Descriptive Study on the Thoughts of Boholano Voters among Women Political Leaders

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Abstract - The study looked into the characteristics of female leaders to see why Boholano voters like them. A purposively selected sample of 37 registered voters from various municipalities was used to investigate participants' preferences in selecting women leaders. Interviews, observation, and document analysis were all used as forms of data collecting. The data was organized and analyzed using the qualitative technique. Responses from Google Forms, Messenger, Zoom, and Google Meet, as well as interviews and observations, were used to compile the research data. The results revealed eight features that were predominantly reflected in the responses of the respondents. Motherly instinct, compassion, honesty, open-mindedness, adaptability, perseverance, commitment, and competitiveness are some of them. The study concluded that Boholans favored female leaders as symbol of gender equality and empowerment. Females are just as important as males in society since they have abilities that can help maintain peace and order. The presence of a female official in Bohol empowers other female leaders and residents. They are advocates of equitable opportunities.

Keywords: factors, leader, province, politics, women

Introduction

The Province of Bohol is one of the first-class provinces in the Philippines, located in Central Visayas (Region VII). Bohol has a total land area of 4,772.52 square kilometers according to the Philippine Atlas (2021). The province has forty-seven (47) municipalities and comprises one (1) component city (Tagbilaran). It is politically subdivided into three (3) congressional districts – District I, II, and III. From the Philippine Atlas, Bohol’s registered voter count is 898,682. There were 10 out of 47 municipalities that held the mayor’s position by women.

The researcher will ask the resident voters and to collate data from different municipalities in Bohol who are currently reigned by women Mayors. For the appropriateness of the study, the descriptive type of research using survey instruments as a tool in gathering will be used. The data collected through the descriptive method will be carefully analyzed, opinions held and processing going on. Then, the researcher will tabulate, count, and process the data after retrieving and collating all completed survey instruments.

The United Nations has set seventeen (17) goals to be achieved by 2030. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are a set of goals that relate to the most pressing concerns of our day. SDG 5 - Gender Equality is one of these goals, which range from micro to macro issues. United Nations member-states have pledged to ensuring that all citizens enjoy the same rights and privileges, regardless of gender, under the aforementioned SDG. Data reveals, however, that women are underrepresented at all levels of decision-making around the world, and that gender balance in politics is a long way off.

There are 26 women serving as Heads of State and/or Government in 24 countries as of September 1, 2021. Women make up only 25% of all national legislatures, a significant increase over the previous year. As of September 1, 2021, there are 26 women serving as Heads of State and/or Government in 24 countries. Only 25% of all national parliaments are women, up from 11% in 1995. Data from 133 countries shows that women constitute 2.18 million or 36% of elected members in local deliberative bodies (UN WOMEN, 2021)
In the Philippines, women in positions of leadership are not uncommon. Filipinos have already elected two female presidents and two female vice presidents since the end of the Marcos dictatorship. This, however, was not always the case. Filipino women were denied the ability to vote under the 1935 Philippine Constitution. Nonetheless, the stated Constitution stipulated that suffrage for Filipino women might be granted if at least 300,000 women voted in favor of it in a special plebiscite. With 447,725 votes, the Philippine National Assembly granted Filipino women the right to vote and run for public office on April 30, 1937. The country hosted its first general elections in which women were allowed to vote in the same year. Carmen Planas was chosen as one of them.

In a democratic country, leaders are the most essential. In the Philippines, elections of local government happen in each province and an opportunity for a serious consideration to who will represent them over the next term. Political leaders cannot operate until the selection process of the people. Leadership is paradoxical. In many spheres of life in the Philippines, politics is dominated by male from the smallest government unit all the way up to the national level (Gemba, 2001). According to the Philippines News Agency, women rule 40 of the country’s 146 cities, accounting for about one third of the total, demonstrating women’s growing importance and engagement at all levels of government in the Philippines.

