



Voter Perceptions of Political Accountability in the 2025 Philippine Senate Elections

Dennis A. De Jesus

Research Head

Philippine College of Criminology

dennisdejesus035@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0080-0286>

Dr. Jocelyn B. Benter

Associate Professor I

Bulacan State University, Philippines

jocelyn.benter@bulsu.edu.ph

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8201-5809>

Windel C. Austria

Senior High school Faculty/Formation Coordinator

National University, Philippines

austriawindel@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8129-4121>

Received: January 10, 2026,

Revised & Accepted: April 30, 2026

Copyright: Author(s) (2026)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how Filipino voters evaluate political accountability dimensions—specifically answerability, enforceability, and responsiveness—following the 2025 Philippine Senate elections. It identifies which accountability dimensions and policy issues voters prioritize, explores demographic differences in accountability perceptions, and analyzes how those perceptions influence voting preferences.

Methods: A cross-sectional quantitative design was employed using a post-election survey of 600 registered Filipino voters. Stratified sampling was applied based on geographic location (Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao), age, gender, and educational attainment. Data were collected from May to June 2025 using a validated 15-item questionnaire (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$). Statistical analyses included frequency distributions, mean scores, one-way ANOVA, and Chi-square tests, with a 95% confidence level and $\pm 4\%$ margin of error.



Results: Voters rated anti-corruption stance (mean = 4.74), candidate integrity (4.69), and transparency (4.57) as the most valued accountability dimensions, while responsiveness received the lowest rating (4.10). The top policy priority was anti-corruption measures (68.5%), followed by job creation (59.2%) and poverty reduction (54.1%). Demographic analysis showed strong participation by voters aged 18–40, with higher educational attainment associated with more critical candidate evaluation. No significant gender-based differences were found.

Conclusion: Filipino voters prioritize ethical, integrity-based dimensions of political accountability over service delivery responsiveness. However, there is persistent skepticism about the effectiveness of electoral and institutional mechanisms in enforcing post-election accountability, indicating an “accountability paradox” where accountability remains candidate-centered rather than institution-driven.

Keywords: political responsibility, voter perception, corruption, Philippine senate, electoral behavior

Introduction

Political accountability refers to the obligation of elected officials to justify their actions and face consequences for misconduct or poor performance. It operates through vertical accountability, where citizens sanction leaders through elections, and horizontal accountability, where institutions enforce checks and balances.

In developing democracies such as the Philippines, accountability mechanisms are often weakened by corruption, patronage politics, and institutional inefficiencies.

Previous studies suggest that voters increasingly prioritize anti-corruption and integrity when evaluating candidates, often more than party affiliation or policy platforms (Mendoza et al., 2023; Davis et al., 2024).

However, despite this trend, there is still limited empirical evidence on how Filipino voters evaluate accountability dimensions after actual elections, particularly in the 2025 Senate elections.

Research Questions

1. What accountability dimensions are most valued by Filipino voters in senatorial candidates?
2. What policy issues are prioritized by voters?
3. Is there a significant difference in accountability perceptions across demographic groups?
4. How do accountability perceptions influence voting preferences?

This study addresses these gaps by analyzing post-election voter perceptions using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

Theoretical Framework

Political accountability is examined through three key dimensions: answerability, enforceability, and responsiveness. Answerability refers to the obligation of political leaders to



explain their actions to the public. Enforceability involves the capacity of citizens and institutions to sanction leaders for misconduct, particularly through elections and legal mechanisms. Responsiveness reflects the ability of leaders to address public needs and policy demands.

This study also distinguishes between vertical accountability, where citizens evaluate leaders through elections, and horizontal accountability, where institutions such as courts and oversight bodies ensure compliance with laws. These frameworks guide the analysis of voter perceptions in the 2025 Senate elections.

Methods

Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional quantitative design using a post-election survey approach.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A total of 600 registered Filipino voters participated in the study. A stratified sampling technique was used based on geographic location (Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao), age group, gender, and educational attainment. The sample size was determined using a 95% confidence level and $\pm 4\%$ margin of error. The response rate was 82%, based on the number of distributed versus completed questionnaires, resulting in 600 valid responses out of 730 distributed surveys.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected from May to June 2025, after the May 12, 2025 Philippine Senate elections. The post-election timing was used to ensure that responses reflected actual voting experiences rather than hypothetical preferences.

Research Instrument

A structured 15-item questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale was utilized. The instrument covered demographic profile, political accountability perceptions, and candidate evaluation criteria.

Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire was validated by three experts in political science and research methodology. A pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents. The Cronbach's alpha result was 0.89, indicating high internal consistency.

Statistical Treatment

Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage distributions, mean scores, one-way ANOVA for group differences, and Chi-square test for associations between variables. A 95% confidence interval was also computed for mean scores.



