends,” respondents revealed that an important factor they consider when voting for a woman candidate is the platform, with 76 responses (28.3%). This indicates that voters place high importance on a candidate's proposed plans and policies.

A respondent said: “*Basta maganda ang plataporma niya para sa mga kababaihan at sa Pilipinas.*”

Another significant consideration is the track record, cited 51 times (19.0%). This reflects voters' interest in a candidate's history of performance and accomplishments.

One respondent mentioned specifically: “*Kung malinis ang track record.*”

Closely following are the candidate's qualifications and competence (kaalaman at kakayahan), with 34 responses (12.6%).

Respondents emphasized that skills and capabilities matter most: “*Titingnan natin kung kaya nya, kung maabilidad, wala syang bahid ng korupsiyon.*”

Other key considerations include the candidate's character, profile, or background, which received 28 responses (10.4%).

Respondents mentioned: *“Depende sa profile, background, at nagawa nila.”* and *“Depende kung hindi siya suplada at kapag siya ay mabuti.”*

Some other respondents also noted that gender should not be the sole basis of voting for a fellow woman.

As noted by the respondents: *“Depende. Pero hindi dahil sa kasarian nya. Ang pagiging babae ay hindi awtomatikong dahilan para piliin ang isang kandidato.”*, *“Hindi nasusukat sa gender ng tao kung maaari mo siyang iboto o hindi, ang mahalaga tapat at maayos itong mamuno.”* and *“I’m all for women, but not women who are promoting against rights of fellow women and people.”*

<b>FACTORS INFLUENCING CONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR WOMEN CANDIDATES</b> (Follow up question: <i>Kung “depende”, depende saan? Anong mga kinokonsidera mo?</i> )		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent Share</b>
Plataporma	76	27.9%
Track record	51	18.8%
Kaalaman at kakayahan	34	12.5%
Katangian, profile, background	28	10.3%
Hangarin, layunin, paninindigan	22	8.1%
Hindi awtomatikong basta babae ay iboboto	17	6.3%
Other	13	4.8%
No answer	31	11.4%
Total responses	272	100.0%
* multiple responses		

### **d.3.2. Reasons for Supporting Women Candidates**

Among those who responded “Yes” to the question “If the candidate is a woman, would you vote for her?”, a variety of reasons emerged.

Around 25.5% (60 respondents) said their support is related to women offering a different perspective, especially in their understanding of issues affecting fellow women. Many respondents answered that women candidates can be more connected to the experiences of other women, which could make them suitable in addressing gender-specific issues.

One respondent mentioned: *“Bilang babae, alam nya ang mga isyu na dapat i-address sa bansa na nauukol sa kababaihan”* and *“Yung iniisip ng babae, mas nakikita ang kahirapan at karanasan lalo na sa bahay—hindi alam ng mga lalaki ‘to.”*

Related to this, many respondents mentioned that women leaders are more approachable and understanding: *“Alam ang hinaing sa buhay ng kababaihan. Hindi ka magdadalawang-isip na lapitan dahil babae sila”* and *“Kapag babae, mabilis hingian ng tulong.”*

Fifty-six (56) respondents, or 23.8%, said that their answer is based on recognition of women's abilities and equal rights in leadership. This could reflect a progressive view on women's rights and gender equality.

Respondents express a belief in gender equality in leadership, that women have the right, ability, and potential to lead: *“Babae o lalaki ay may karapatan tumindig sa larangan ng politika basta may matibay na paninindigan sa batas.”* and *“Hindi lang lalaki ang may kakayanan. Tayong mga babae kaya din natin yan.”*

Respondents also mentioned that women should be given equal representation in politics, noting that: *“May limitado na kababaihan sa politika”* and *“dapat may kababaihan na partisipasyon sa pamahalaan.”*

Around 20.0% (47 respondents) cited specific traits commonly associated with women, such as being intelligent, brave, and strong-willed—qualities they see as important in leadership.

Respondents view women as principled, capable, and powerful leaders who can bring positive change to the country. Many believe that women are not only equal to men but in many ways better suited for leadership roles. One respondent stated: *“Ang babae ay matapang at sila ay may prinsipyong matatag,”*

Women are seen as both compassionate and action-driven: *“Kapag babae, iba mag-isip at mag-take ng action,”* and *“Mas malawak ang pag-unawa, karanasan sa lahat... kayang solusyunan ang mga problema.”*

Some mentioned that their decision was based on positive experiences with women leaders and their accomplishments (18 respondents or 7.7%).