Politics entails the creation, distribution, and exercise of decision-making authority among larger groups of people and with that inequality in politics existed. The inequality that women cannot be considered in position ages ago. Gender equality, according to the United Nations Women, says that both men and women have equal chances and the circumstances in which they might achieve their full potential in economic, social, cultural, and political development are all factors to consider. In history, the roles that men and women play are different. The United Nations Population Fund believes that gender equality exists when both sexes are able to share equally in the distribution of influence and power.

In fact, men and women are equal in all spheres of life. Without this equality, women cannot be in governance or political representation (Zapata, 2018). Countries are increasingly recognizing women to be part of all transnational processes and reparation that includes politics as their political realm. As noted in the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2019), women’s equal participation with men in power and decision-making is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life and at the core of women’s empowerment. Strategies to increase women’s participation in politics have been advanced through conventions, protocols and international agreements (Morobane, 2014). UNDP democratic governance programs take a holistic approach, encompassing the full political and electoral process and emphasizing the critical relevance of women's empowerment as political actors and decision-makers. Half of the world’s population are women, but today women’s proportion of seats held in national parliaments globally is 25.58 (World Bank, 2020). As of 2020, the female representation in national parliaments consisted of 28 percent (Statista 2021). It has been a challenge for women in the Philippines to take a bigger role and impact in terms of politics. Leadership is still viewed through the lens of masculinity. Social definitions of role still prevail in society wherein women are the bearers of the child and take good care of the family’s future generations. As a result of this, political clout is being eroded (Hega, 2003).

The study aimed to find out the experience and thoughts that facilitated the selection of women to be the leader in 10 municipalities in Bohol. The study aims to find out the qualities female leaders possess than in their male counterparts, characteristics of the women leaders to be selected, contributing factors on selecting women, and the effect of having a women leader in the current term, 2018-2022. The result of this survey served as the basis of the qualities Boholanos considered in choosing a leader to be their voice and expected to perform a number of duties in their localities.

Methods and Materials

As a result of understanding the aims and objectives of this study, the researcher will use Quantitative Method of data collection. In this method, the researchers aim to discover the qualities of the female leaders of
Bohol possess, and the reasons why the respondents chose to vote for female leaders rather than male leaders through gathering information and data.

In order to collect its data, the method of Quantitative Research this study focuses on utilizing a survey question. Surveys help to collect a vast amount of real-time data. The researcher will ask the resident voters of the municipality to answer the survey to make sure of the credibility of the survey.

The researcher first move is to collate data from different municipalities in Bohol who are currently reigned by women Mayors. A list of eligible respondents will be selected. The researcher plans to personally interview some respondents and send the link of the survey through online platforms: google forms, Messenger, Zoom and Google Meet and explain the purpose of the study. For the survey sent online, the researcher will follow up after two days, to check if the survey instrument is already completed by the respondents and ready to be analyzed. For the appropriateness of the study, the descriptive type of research using survey instruments as a tool in gathering was used. The data collected through the descriptive method will be then carefully analyzed.

Ethical Consideration
In the manner of conducting the research, the researcher has to consider the ethical standard by asking the respondents’ consent to be part of the study. Further, it was disclosed to them the purpose of the research and how their participation could be a valuable contribution for the success of the study. They were also informed that their participation is voluntary and if ever if they find that this research could be as an additional burden, then they are free to withdraw their participation anytime. The researcher urges the respondents to reveal about their identities by stating their names to ensure the authenticity of their participation and they must be registered voters of that particular town. But at the same time, they are told that their identities will be protected and that any information they provide will be treated with the utmost care and confidentiality. In addition, the respondents are assured that they will receive any information if they require about the study’s conclusions or findings. Finally, the respondents are given adequate time to ponder or decide whether or not to participate in the study.

Results
The data gathered yielded eight (8) significant factors in which Boholano voters thought as qualities of female leaders possess as compared to their male counterparts. These factors will be reflected as themes, which include (1) motherly instinct, (2) compassionate, (3) honest, (4) open-minded, (5) adaptability, (6) perseverance, (7) commitment, and (8) competitive. The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Theme 1. Motherly Instinct
Theme 1 of the study is motherly instinct in which ten respondents believed that a woman leader could be considered as their own mothers in the family. A mother who will respond to their needs and look what is best for them.