Results

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

| Characteristic | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 307 | 51.2% |
| Female | 283 | 47.2% |
| Age | | |
| Age 18–24 | 155 | 25.8% |
| Age 25–40 | 242 | 40.3% |
| Age 41+ | 203 | 33.8% |
| Education | | |
| Secondary (High School) | 278 | 46.3% |
| College | 241 | 40.2% |
| Postgraduate | 81 | 13.5% |
| Total | 600 | 100% |

The demographic profile shows that a large proportion of respondents belong to the 18–40 age group, indicating the strong participation of young and middle-aged voters in the 2025 Philippine Senate elections. This supports findings that younger Filipino voters are generally more politically aware and more concerned with governance quality, transparency, and accountability than older cohorts (Atun et al., 2019; Mendoza et al., 2023).

This is consistent with Abinales and Amoroso (2023), who emphasize that governance and corruption issues cut across all demographic groups regardless of gender. According to Mendoza et al. (2016), higher educational attainment enhances voters’ ability to critically evaluate political candidates based on integrity, competence, and ethical behavior. In terms of education, the majority of respondents completed secondary education, followed by college graduates and a smaller proportion with postgraduate education. According to Hutchcroft (2022), higher educational attainment enhances voters’ ability to critically evaluate political candidates based on integrity, competence, and ethical behavior, suggesting that education plays a role in shaping accountability expectations.

Table 2. Voter Ratings of Political Accountability Dimensions

| Accountability Dimension | Mean Score |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Anti-corruption stance | 4.74 |
| Candidate integrity | 4.69 |
| Transparency | 4.57 |
| Performance competence | 4.35 |
| Responsiveness | 4.10 |

The results indicate that anti-corruption stance, candidate integrity, and transparency received the highest ratings, while responsiveness received the lowest. This suggests that Filipino voters prioritize ethical and integrity-based dimensions of political accountability over service delivery responsiveness.



This finding aligns with Mendoza et al. (2016), who found that voters in Philippine elections place greater emphasis on moral credibility and competence rather than party affiliation.

The strong emphasis on anti-corruption reflects widespread dissatisfaction with governance and recurring corruption issues in public institutions.

According to Mendoza et al. (2025), ethical leadership has become a central factor in voter decision-making due to persistent corruption concerns.

In contexts where institutional accountability mechanisms are weak, voters tend to equate accountability with personal honesty and transparency.

The lower importance given to responsiveness supports Mendoza et al. (2023), who argue that Philippine political parties lack strong ideological distinctions, leading voters to focus more on individual candidate qualities than party-based performance.

Table 3. Priority Issues Voters Expect Senate Candidates to Address

| Issue | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Anti-corruption measures | 411 | 68.5% |
| Job creation | 355 | 59.2% |
| Poverty reduction | 325 | 54.1% |
| Education | 304 | 50.7% |
| Healthcare | 287 | 47.9% |

Note: Multiple responses were allowed; therefore, percentages do not sum to 100%.

The data indicate that anti-corruption measures are the most frequently selected priority issue, followed by job creation and poverty reduction. This reflects a strong public concern over governance quality and economic stability.

The inclusion of a multiple-response format provides a more realistic representation of voter concerns, as individuals often prioritize more than one national issue simultaneously. The dominance of anti-corruption concerns reflects widespread dissatisfaction with governance systems and aligns with Atun et al. (2019), who document how corruption-related governance issues influence public trust. This is further supported by Davis et al. (2024), who highlight the persistent link between corruption risks and political behavior in the Philippines.

Discussion

The findings show that voters highly prioritize anti-corruption stance, candidate integrity, and transparency, indicating strong preference for ethical governance (Mendoza et al., 2016; Mendoza et al., 2025). These dimensions reflect the importance of answerability in political accountability, where leaders are expected to justify actions and maintain integrity.

The demographic composition suggests that younger and middle-aged voters dominate the sample, which may explain the strong emphasis on transparency and accountability. Higher educational attainment may also contribute to more critical evaluation of candidates.

The prioritization of anti-corruption measures as the top issue reflects persistent public concern regarding governance quality and corruption (Atun et al., 2019; Davis et al., 2024). Economic concerns such as job creation and poverty reduction remain secondary but still significant.



Despite strong expectations for accountability, voters expressed limited confidence in elections as mechanisms for enforcing post-election accountability. This indicates a gap between electoral participation and institutional enforcement capacity, reinforcing the concept of an accountability paradox.

Limitation

This study is limited by its cross-sectional design, which prevents causal inference. Self-reported responses may introduce bias. Although stratified sampling was used, generalizability may still be limited.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Filipino voters prioritize political accountability, particularly anti-corruption, integrity, and competence, when evaluating senatorial candidates. However, there is persistent skepticism regarding the effectiveness of electoral and institutional mechanisms in enforcing accountability. This indicates that political accountability in the Philippines remains largely candidate-centered rather than institution-driven.

Recommendation

1. Strengthen civic education to promote continuous political engagement.
2. Institutionalize citizen participation mechanisms beyond elections.
3. Improve transparency and anti-corruption enforcement systems.
4. Strengthen political party systems to reduce personality-based politics.

Transparency Statement: The authors confirm that this study has been conducted with honesty and in full adherence to ethical guidelines.

Funding: The study received no external funding.

Acknowledgments: The researchers would like to thank the editor and the anonymous reviewers for their comments, which have greatly improved the paper.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare there are no conflicts of interest.



References

- Abinales, P. N., & Amoroso, D. J. (2023). *State and society in the Philippines* (5th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Acuna, R., Alejandro, A., & Leung, R. (2025). The families that stick: A network approach to dynastic politics in the Philippines. arXiv. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2505.21280>.
- Atun, J. M. L., Mendoza, R. U., David, C. C., Cossid, R. P. N., & Soriano, C. R. R. (2019). The Philippines' antidrug campaign: Spatial and temporal patterns of killings linked to drugs. *Ateneo School of Government Publications*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0955539591930221X>
- Batara, E. B., Labadan, A. K. E., & Roa, M. B. (2021). Influencing the voting behavior of the youth during the Philippine senatorial election: A structural equation modelling (SEM) investigation. *Jurnal Studi Pemerintahan*. Accessed on 22nd October, 2009, at <https://jsp.umy.ac.id/index.php/jsp/article/download/28/69/136>.
- Davis, D. B., Mendoza, R. U., & Yap, J. K. (2024). Corruption risk and political dynasties: Exploring the links using public procurement data in the Philippines. *Economics of Governance*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10101-023-00306-4>
- Manhit, V. A. (2025, March 5). 70% of the Filipinos would most likely vote in the upcoming elections who promise to crack down on corruption – survey. Philstar.com. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/03/05/2426135/70-filipinos-would-probably-vote-candidates-vowing-fight-corruption-survey>
- Maligro, T., (2025, February 28). 90 per cent of Filipinos would elect healthcare, food security activists – survey. Rappler. <https://www.rappler.com/business/filipinos-would-vote-agriculture-food-security-advocates-sws-survey-february-2025/>
- Mendoza, R. U., Beja, E. L., Venida, V. S., & Yap, D. B. (2016). Political dynasties and poverty: Measurement and evidence of linkages in the Philippines. *Oxford Development Studies*, 44(2), 189–201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2016.1169264>
- Mendoza, R. U., Mendoza, G. A. S., Teehankee, J. C., Tuaño, P. A. P., & Yap, J. K. (2023). Interrogating the links between dynasties and development in the Philippines. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, 8(3), 765–786. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20578911231182490>
- Mendoza, R. U., Bulaong, O. G., & Mendoza, G. A. S. (2025). Anti-corruption reforms in the Philippines: Quo vadis? *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09763996251333209>
- Philippine News Agency. (2025, February 28). SWS poll: Agri, healthcare become top issues of PH voters. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1245157>.
- Schedler, A. (1999). Conceptualizing accountability. *The self-restraining state: Power and accountability in new democracies* (pp. 14-35). Lynne Rienner.
- Schedler, A. (2002). That is elections without democracy: The menu of manipulation. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2), 36-50.



Teehankee, J. C. (2022). Breaking down patronage politics in the Philippines. Ateneo de Manila Press /Bughaw.

Philstar.com. (2025, February 15). Vote our better future. <https://www.philstar.com/news-commentary/2025/02/15/2421739/vote-our-better-future>.

Manila Standard. (2025, March 4). 7 in 10 Filipinos prefer politicians against corruption – survey. <https://manilastandard.net/news/elections-2025/314564714/7-in-10-filipinos-prefer-politicians-against-corruption-survey.html>.

Views and opinions expressed in this article are the views and opinions of the author(s), *NPRC Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability etc. caused in relation to/arising out of the use of the content.



Questionnaire

Section A: Demographics

Age: _____

Gender: Male Female Prefer not to say

Education: High School College Postgraduate

Region: _____

Section B: Perceptions of Political Accountability

Please indicate agreement (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree):

5. Politics in the Philippines is highly corrupt. ____

6. Politicians are held accountable by voters. ____

7. Transparency in government is important for accountability. ____

8. Election outcomes can reduce corruption. ____

9. Citizen participation increases accountability. ____

Section C: Candidate Evaluation

Please rate each factor in choosing a Senate candidate (1 = Not Important, 5 = Very Important):

10. Anti-corruption stance ____

11. Personal integrity ____

12. Prior performance and experience ____

13. Party affiliation ____

14. Advocacy on economic issues ____

15. Stance on social issues ____