Respondents noted that some women candidates have proven their leadership: *“Nakita ko na may kapasidad siya o may kakayahan siya na maging leader,”* and *“Napatunayan sa kasaysayan na ang kababaihan may kakayahan mamuno ng bansa.”*

Some said they want to try something different and give women the chance to lead, hoping it might bring change to the current system (6.0%, or 14 respondents).

Some respondents said that women should be given a chance to lead and expressed optimism that they could offer better solutions, especially in a political landscape historically dominated by men. Respondents noted: *“Para maiba naman,” “Para masubukan,”* and *“Malay mo mas maganda ang patakbo.”*



REASONS FOR SUPPORTING WOMEN CANDIDATES (Follow up question: <i>Kung "Oo", bakit?</i> )		
Response	Frequency	Percent Share
Kaugnay ng ibang perspective ng kababaihan, alam ang isyu ng kapwa kababaihan`	60	25.5%
Kaugnay ng recognition sa kakayahan at pantay na karapatan ng kababaihan sa pamamahala	56	23.8%
Kaugnay ng partikular na katangian ng mga babae (sharp, matalino, matapang, palaban, etc)	47	20.0%
No answer	24	10.2%
Kaugnay ng karanasan sa pamumuno ng babae, mga nagawa	18	7.7%
Para maiba, masubukan ang pamamahala ng babae, pag-asa sa babae	14	6.0%
Dahil babae	10	4.3%
Others	6	2.6%
Total responses	235	100.0%

### d.3.3. Reasons for not supporting women candidates

On the other hand, a minimal number of women (4.3%, or 10 respondents) supported simply because the candidate is a woman.

A minimal number of respondents expressed doubt or skepticism about women's ability to lead. They cite perceptions that women are weaker or less capable than men. Responses such as "*Mahina ang kababaihan*" (Women are weak) and "*Kapag babae, mahihirapan lang*" (If it's a woman, it will just be difficult) reflect this perception. Another view is that women lack firmness or resolve, stating, "*Malamya, mas gusto ko ang lalaki*" (Too soft, I prefer a man). There are also concerns about women's competence and integrity, as one respondent remarked, "*Hindi lahat matino*" (Not all are decent). Another noted that women are not suited for the current political climate: "*Panahon ng mundo ngayon dapat matapang... Kapag babae mahihirapan*" (In today's world, you have to be tough... If it's a woman, it will be difficult). These views reflect persistent gender biases that associate strength, decisiveness, and leadership more naturally with men, while linking hesitation and softness with women.

REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING WOMEN CANDIDATES (Follow up question: <i>Kung "Hindi", bakit?</i> )		
Response	Frequency	Percent Share
Kaugnay ng partikular na katangian ng babae (mahina, malamya, etc.)	4	44.4%

Mas preferred ang lalaking leader	2	22.2%
No answer	2	22.2%
Dahil hindi pa nasusubukan	1	11.1%
Total	9	100.0%

## E. Important Issues That Candidates Must Address

### e.1. National issues

Respondents identified several important issues that candidates must address.

Economic concerns dominate – The price of commodities (23.23%), job creation (20.48%), and raising wages (17.64%) collectively account for over 60% of the priorities. This underscores the importance of addressing economic stability and cost-of-living challenges.

Health and Education – With 13.76% prioritizing health and 15.5% valuing education, these areas remain significant but rank slightly lower than economic issues. This could reflect a need for better healthcare access and quality education systems.

Corruption as a persistent issue – Although 9.3% of respondents see corruption as a priority, it still holds importance, indicating a desire for transparent governance and ethical leadership.

<b>IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT CANDIDATES MUST ADDRESS</b> <b>(Question: Anong mahahalagang isyu na dapat bitbitin ng kandidato?) (Multiple responses)</b>		
Issue	Frequency	Percent Share
Presyo ng bilihin at bayarin	270	23.23
Trabaho at kabuhayan	238	20.48
Sahod	205	17.64
Edukasyon	180	15.5
Kalusugan	160	13.76
Korapsyon	109	9.3
TOTAL	1,162	100

## **e.2. Women's Issues That Need to Be Addressed**

Based on the 609 responses from 492 women who responded to the question, it is clear that there are major issues they want candidates to prioritize in the upcoming elections.

At the top of the list is addressing gender-based abuse and violence against women, with 176 responses (28.9%). Women's responses emphasize the urgent need for protections against gender-based violence, particularly rape (36 mentions), domestic violence, and sexual harassment. Many respondents mentioned better legal frameworks to protect women and children, stronger laws, and improved enforcement of existing ones. Support for victims is also frequently mentioned, with calls for more resources and social services, including safe spaces and mental health services. Several responses highlight the need for access to justice and the punishment of perpetrators. Additional responses include increasing public awareness about gender-based violence and violence against women and children (GBV and VAWC). Respondents also mentioned the need for improved public safety to reduce instances of violence and ensure that women can live without fear of harm is also emphasized.

Another top concern of women is issues related to the need for public social services such as health, education, and housing (101 responses, or 16.6%). Among the public services, respondents highlighted the importance of accessible reproductive and general healthcare, including contraception, family planning, maternal care, and free or affordable services. There were mentions to provide free menstrual products, and address teenage pregnancy and early marriage. Access to medicines and healthcare for pregnant women, seniors, and those with illnesses, along with better maternity policies, were also emphasized. Education and housing were also mentioned as important social services for women.

Another important concern is jobs, wages, livelihood and incomes at 15.1% (92 responses). Respondents consistently emphasized the need for decent and accessible employment and livelihood opportunities, including protection of their rights, especially for women, single mothers, and those in marginalized sectors such as farmers, factory workers, and informal workers. There were several mentions of job security, higher wages, equal pay, maternity benefits, and the elimination of workplace discrimination.

Respondents also emphasized women's rights and non-discrimination at (92 responses, or 15.1%). This includes empowerment, respect, and human rights for women were repeatedly highlighted as fundamental. Many mentioned the need for gender equality in policy and practice, respect for women's voices and decisions, and the recognition of women's contributions to society.

Other issues mentioned include lowering the prices of goods (5.6%) and social welfare and protection (4.8%), especially for solo parents and senior citizens.

In addition to issues directly affecting women, several other national concerns (20 responses, or 3.3%) were raised by respondents, such as addressing corruption and

economic challenges of the country. Responses highlighted the need to address bureaucratic inefficiency. There was also mention of addressing criminality. Economic policies, such as national industrialization, were also mentioned as important steps to address poverty and ensure economic stability. Food insecurity and militarization, and conflict were also mentioned.

Interestingly, 65 respondents (10.7%) did not provide an answer, possibly indicating a lack of awareness or understanding of key issues affecting women. Many expressed uncertainty with responses like "wala" (none), "hindi alam" (don't know), or "hindi ko maipaliwanag" (I can't explain). Some even showed disengagement, such as one who said, "Di ako masyadong ano sa problema ng bansa. Di ko iniintindi." (I don't really care about the country's problems). This highlights the need for greater public education and information on women's issues and their relevance to political priorities.

<b>WOMEN'S ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED</b> (Question: <i>Ano ang mahahalagang isyu ng kababaihan na dapat bitbit ng kandidato?</i> )		
Isyu/Usapin	Frequency	Percent Share
Anti-VAWC	176	28.9%
Public social services (health, education, housing)	101	16.6%
Trabaho/kabuhayan, sahod at kita	92	15.1%
Karapatan at walang diskriminasyon	92	15.1%
Pagbaba ng presyo ng bilihin	34	5.6%
Social welfare and social protection	29	4.8%
Other national issues	20	3.3%
No answer, di alam, unfamiliar	65	10.7%
Total responses	609	100.0%
* multiple responses		

## **F. Perception on the current political system and elections in the Philippines**

Results revealed that the majority of the 478 responses had an overall negative perception about the current political system and elections.

Described as "magulo" (chaotic), more than half (262 responses, or 54.8%) of the respondents believe that politics and elections in the Philippines are riddled with fraud and corruption. They highlighted that politicians take advantage of public funds for

their vote-buying activities in the form of providing cash aid or “ayuda.” There is also a perception among the respondents that politics seems performative and a circus that is just for show.

As one respondent articulately described: “It's a circus. Minsan feeling ko performative lang itong lahat kasi may mga mayayaman na bumibili ng boto... The corruption in this election system makes me feel like we're in either Hunger Games or Squid Game. Nakakasuka pero laban pa din. Kailangan kasi sino pa ba ang lalaban?”

Around 15.5% (74 responses) of the respondents expressed their general disappointment with the election system, describing it as trash, rotten, and in need of systemic change.

As respondents put it, *“Tingin ko, sobrang bulok na ng political system natin dahil puno na ng mga dynasty at paulit ulit na lang ang mga kandidato at nananalo. Pinagpapasahan na lang ng uunting pamilya ang pilipinas. Halata ding may nangyayaring kadayaan tuwing eleksyon.”*, *“Kailangan palitan ng mas demokratikong sistema.”*, *“Kailangan ng improvement, dapat ito ang tutukan ng mga tao dahil hindi natin alam kung may mangyayaring corruption.”*

Meanwhile, a significant number of respondents (64 responses, or 13.4%) also view politics and elections to be elitist and only for the interests of the few. They believe that politicians do not actually serve the people. They also said that political dynasties remain a pervasive problem with promises left unfulfilled upon winning a seat.

According to some respondents: *“Political system here sucks, why? Because of the politicians who love themselves before their responsibilities. They love power, not their duty.”*, *“Walang maganda, makasarili lang. Daldal lang nang daldal pero walang ginagawa. Putak lang nang putak.”*, and *“Nagiging political dynasty kasi sila-sila na lang yung tumatakbo dahil sa kapangyarihan at yaman kaya walang asenso ang Pilipinas dahil sa pangakong hanggang salita lang.”*

On the other hand, 9.2% (44 responses) of the respondents were generally optimistic about politics and elections, particularly about the current administration, but some still expressed their doubts.

Respondents noted: *“Okay naman, may tiwala naman tayo sa COMELEC.”*, *“Okay lang ang patakbo ni BBM, pero hindi mawawala ang kontrabida.”*, *“Okay naman, di gaya nung nakaraan magulo, kaya lang di maiwasan ang dayaan.”*

Interestingly, a number of respondents (10 responses, or 2.1%) answered “hindi alam” (don't know), “walang idea” (no idea), “hindi sigurado” (not sure), or “walang masabi” (nothing to say). These answers indicate that there is a lack of awareness of the current political landscape and its potential impacts on their lives.

Nine respondents (1.9%) believe elected leaders are disunited, while 1.5% (7 respondents) observed that heightened tensions during the election often led to

violence and death. Other responses included answers related to the election process itself and other national issues (8 responses or 1.7%).

<b>PERCEPTIONS ON THE CURRENT POLITICAL SYSTEM AND ELECTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES</b> <b>(Question: <i>Sa kabuuan, ano ang pagtingin mo sa political system at eleksyon sa Pilipinas?</i>)</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent share</b>
Chaotic and fraudulent	262	54.8%
Bulok, hindi maganda (general disappointment sa sistema ng eleksyon)	74	15.5%
Elitist, para sa iilan, maintaining the status quo	64	13.4%
Positibo, may pagbabago	44	9.2%
Hindi alam, walang idea, hindi sigurado, walang masabi	10	2.1%
Disunity	9	1.9%
Others	8	1.7%
Violent	7	1.5%
Total	478	100.1%

## V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The survey results show that Filipino women have strong participation in elections despite systemic challenges that leave many dissatisfied with the current system. As described by the respondents, elections are “magulo”, “madumi”, “marahas”, and “para sa iilan lang.”

It must be noted that the current political system is historically rooted in structures where power revolves around a few families and vested interests. In such a system, despite the holding of periodic elections, women and the broader public are denied a genuine voice and meaningful decision-making power. Thus, even when women identify clear criteria for choosing candidates—such as platform, track record, and

integrity—elections continue to be dominated by candidates who do not exhibit these desired qualities.

Resources also play a crucial role, especially when voters lack access to comprehensive information on potentially desirable candidates. As noted by respondents, their primary sources of information remain conventional media, which require significant resources for candidates to access and utilize effectively during campaigns. On the other hand, while social media may be more accessible for both candidates and voters, it is also ridden with misinformation, disinformation, and the spread of fake news.

Given this context, civic and political education campaigns must reinforce the value of voting as both a right and a democratic responsibility, while promoting a politics of change. This politics of change challenges traditional politics that serve only a select few and instead upholds leadership that is accountable to the people and reflective of the democratic interests championed by women and the people.

The respondents' women's agenda closely aligns with the broader people's agenda (national issues). This should guide the platforms and actions of candidates—should they be elected — to address women's concerns in a systemic and structural manner, rather than through band-aid solutions or programs vulnerable to patronage politics. This entails implementing policies that address economic concerns (e.g., high prices, lack of jobs, inadequate income and wages), the absence of public services, violence against women, persistent gender discrimination, and rights violations. It also requires repealing or ending neoliberal policies that have proven ineffective or harmful to women's welfare and development.

The survey results also suggest a generally positive acceptance of women in leadership roles. However, support for women candidates remains conditional—dependent not solely on their gender but on whether they exhibit traits perceived as desirable by voters. This conditional support reflects a nuanced view: while there is recognition of women's right and capability to lead, voters prioritize merit and performance over identity alone.

Finally, it must be emphasized that women's political participation does not begin and end with voting or elections. Continuous engagement in issues affecting women and society is essential. Regardless of the outcome of the elections, holding those elected to account is important — monitor the policies and programs that elected officials introduce or implement. Civic education must reiterate that women and the people have the power to revoke the mandate granted through elections—whether through legal means or through historically proven forms of collective action such as mobilizations and people's power.