“Theyungd kay ang mga babaye nay panghumunahasasasausa ka inahanngabuahton ang tanangmakaayıosaiyang mga sakopsap panimalay. (Participant 25)

“They have motherly instincts which made them more empathetic and compassionate than men.” (Participant 37)

“If they will lead a particular place or organization, they will always have a heart of a mother who will always find ways just to give the best of her children. (Participant 5)

Theme 2. Compassionate
Theme 2 of the study is compassionate in which eight respondents pointed out that this what was female leaders are known for. It emphasizes women leaders’ ability to address the concerns of her constituents.
“Compassion is the heart of serving. Above all qualities of leaders, being compassionate is the most unique attributes of women leaders.” (Participant 17)
Compassionate towards people”. (Participant 9)

Theme 3. Honest
Theme 3 of the study is honest. Four respondents emphasized that this value is a reflection of a women leader serving in their respective towns.

“But if you’re asking me why the current mayor is better than her opponent, it’s on the background and who is honest, practiced fair and just especially during the campaign period. I guess you would know who is better as a person.” (Participant 16)

“My views of a good female leader are that she is active, true to her words and a good decision maker.” (Participant 35)

Theme 4. Openminded
Theme 4 of this study is openminded where three respondents stated that this must be considered as basis in choosing female leaders.

“Selecting women as a leader is that, women are more open minded than men. Women can express more on their opinions rather than men.” (Participant 11)

“Open-mindedness in managing multiple tasks and being flexible.” (Participant 31)

Theme 5. Adaptability
Theme 5 indicates adaptability where three respondents considered this as one of the qualities in choosing female leaders.

“I think that female leaders are more adaptive in taking initiative in contrast to men, who tend to be career-centric and want to maximize their financial return from work.” (Participant 24)

“Adaptability and has a positive disposition towards work and challenges.” (Participant 2)

Theme 6. Perseverance
Theme 6 is perseverance in which there were three respondents made mention that this is an important trait why they chose women leaders.

“Perseverance because of her dedication as a public servant.” (Participant 4)

“Women are great listeners and strong in communicating people. Women are so active and persevere in handling people and crisis situations.” (Participant 7)

Theme 7. Commitment
Theme 7 is commitment which pinpoints the desire to serve as truly servant of people. Three respondents answered that women leaders have this characteristic.

“Ihatag ang sak tongaserbisyoalang satanang gawala’y pili.” (Participant 25)
“Women leaders are committed and values transparency in the field.” (Participant 32)

**Theme 8. Competitive**

Theme 8 of the study is competitive. Three participants answered that this particular trait plays an important role in choosing female leaders.

“I believe that women are more competitive than men. They always tend to do their best and will not settle for less.” (Participant 5)

“Isog ug dawat ang tanangpagsuway.” (Participant 10)

“Kay ang babaye mas dalikaduolanog kaya na pod ang buhatsalakingadtosabaye.” (Participant 3)

**Discussion**

The first finding of the study revealed that Boholanos preferred to have a motherly instinct of women leader to reign in a certain town. It is commonly believed that women lose their edge after becoming moms. However, according to Grzelakowski’s research, the experience of raising children appears to enhance women’s ability to lead and inspire employees, rather than diminishing it (Lindell, 2002). The findings of this study demonstrated that a female leader's motherly instinct is a quality that distinguishes her from her male counterparts.

Furthermore, being compassionate to its constituents also makes female dominant to its counterpart. Women are typically believed to be more understanding and open towards sentiments, therefore one would predict a higher level of self-compassion in women, according to (Mestre, Samper, Fras, & Tur, 2013). Women also show higher degrees of compassion for humanity, sympathetic concern, perspective taking, and forgiving than men, which could indicate better self-compassion scores (Neff & Pommier, 2013). In addition, according to Spence and Helmreich (1978), women score higher on compassion than men.

The study also discovered that being honest is a factor in selecting female leaders. Despite the fact that honesty is not a fixed feature, most research show that women cheat less than men, according to Rosenbaum et al. (2014). Although most studies show that men cheat substantially more than women, certain studies show no gender differences (e.g., Childs, 2012; Djawadi and Fahr, 2015). Gender does not appear to be the only factor that impacts why people may be dishonest.

The study also demonstrated the importance of having an open mind. Open-mindedness is defined as a person's willingness to abandon established ways of thinking (Mitchell et al., 2012; Haran et al., 2013; Eneizian et al., 2019a). It also includes the acceptance of new changes (Olokundun et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2010). This can lead to success since it raises the likelihood of other members embracing new ideas and decreases organizational conflicts.

Adaptability is another quality that is highlighted. A woman leader is willing to push herself to overcome diverse difficulties and is always searching for ways to develop. Adaptability is a personal trait that helps people manage with ambiguity, uncertainty, and stress, as well as work outside of typical time and geographic constraints (Pearlman & Barney 2000). At its foundation, adaptability is the ability to change, which includes both the ability and the competition to do so (Hall & Chandler, 2005).

Perseverance is also one of the characteristics mentioned by the participants. Perseverance is a human attribute linked to excellent leaders across a wide range of fields. Great leaders understand the value of perseverance. To realize their goals, they need focus, determination, tenacity, endurance, and constancy (Haden, 2017). Women leaders, like men, have won and lost, succeeded and failed, but what matters most is that they continue to carry out their responsibilities for the sake of their citizens.
Another trait was revealed by this study is commitment. Participants agree that a leader must be dedicated to serving the people. Being and maintaining a member of an organization, having a desire to strive for the organization, and believing in organizational aims and ideals are all examples of commitment. Furthermore, commitment is like feeling like a member of the family, according to (Dubin, et al., 1975; Steers, 1977). As a result, as a leader and a member of the family, she is now devoting herself to doing her work to the best of her ability, as required by law.

Finally, the study found that a female leader was chosen due of her aggressiveness. Even while executing the same leadership activities, women are judged more harshly than males. In assessments of their efficacy and expectations of their leader characteristics, there is bias against women leaders (Eagly& Carli, 2007). However, women leaders have ascribed their leadership success to being competitive, demonstrating that they can be as effective as males in political leadership. According to Alice Eagly (2007), the path to leadership for women today is a labyrinth through which they must navigate and find their way, rather than a glass ceiling to which they have no access.

Conclusion

The researcher found that female government officials in Bohol represent a symbol of feminism as well as equity and empowerment. Females are just as vital as males in society since they possess skills that can aid in the maintenance of peace and order. Having women in politics or any other group encourages variety, which is beneficial in making better decisions.

These women leaders take initiative, inspires and motivates others, develops others, builds relationships, displays high integrity and honesty, communicates powerfully and prolifically, collaboration and teamwork, champions change, makes decisions, innovates, solves problems and analyzes issues, customer and external focus, values diversity, establishes stretch goals, develops strategic perspective, technical or p (2020, Zenger and Folkman). These leadership skills are essential for maintaining community peace and order. Respondents want a candidate who would inspire and motivate them when seeking for an excellent government representative. Residents have high expectations for female candidates in terms of women’s empowerment. The presence of a female official in Bohol empowers other female leaders and residents. They became advocates of equitable opportunities.

They exhibit nourishment as a womanly attribute. People have high hopes for these officials in terms of community development. Bohol residents are looking for candidates who will improve their social services. Women are known for their honesty and integrity, and they tend to perform better in stressful situations (Zenger and Folkman, 2020). The presence of a female government official screams equality and empowerment. This would encourage women to participate more actively in activities that benefit their community. Female leaders, according to the residents, are more required in this time of distress.

Boholanos believed that a female leader would strengthen women’s empowerment advocacy. This would be encouraging because women have historically been underrepresented in politics. When women become leaders, they bring skills, new perspectives, and cultural variations to the table, resulting in more effective solutions. (Megan, 2020). This implies that women are required in every facet of a business or society.

Lastly, Boholans saw their leaders as their voice and expected them to carry out a variety of responsibilities in their communities. They entrust women with the difficult task of developing policy and delivering services as their governing body.

References:


