Examining How Candidate Attributes Shape Gen Z Perceptions for the 2025 Philippine Senate Elections Using Conjoint Analysis

Emmanuel Joseph B. Sumatra
Marketing Department, Ateneo de Davao University, Davao City, Philippines

Author Email: ejsumatra@gmail.com

Abstract. Understanding Generation Z's political preferences is essential for candidates who engage this influential demographic in the 2025 Philippine Senate elections. Despite the growing importance of Gen Z in the electorate, limited research exists on the specific candidate attributes that shape their voting decisions. This study, conducted in Davao City, addresses this gap by examining how Gen Z perceives various candidate attributes through the lens of Multi-Attribute Utility Theory (MAUT) and Rational Choice Theory (RCT). Using conjoint analysis with the PAPRIKA method, the study evaluated the relative importance of six key attributes: political experience, educational background, stance on issues, party affiliation, campaign style, and age group. Data from 1,380 respondents were analyzed to ensure a robust representation of Gen Z preferences. Results reveal that political experience (31.0%) and educational background (18.1%) are the most influential factors, followed by stance on issues (17.2%) and party affiliation (15.8%), with campaign-style (10.8%) and age group (7.2%) being less significant. Gen Z voters in this study preferred candidates with substantial experience, advanced academic credentials, and a progressive stance on social and environmental issues, favoring digital over traditional campaign strategies. These findings have theoretical and practical implications, enriching the understanding of Gen Z's decision-making processes and highlighting their prioritization of competence, authenticity, and modern communication. Politicians can use these insights to develop targeted campaign strategies that resonate with Gen Z values, emphasizing progressive policies, qualifications, and digital engagement. By aligning campaign approaches with Gen Z's expectations, candidates have a strategic opportunity to connect meaningfully with this emerging voting bloc in the Philippine political landscape.

Keywords: Conjoint analysis; Electoral preferences; Generation Z; PAPRIKA method; Political marketing.

1.0 Introduction

As the 2025 Philippine Senate elections approach, understanding the factors influencing voter preferences, particularly among the growing Gen Z demographic, becomes increasingly crucial. Recent studies highlight the evolving importance of candidate attributes in shaping voter choices, especially among younger generations. This shift in focus presents an opportunity to explore how Gen Z voters in the Philippines evaluate potential senatorial candidates.

Several studies have employed conjoint analysis to investigate voter preferences in various contexts. In Japan and the Philippines, researchers found that voters prioritize competencies such as political experience, education, and profession over traditional factors (Anabo, 2021; Murcia & Bolo, 2017; Horiuchi et al., 2018). Explicitly focusing on

younger voters, Timoteo Jr. (2021) observed that Gen Z and Millennial voters in the Philippines prefer candidates who are not corrupt, wise, and have a solid moral character. The political landscape in the Philippines is complex, with various factors influencing voting behavior. While party identification and pre-election surveys shape voting preferences, issue orientation, and candidate orientation appear less significant (Batara et al., 2021). Interestingly, Horiuchi et al. (2018) noted that voters' preferences for personal attributes often diverge from the observed characteristics of elected officials, suggesting the influence of party recruitment strategies and electoral systems. Gen Z voters, in particular, exhibit unique characteristics that may influence their political preferences. Putra et al. (2024) and Vira et al. (2024) emphasized the pivotal role of social media in shaping political awareness and participation among youth. This digital savviness extends beyond politics, as seen in their approach to financial decision-making. Sumatra (2023) found that effective social media campaigns and competitive interest rates are crucial for Gen Z in financial contexts, which may also affect their political engagement.

The Multi-Attribute Utility Theory (MAUT), developed by Keeney and Raiffa in the 1970s, provides a framework for analyzing complex choices by assessing the value individuals assign to multiple attributes (Keeney & Raiffa, 1976; Dyer, 2016). This approach has been applied in various contexts, including evaluating presidential candidates (Murcia & Bolo, 2017). For Gen Z, environmental consciousness, attitudes, and self-efficacy significantly influence their behaviors, as observed in their green travel choices (Khan, 2023). Complementing MAUT, the Rational Choice Theory (RCT) suggests that Gen Z's decisions, including voting, are based on perceived costs and benefits aligned with personal goals (Becker, 1976). This theory helps explain the value-driven approach observed in Gen Z's decision-making across various domains, from food choices (Garai-Fodor, 2021) to technology adoption in educational settings (Persada et al., 2019).

Building on established theories and methods, this study's Conceptual Framework, as shown in Figure 1, illustrates how key candidate attributes—such as political experience, stance on issues, and campaign-style—are identified and assessed through the PAPRIKA method within the conjoint analysis. This approach enables the generation of preference data that captures the unique priorities of Gen Z voters in Davao City, setting the foundation for nuanced insights into their electoral decision-making.
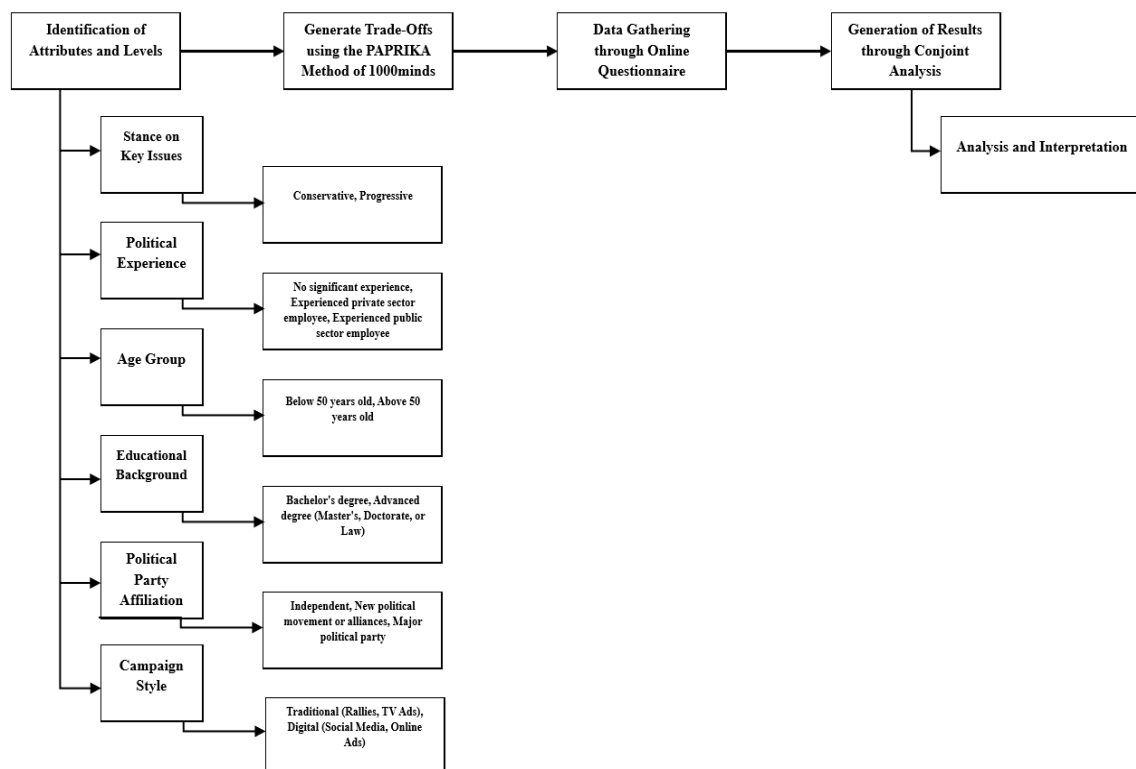

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.

A compelling method for conjoint analysis is the PAPRIKA method, introduced by Hansen and Ombler (2008). This method allows for the evaluation of multi-attribute options through pairwise comparisons. PAPRIKA has been applied in various fields, from healthcare prioritization to agricultural breeding programs (Hansen & Ombler, 2008; Balogun et al., 2021). Political science is gaining traction for studying voter preferences, especially in developing countries and among younger generations (Department, 2018; Anabo, 2021; Murcia & Bolo, 2017). Conjoint analysis, including methods like PAPRIKA, enables researchers to identify causal effects of multiple components and test several hypotheses simultaneously (Hainmueller et al., 2013). This approach provides a detailed examination of voter preferences. For instance, it has been used to study voter behavior in Japan's 2014 House of Representatives election (Horiuchi et al., 2016). By highlighting nuanced preferences across complex, multi-attribute profiles, conjoint analysis offers valuable insights into how voters evaluate candidates on multiple dimensions (Horiuchi et al., 2016; Hainmueller et al., 2013).

While these studies provide valuable insights, more literature is still needed to address Gen Z voters' preferences in regional areas of the Philippines, such as Davao City, especially in upcoming Senate elections. Previous research has extensively explored how candidate attributes shape voter choices; however, the unique context of Gen Z voters in Davao City offers a novel perspective that existing literature must fully capture. This study aims to bridge this gap by identifying the most valued candidate attributes and the combinations of attribute levels that resonate most strongly with young voters in this region. These insights could contribute uniquely to understanding and influencing youth voter turnout in the Philippines, particularly in regional and urbanized areas where voter dynamics may differ.

This study aims to identify the most preferred candidate attributes and combinations of attribute levels among Gen Z voters in Davao City for the 2025 Philippine Senate elections. By employing conjoint analysis, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how this demographic evaluates multi-attribute profiles, including a candidate's stance on issues, experience, age, education, party affiliation, and campaign style. This investigation will offer valuable insights for political candidates and parties, enabling them to tailor their outreach efforts effectively and potentially influence youth voter turnout and overall candidate success.

2.0 Methodology
2.1 Research Design
The study utilizes a quantitative, cross-sectional research design, employing Conjoint Analysis to explore Gen Z college students' preferences for candidate attributes in the 2025 Philippine Senate elections. Conjoint analysis has proven to be a valuable tool for examining multidimensional preferences in fields like political science and consumer behavior (Bansak et al., 2021). Research in the Philippines indicates that younger voters, including students, value candidate attributes such as political experience, competence, and track record (Anabo, 2021; Timoteo Jr., 2021; Murcia & Bolo, 2017). The PAPRIKA method, central to this analysis and utilized within the 1000minds platform, specifically supports real-world decision-making comparisons by assessing the relative importance of each candidate attribute. This method achieves this by simulating trade-offs between attributes like stance on critical issues, political experience, age group, educational background, party affiliation, and campaign style. By focusing on pairwise comparisons, PAPRIKA allows participants to reveal implicit priorities, offering a choice-based approach that provides insights into the priorities of Gen Z voters. Understanding their electoral behavior is invaluable for developing effective voter engagement strategies. Additionally, research suggests that factors such as party identification and pre-election surveys can further shape voting preferences (Batara et al., 2021), reinforcing the utility of conjoint analysis in uncovering nuanced voting dynamics.

2.2 Research Participants
This study focused on Gen Z college students aged 18 to 26 residing in Davao City. A multi-stage sampling approach was employed to ensure a representative sample of this population. Quota sampling was used to establish a sample size of 300 respondents, deemed adequate for conjoint analysis in similar research on voter preferences (Murcia & Bolo, 2017; Sumatra, 2023). Participants were identified through Purposive Sampling, specifically targeting Gen Z students in Davao City, while Convenience Sampling helped distribute surveys via personal and professional networks. Snowball Sampling further expanded the study's reach, as initial respondents shared the survey link within their networks, facilitating more involvement within the target demographic. This combination of methods was strategically designed to ensure that the sample adequately represents the Gen Z

college student population in Davao City. This multi-stage approach aligns with best practices in electoral research (Burger & Silima, 2006; Lunsford & Lunsford, 1995), balancing practicality and representativeness. Clearly defining the target population and applying structured inclusion criteria, the research gathered high-quality data for reliable insights into Gen Z electoral behavior (Zickar & Keith, 2022).

2.3 Research Instruments

Data for this study was collected using an online survey created on the 1000minds platform, specifically designed for PAPRIKA Conjoint Analysis. This method is highly regarded for examining multidimensional preferences in political science and marketing research (Hainmueller et al., 2013; Department, 2018). Respondents assessed hypothetical candidate profiles with varying attributes such as Stance on Key Issues, Political Experience, Age Group, Educational Background, Political Party Affiliation, and Campaign Style. By requiring respondents to choose their preferred candidates, the PAPRIKA method ranked the importance of each attribute, providing insights into the factors that influence Gen Z college students' candidate preferences. Conjoint analysis has proven effective in political contexts, allowing researchers to simulate real-world decision-making by presenting respondents with randomized profiles and identifying the causal effects of different attributes on preferences (Bansak et al., 2021). This method, widely used in studies on voter preferences (Anabo, 2021; Murcia & Bolo, 2017), has shown that younger voters value attributes like political experience, competence, and issue stances. Therefore, this approach is crucial for understanding and predicting Gen Z's voter behavior and informing political and educational research in various fields.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection for this study took place from September 29 to October 11, 2024. An online survey link was shared through various channels to reach Gen Z college students and gather their preferences for the 2025 Philippine Senate elections. Initially, the survey was distributed through personal and professional networks. Participants were encouraged to share the survey with other eligible respondents to expand their reach, leading to a snowballing effect. The survey remained open for a specific period, and at least 300 completed responses were collected, sufficient for Conjoint Analysis. Responses were gathered digitally on the 1000minds platform, facilitating complex preference studies in political science, education, and healthcare (Bansak et al., 2021). Conjoint analysis has proven effective in studying voter preferences, with recent studies showing that attributes like political experience, competence, and profession often influence voting decisions (Anabo, 2021; Murcia & Bolo, 2017). Ensuring respondent anonymity and emphasizing voluntary participation, this approach provided insights into how Gen Z students evaluate candidate profiles. This aligns with similar studies on multidimensional preferences in various sectors, from social media content to leadership styles in healthcare (Orte & Diño, 2019; Santos et al., 2022).

2.5 Data Analysis

The data gathered in this study were analyzed using the 1000minds PAPRIKA method. This method allowed for precise ranking of attribute levels based on respondent preferences. The analysis began by calculating utility scores for each attribute level, which served as quantitative representations of preferences and allowed for identifying the most preferred attribute. Following this, relative importance scores were derived across attributes, enabling a detailed understanding of which Gen Z voters prioritized candidate characteristics. Conjoint analysis, widely applied in political science and education fields, offers insights into voter behavior by simulating real-world attribute trade-offs (Bansak et al., 2021; Department, 2018). To achieve the study's objectives, results pinpointed the most preferred single attribute and the most favorable combination of attribute levels, which were used to simulate market share for a hypothetical candidate based on this optimal combination. Descriptive statistics supplemented the Conjoint Analysis, summarizing participant demographics and frequencies of attribute levels, further supporting a comprehensive analysis of Gen Z college students' electoral preferences. This method's application in similar studies has demonstrated its ability to reliably capture complex preferences and inform targeted decision-making strategies (Hauber et al., 2016; Castillo & Yee, 2023).

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were a priority in this study to ensure the responsible handling of participant data, especially given the digital context and Gen Z participants' concerns about privacy (Jabar et al., 2024). Informed consent was obtained digitally before participation, ensuring that involvement was voluntary and confidential, a

crucial practice in studies involving voting preferences and young demographics (Swedan et al., 2020; Joseph, 2023). Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and personal identifiers were excluded to maintain respondent anonymity throughout the data collection and analysis processes (Nii Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). In the context of Conjoint Analysis for electoral research, ethical frameworks were adapted to accommodate both emerging methodologies and digital communications, respecting intellectual ownership, transparency in data handling, and participant autonomy (Oliver, 2003; Nebeker et al., 2020). This approach reflects best practices in research ethics, ensuring that privacy, data confidentiality, and transparency are foundational to the study's structure.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

A total of 1,561 respondents initially participated in this study. After applying rigorous exclusion criteria to ensure response quality and data reliability, 1,380 valid responses were retained for analysis. The exclusion criteria included several automated checks: participants were removed if they failed two or more consistency check questions, repeatedly selected only the "they are equal" option, consistently chose either the "left" or "right" option or answered any question too quickly (less than one second per question or with a median response time below two seconds). These rules were implemented to identify and exclude respondents who might not have engaged genuinely with the survey content, refining the dataset to focus on reliable responses.

The demographic profile of the remaining respondents highlights a predominantly young, diverse group of Generation Z college students from Davao City, aged 18 to 26, as shown in Table 1. With the majority (74.0%) in the 18-20 age range, this sample reflects a relatively younger subset of Gen Z, who may hold distinct perspectives compared to older cohorts. The notable representation of women (57.1%) indicates a female-majority sample, which may influence the overall preferences expressed in the study, as previous research suggests that young female voters tend to prioritize progressive values and social issues in political candidates. Additionally, including respondents who identify as LGBTQ (4.3%) and non-binary (1.0%) suggests an openness within this demographic to diverse gender identities, reflecting Gen Z's broader inclination toward inclusivity.

Table 1: Demographic profile of 1,380 valid respondents in the study

Category	Subcategory	Frequency
Age Range	18-20 years old	1021
	21-23 years old	336
	24-26 years old	23
Gender	Female	788
	Male	504
	Non-binary	14
	LGBTQ	59
	Rather not say	15
Current/permanent residence in Davao City	District 1	611
	District 2	531
	District 3	238

The geographical distribution, with nearly half of the respondents residing in District 1 (Poblacion & Talomo), followed by District 2 (Agdao, Buhangin, Bunawan, & Paquibato) and District 3 (Baguio, Calinan, Marilog, Toril, & Tugbok), is significant. Each district has unique socio-economic and cultural attributes that may influence voter priorities. For instance, District 1, being more urbanized, may align with the digital engagement and progressive political stances that the study found appealing to this demographic. Conversely, students from the more rural or less centralized District 3 may approach political engagement differently, potentially valuing candidates with experience addressing issues relevant to diverse community needs. This demographic context provides a foundational understanding of the Gen Z electorate in Davao City. Its diversity and regional distinctions underscore the need for candidates to adopt tailored approaches that resonate with young, socially aware, and geographically varied voters.

3.2 Relative Importance of Candidate Attributes

The relative importance of candidate attributes in this study reveals that Gen Z college students in Davao City prioritize Political Experience above all other factors when evaluating Senate candidates, with a relative importance score of 31.0%, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Relative importance of attributes

Factor	Political Experience	Educational Background	Stance on Key Issues	Political Party Affiliation	Campaign Style	Age Group
Political Experience (31.0%)		1.7	1.8	2.0	2.9	4.3
Educational Background (18.1%)	0.6		1.0	1.1	1.7	2.5
Stance on Key Issues (17.2%)	0.6	1.0		1.1	1.6	2.4
Political Party Affiliation (15.8%)	0.5	0.9	0.9		1.5	2.2
Campaign Style (10.8%)	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.7		1.5
Age Group (7.2%)	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.7	

This preference suggests that young voters in this demographic place a high value on demonstrated competency and a proven track record, likely viewing experience as a foundation for reliable leadership. The emphasis on experience aligns with global trends among younger voters, who increasingly seek candidates capable of handling complex issues with informed judgment. Following political experience, Educational Background holds substantial influence, with a score of 18.1%. This preference for candidates with advanced academic credentials suggests that Gen Z voters may associate higher education with credibility and expertise. Given that many Gen Z individuals are engaged in their educational journeys, they likely perceive advanced educational qualifications as indicators of commitment and capability in public service. The Stance on Key Issues is also highly valued (17.2%), reflecting this generation's interest in candidates' social, economic, and environmental positions. Gen Z's inclination towards issue-based politics underscores their desire for leaders who take clear, actionable stands on society's challenges. Meanwhile, Political Party Affiliation is less critical (15.8%), indicating that while party identity is relevant, it does not override other qualifications. This may reflect Gen Z's broader trend toward valuing individual merit and issue alignment over traditional party loyalty.

Lastly, Campaign Style and Age Group scored the lowest in importance (10.8% and 7.2%, respectively), showing that stylistic elements and demographic alignment are less impactful for this demographic. This de-emphasis on campaign-style suggests that Gen Z voters may value substance over style, focusing on what candidates have accomplished and stand for rather than how they present themselves. The age group's low influence reflects Gen Z's openness to leadership across different generations as long as candidates resonate with their values and priorities. These insights are valuable for campaign strategists aiming to connect with Gen Z voters, as they reveal a demographic that values experience, qualifications, and progressive issue stances over traditional factors like party alignment or age.

3.3 Most and Least Preferred Candidate Profiles

The analysis of the Most and Least Preferred Candidate Profiles among Gen Z college students in Davao City highlights a clear preference for candidates who demonstrate progressive values, digital engagement, substantial qualifications, and a specific openness to older candidates. As shown in Table 3, Candidate 144 embodies these priorities, achieving a perfect preference score of 100%. A progressive stance on critical issues characterizes this candidate, significant public sector experience, an advanced degree (Master's, Doctorate, or Law), affiliation with a major political party, and a digital campaign strategy (social media and online ads). Notably, this candidate is also over 50 years old. The preference for an older candidate suggests that Gen Z voters value experience and professional accomplishments over age, associating these qualities with reliability and expertise.

Table 3. Most and least preferred combinations of attribute levels

Alternative	Rank	Total Score	Stance on Key Issues	Political Experience	Age Group	Educational Background	Political Party Affiliation	Campaign Style
Candidate 144	1st	100.0%	Progressive	Experienced public sector employee	Above 50 years old	Advanced degree (Master's, Doctorate, or Law)	Major political party	Digital (Social Media, Online Ads)
Candidate 132	2nd	92.8%	Progressive	Experienced public sector employee	Below 50 years old	Advanced degree (Master's, Doctorate, or Law)	Major political party	Digital (Social Media, Online Ads)
Candidate 142	3rd	92.6%	Progressive	Experienced public sector employee	Above 50 years old	Advanced degree (Master's, Doctorate, or Law)	New political movement or alliances	Digital (Social Media, Online Ads)
Candidate 3	142nd	8.4%	Conservative	No significant experience	Below 50 years old	Bachelor's degree	New political movement or alliances	Traditional (Rallies, TV Ads)
Candidate 13	143rd	7.2%	Conservative	No significant experience	Above 50 years old	Bachelor's degree	Independent	Traditional (Rallies, TV Ads)
Candidate 1	144th	0.0%	Conservative	No significant experience	Below 50 years old	Bachelor's degree	Independent	Traditional (Rallies, TV Ads)

On the other hand, Candidate 1, who received a 0% preference score, represents attributes that appear less appealing to Gen Z students in this study. This candidate's conservative stance on issues, lack of significant political experience, bachelor's degree as the highest educational qualification, and traditional campaign style (rallies and TV ads) diverge from the values that resonate with this demographic. Being under 50 years old, this candidate's profile indicates that youth alone cannot appeal to Gen Z voters. Instead, they emphasize progressive values, experience, and effective digital engagement over demographic similarity in age.

These findings suggest aspiring senators should highlight progressive policy positions, emphasize their experience and advanced educational credentials to engage Gen Z voters, and effectively adopt digital outreach platforms. The openness to candidates over 50 demonstrates that this demographic values expertise and qualifications more than age alignment. Candidates relying on traditional campaign strategies and conservative stances may struggle to connect with these voters, who seek modern, progressive, and digitally accessible representation.

These findings are relevant to the 2025 Philippine Senate elections, where candidates must appeal to a highly discerning Gen Z demographic. Given this generation's emphasis on progressive values, digital accessibility, and a proven track record, candidates with demonstrated expertise in addressing social, economic, and environmental issues will likely resonate more with Gen Z voters. In the current socio-political climate, where youth are increasingly vocal about issues such as environmental sustainability and social equity, Senate candidates who clearly articulate their stance on these matters could gain an advantage. Furthermore, as Gen Z prioritizes candidates who embody competence over traditional party loyalty, those who can showcase a robust portfolio of impactful initiatives may appeal more directly to this demographic.

3.4 Consistency in Attribute Rankings
The consistency in attribute rankings, measured by Kendall's W and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, demonstrates a strong agreement among Gen Z college students in evaluating candidate attributes. Kendall's W value of 0.845 and Spearman's rank correlation of approximately 0.844 indicate significant alignment among participants' preferences, suggesting that this demographic holds cohesive views on the attributes they prioritize in Senate candidates. This substantial agreement underscores the reliability of the ranking data and provides confidence in the validity of the overall patterns and preferences identified in this study.

According to Moslem et al. (2019), Kendall's W is instrumental in assessing consensus in ranked data, making it suitable for understanding group agreement in preference-based research. With a Kendall's W value close to 1 indicating perfect agreement and a value near 0 showing no consensus, the observed value of 0.845 reflects substantial consensus in the Gen Z sample, supporting that preferences for attributes like political experience, educational background, and progressive stances are collectively significant. This uniformity suggests that respondents' prioritization of specific attributes is neither random nor highly individualistic but represents a standard set of values within this demographic.

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, another critical measure of agreement, complements Kendall's W by assessing the direction and strength of this consensus, reinforcing the robustness of these findings. Prion and Haerling (2014) highlight that using multiple consistency measures helps validate the dependability of ranked data in research, especially in preference studies. The substantial alignment indicated by Kendall's W and Spearman's correlation suggests that the preferences identified in this study reflect a reliable pattern, providing insight into the shared political priorities of Gen Z college students in Davao City. The high degree of consistency in rankings demonstrates that the attributes most valued by this demographic—such as progressive stances, substantial political experience, and digital engagement—reflect broader trends within Gen Z. This level of agreement not only enhances the study's validity but also strengthens the conclusion that Gen Z voters in Davao City possess well-defined and consistent expectations for Senate candidates.

3.5 Simulated Market Share and Candidate Preferences

The simulated market share and candidate preferences analysis highlight a distinct set of priorities among Gen Z college students in Davao City, who favor candidates embodying progressive values, significant experience, advanced educational qualifications, and effective digital engagement. Table 4 shows Candidate 144 emerged as the clear favorite, securing 100% of first-place votes. This candidate's profile, characterized by a progressive stance on crucial issues, extensive experience as a public sector employee, advanced degree (such as a Master's, Doctorate, or Law), and affiliation with a major political party, strongly aligns with this demographic's values. Additionally, Candidate 144 is over 50 years old, showing that while Gen Z voters appreciate youth, they highly prioritize experience and qualifications, viewing age as secondary to these attributes when selecting a candidate.

Table 4. Participants ranking alternatives 1st, 2nd, 3rd

Alternative	1st	2nd	3rd
Candidate 144	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Candidate 132	0.0%	37.0%	23.4%
Candidate 142	0.0%	28.6%	28.5%
Candidate 143	0.0%	19.0%	16.3%
Candidate 120	0.0%	6.6%	11.8%
Candidate 72	0.0%	5.2%	8.3%
Candidate 138	0.0%	3.7%	4.6%
Candidate 140	0.0%	0.0%	6.8%
Candidate 96	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%

Candidate 132 ranked as the second most preferred, with 37% of participants choosing this candidate as their second choice and 23.4% as their third. Candidate 132 shares key attributes with Candidate 144, including a progressive stance, public sector experience, and advanced educational background. However, Candidate 132 is under 50, which may appeal to participants who value the same qualifications but lean toward younger representation. This distinction suggests a nuanced preference among Gen Z voters, who value experience and appreciate candidates closer to their generation if they meet their other priorities.

In third place, Candidate 142 received 28.6% of second-choice votes and 28.5% of third-choice votes. This candidate aligns with the top two selections in having a progressive stance, extensive public sector experience, and advanced educational credentials. However, Candidate 142's affiliation with a new political movement rather than a major party may account for the lower ranking. This openness to candidates affiliated with newer or independent political movements indicates flexibility in party allegiance among Gen Z voters as long as core values and qualifications align with their expectations.

These findings suggest that Gen Z college students in Davao City are drawn to candidates who exhibit progressive viewpoints, strong qualifications, and digital campaign strategies, regardless of age. While there is some appreciation for younger candidates, the demographic shows an evident willingness to support older candidates if they demonstrate the experience, values, and digital engagement Gen Z expects. This analysis provides valuable insight into the ideal candidate profile for this demographic, emphasizing that qualifications, progressive stances, and modern campaign approaches are paramount in engaging Gen Z voters effectively.

3.6 Key Findings

The study provides valuable insights into the preferences of Gen Z voters in Davao City for Senate candidates, highlighting a clear prioritization of qualifications, values, and modern engagement methods. The findings show that Gen Z voters value political experience and advanced educational credentials most highly, associating these attributes with credibility and competency. Additionally, Gen Z respondents strongly prefer candidates with progressive stances on key issues and a digital-first approach to campaigning, aligning with their generational expectations for modern, accessible communication.

Traditional factors, such as party affiliation and conservative policies, rank less important, indicating a generational shift toward candidates who embody personal merit and progressive values over party loyalty. The high consistency in attribute rankings, coupled with simulated candidate preferences, reinforces the profile of an ideal candidate for this demographic—someone who combines progressive values, substantial political experience, and digital outreach strategies. These preferences suggest that Gen Z voters in Davao City are drawn to candidates who reflect their values of authenticity, professional qualification, and adaptability to modern communication platforms.

3.7 Implications for Political Candidates

Several targeted strategies can enhance the appeal and resonance of candidates seeking to engage Gen Z voters. First, candidates should highlight their political experience and educational background, focusing on a proven track record in public service and advanced academic achievements. Gen Z voters prioritize competency and credibility, viewing these qualifications as essential indicators of a candidate's capacity to lead effectively. Moreover, adopting a progressive stance on critical issues is crucial. Gen Z voters prefer candidates who advocate for social, environmental, and political reforms that align with modern values. To connect effectively, candidates should articulate their positions transparently and authentically, demonstrating a genuine commitment to addressing pressing societal challenges. Clear and actionable policy positions resonate with Gen Z's desire for meaningful change, making authenticity and transparency paramount.

With the 2025 elections approaching, candidates will benefit significantly from recognizing the digital savviness of Gen Z. This demographic, known for their social media engagement, expects campaigns to go beyond traditional outreach and embrace interactive, transparent, and digitally accessible platforms. Leveraging platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube for policy discussions, Q&A sessions, and authentic, behind-the-scenes insights could create a sense of connection and trust. Additionally, data-driven approaches that personalize content and respond to Gen Z's values—such as environmental awareness and inclusivity—will likely resonate. This shift toward digital platforms is not merely an option but a strategic necessity in engaging a demographic that seeks immediacy, relevance, and authenticity in political communication. Digital engagement, therefore, not only broadens outreach but also reinforces the candidate's relevance to younger voters.

Finally, candidates can benefit from adopting a flexible approach to party affiliation. While party alignment still holds some significance, Gen Z voters focus more on values and qualifications than traditional political loyalty. This openness allows candidates affiliated with new or independent political movements to attract Gen Z support, provided they embody values that align with this generation's expectations. This adaptability signals that non-traditional affiliations can be an asset if core values—such as progressiveness, experience, and a commitment to impactful policies—resonate strongly with Gen Z voters.

3.8 Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study's findings strongly reinforce the frameworks of Multi-Attribute Utility Theory (MAUT) and Rational Choice Theory (RCT) applied to Gen Z's voting behavior. According to MAUT, voters assess candidates by evaluating the utility of various attributes. Here, Gen Z voters demonstrate a highly utility-driven approach,

placing considerable weight on attributes that convey experience, advanced qualifications, progressive stances, and digital engagement. This pattern shows that Gen Z values tangible indicators of competency and alignment with their values over superficial or stylistic factors.

RCT is also evident in Gen Z's rational, benefit-based approach to candidate selection. Gen Z voters prioritize attributes they perceive as benefiting their social and political interests, such as a candidate's progressive policies, digital accessibility, and readiness to address pressing societal issues. This pragmatic focus on value alignment over traditional party loyalty or age similarity underscores a shift in voter behavior among younger generations toward value-driven, pragmatic decision-making.

Practically, these insights emphasize the importance of tailored voter engagement strategies that align with Gen Z's unique set of expectations. Campaigns prioritizing transparency, digital communication, and progressive policy commitments are more likely to resonate with this demographic. Additionally, these findings provide a foundation for future studies on generational voting behavior, suggesting a need to explore how younger generations balance values and practical considerations in candidate evaluation. As these theoretical and practical insights reveal, Gen Z's approach to voting reflects an evolving political landscape where attributes signaling competence, authenticity, and progressive alignment take precedence.

3.8 Limitations
The study's focus on Gen Z college students in Davao City may only partially reflect the diversity of preferences among Gen Z voters across other regions in the Philippines. By concentrating on this specific geographic and demographic group, the findings provide valuable insights but may need more breadth for generalization. Expanding the geographic scope in future studies could offer a more comprehensive perspective on Gen Z's electoral preferences nationwide, capturing regional variations and enhancing the applicability of the results.

Another limitation lies in the study's reliance on stated preferences through conjoint analysis, which may only sometimes align with actual voting behavior in real-world elections. Various factors influence real-life decisions, including campaign dynamics, peer influence, and socio-economic conditions, which may lead to deviations from preferences expressed in a controlled survey environment. Considering these external factors in future research could provide a more accurate reflection of Gen Z's voting patterns.

Additionally, the study's attribute selection, while focused on relevant candidate characteristics such as political experience, stance on issues, and campaign style, may have overlooked other influential factors. Attributes like endorsements, financial transparency, and voter accessibility could be essential in Gen Z's decision-making process. Exploring these additional attributes in future studies could yield a more nuanced understanding of the factors shaping Gen Z's electoral preferences.

3.9 Future Research Directions
Future research could benefit from exploring several vital directions to gain a deeper understanding of Gen Z's electoral preferences. First, broadening the geographic and demographic scope to include Gen Z voters across various regions in the Philippines and internationally could offer comparative insights into how cultural and regional differences shape candidate preferences. This expanded focus would help validate the current findings and potentially reveal variations in Gen Z's prioritization of candidate attributes based on location and cultural context.

Another valuable area for future research is examining real-world voting behavior through longitudinal studies that track actual voting patterns alongside stated preferences. By observing how external factors—such as media influence, peer networks, and socio-political events—impact voting decisions over time, researchers could better understand how preferences identified in conjoint analysis translate into concrete actions during elections. This approach would enhance understanding of the factors that bridge stated and actual electoral behavior.

Incorporating additional candidate attributes, such as financial transparency, ethical endorsements, and social influence, could also enrich future studies. Expanding the set of attributes would provide a more nuanced view

of the criteria Gen Z voters use to evaluate candidates, recognizing that Gen Z's preferences may extend beyond the traditional qualities assessed in this study.

Finally, since Gen Z shows a marked preference for digital campaign strategies, future research could investigate which types of digital content—such as social media platforms, online ads, or influencer endorsements—most effectively engage this demographic. Insights from such research would offer practical guidance for digital political marketing, helping campaigns target Gen Z with tailored digital strategies. These suggested directions for future research would not only address the limitations of the present study but also contribute to a broader understanding of Gen Z's evolving political engagement.

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides a detailed analysis of the electoral preferences of Gen Z college students in Davao City, highlighting the specific candidate attributes this demographic values the most. The findings reveal a strong preference for candidates with significant political experience, advanced educational qualifications, and progressive stances on vital societal issues, reflecting Gen Z's prioritization of competence, integrity, and alignment with forward-thinking values. Gen Z's preference for digital campaign strategies underscores the importance of adapting political outreach to meet this generation's digital-first communication style, indicating a shift away from traditional campaign methods.

While these insights offer a foundational understanding of Gen Z's electoral inclinations, limitations exist due to the study's focus on a single geographic area and demographic subset. Future research that expands to various regions, tracks real-world voting behavior, and explores additional candidate attributes—such as transparency, social impact, and inclusivity—could provide a broader view of the diverse factors influencing Gen Z's political engagement. Such expanded studies will deepen understanding of Gen Z's role in shaping the political landscape and enhance the ability of candidates to connect meaningfully with this emerging voter base, fostering a more informed and engaged electorate.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

There is only one author for this study.

6.0 Funding

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

8.0 Acknowledgment

9.0 References

Aldisa, R. T., Sanwani, S., Simanjuntak, D. M., Laia, S., & Mesran, M. (2022). Penerapan metode multy attribute utility theory (MAUT) dalam pemilihan asisten laboratorium komputer. Jurnal Media Informatika Budidarma. https://doi.org/10.30865/mib.v6i3.4171

Anabo, F. D. (2021). What matters most to student voters?: A conjoint analysis of political candidate attributes. Philippine Social Science Journal. https://doi.org/10.52006/main.v4i2.355

Balogun, I., Garner, E., Amer, P., Fennessy, P., Teeken, B., Olaosebikan, O., Abolore, B., Madu, T., Okoye, B., Santos, B., Byrne, T., Martin-Collado, D., Egesi, C. N., Kulakow, P., & Tufan, H. A. (2021). From traits to typologies: Piloting new approaches to profiling trait preferences along the cassava value chain in Nigeria. Crop Science. https://doi.org/10.1002/csc2.20680

Bansak, K., Hainmueller, J., Hopkins, D. J., & Yamamoto, T. (2020). Using conjoint experiments to analyze elections: The essential role of the average marginal component effect (AMCE). SSRN. https://doi.org/10.2139/SSRN.3588941

Bansak, K., Hainmueller, J., Hopkins, D. J., & Yamamoto, T. (2021). Conjoint survey experiments. SSRN. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108777919.004

Batara, E. B., Labadan, A. K., & Roa, M. C. (2021). Factors affecting youth voting preferences in the Philippine senatorial election: A structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis. Jurnal Studi Pemerintahan. https://doi.org/10.18196/jgp.123137

Becker, G. S. (1976). The economic approach to human behavior. University of Chicago Press.

Burger, A., & Silima, T. (2006). Sampling and sampling design. Encyclopedia of Biopharmaceutical Statistics. https://doi.org/10.1002/352760216x.ch

Canares, X. J., Estipular, L. L., Protacio, T. M., Ramos, B. D., Kurata, Y. B., & Ngo, J. K. (2022). Factors affecting perceived decision making among Filipinos in national elections: An integration of theory of planned behavior and behavioral decision theory. Proceedings of the 2022 IEEE International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management (IEEM), 0194-0199. https://doi.org/10.1109/IEEM55944.2022.9990002

Castillo, R., & Yee, J. E. C. (2023). Preferences of accountancy graduating students of a CPA review center. Business and Finance Journal. https://doi.org/10.33086/bfj.v8i1.3912

Castro, M. M., Pabuayon, I. M., Catelo, S. P., & Camacho, J. V. (2021). Analyzing consumer preferences for credence attributes of fish and fishery products in Davao City, Philippines. Asian Journal of Agriculture and Development, 18(1), 84-103. https://doi.org/10.37801/AJAD2021.18.1.6

Department, L. R. (2018). Conjoint analysis tools for developing country contexts.

Dewi, E. A. S., Arifin, H. S., & Fuadi, I. (2023). Nurturing political engagement: Political communication strategies for generation Z in the lead-up to the 2024 election in West Java. The Journal of Society and Media, 7(2), 370–388. https://doi.org/10.26740/jsm.v7n2.p370-388

Dyer, J. S. (2016). Multiattribute utility theory (MAUT). Operations Research and Management Science, 233, 285-314. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-3094-4_8

Ebro, E. D. (2021). Political attributes of millennials in a state university in Zambales, Philippines. International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research. https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.02.08.04

Franchino, F., & Zucchini, F. (2013). Conjoint analysis of voting behaviour: A stated preference experiment employing valence and ideology attributes of candidates.

Garai-Fodor, M. (2021). Food consumption patterns, in a values-based approach, for generation Z. Acta Polytechnica Hungarica. https://doi.org/10.12700/aph.18.11.2021.11.7

Hainmueller, J., Hopkins, D. J., & Yamamoto, T. (2013). Causal inference in conjoint analysis: Understanding multidimensional choices via stated preference experiments. Political Analysis, 22, 1-30. https://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpt024

Hansen, P., & Ombler, F. (2008). A new method for scoring additive multi-attribute value models using pairwise rankings of alternatives. Journal of Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis, 15, 87-107. https://doi.org/10.1002/MCDA.428

Haşim İNAL, İ. (2023). Z kuşağının sosyal medyanın siyasi etkisine yönelik algısının sosyal medyanın oy verme davranışı üzerindeki etkisine yönelik algısına etkisi ve sosyal medyada siyasi iletişim davranışının aracılık rolü. International Journal of Social Humanities Sciences Research (JSHSR). https://doi.org/10.26450/jshsr.3505

Hauber, A. B., González, J. M., Groothuis-Oudshoorn, C. G., Prior, T. J., Marshall, D. A., Cunningham, C. E., IJzerman, M. J., & Bridges, J. F. (2016). Statistical methods for the analysis of discrete choice experiments: A report of the ISPOR conjoint analysis good research practices task force. Value in Health: The Journal of the International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research, 19(4), 300-15. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jval.2016.04.004

Horiuchi, Y., Smith, D., & Yamamoto, T. (2016). Identifying multidimensional policy preferences of voters in representative democracies: A conjoint field experiment in Japan. Social Science Research Network. https://doi.org/10.2139/SSRN.2627907

Horiuchi, Y., Smith, D., & Yamamoto, T. (2017). Measuring voters' multidimensional policy preferences with conjoint analysis: Application to Japan's 2014 election. Political Analysis, 26, 190-209. https://doi.org/10.1017/pan.2018.2

Horiuchi, Y., Smith, D., & Yamamoto, T. (2018). Identifying voter preferences for politicians' personal attributes: A conjoint experiment in Japan. PSN: Legislative Elections (Topic). https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2827969

Jabar, M. A., Chiong-Javier, E., & Pradubmook Sherer, P. (2024). Qualitative ethical technology assessment of artificial intelligence (AI) and the internet of things (IoT) among Filipino Gen Z members: Implications for ethics education in higher learning institutions. Asia Pacific Journal of Education. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2024.2303048

Joseph, P. (2023). 'It's all public anyway': A collaborative navigation of anonymity and informed consent in a study with identifiable parent carers. Ethics and Social Welfare, 17, 191-205. https://doi.org/10.1080/17496535.2023.2206671

Kaikara, C. (2024). Innovative marketing strategies for attracting millennial and Gen Z travelers. Journal of Modern Hospitality. https://doi.org/10.47941/jmh.1953

Keeney, R. L., & Raiffa, H. (1976). Decisions with multiple objectives: Preferences and value tradeoffs. Cambridge University Press.

Khan, A. N. (2023). Elucidating the effects of environmental consciousness and environmental attitude on green travel behavior: Moderating role of green self-efficacy. Sustainable Development. https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2771

Lunsford, T. R., & Lunsford, B. R. (1995). The research sample, part I: Sampling. JPO Journal of Prosthetics and Orthotics, 7, 17A. https://doi.org/10.1097/00008526-199500730-00008

Moslem, S., Ghorbanzadeh, O., Blaschke, T., & Duleba, S. (2019). Analysing stakeholder consensus for a sustainable transport development decision by the fuzzy AHP and interval AHP. Sustainability, 11(12), 3271. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11123271

Murcia, J. V., & Bolo, R. (2017). Millennial voters' preference for the 2016 Philippine presidential elections: A simulation using conjoint analysis. SSRN. https://doi.org/10.2139/SSRN.2983023

Nebeker, C., Leavy, V., Roitmann, E., & Steinhubl, S. S. (2020). Ethical considerations when creating evidence from real world digital health data. medRxiv. https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.01.16.20017806

Nii Laryeafio, M., & Ogbewe, O. C. (2023). Ethical consideration dilemma: Systematic review of ethics in qualitative data collection through interviews. Journal of Ethics in Entrepreneurship and Technology. https://doi.org/10.1108/jeet-09-2022-0014

Oliver, P. (2003). The student's guide to research ethics. Open University Press.

Orzal, L. B., Toring, L. A., Coton, M. A., Lucenecio, D. M., Nunez, R. M., Bordon, K., Delan, D. J., & Almazan, M. C. (2023). Understanding voters' preference for candidates in the Philippine presidential elections. Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies. https://doi.org/10.47760/cognizance.2023.v03i10.009

Orte, C. J., & Diño, M. J. (2019). Eliciting e-leadership style and trait preference among nurses via conjoint analysis. Enfermería Clínica, 29(Suppl 1), 78-80. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enfcli.2018.11.025

Persada, S. F., Miraja, B. A., & Nadlifatin, R. (2019). Understanding the generation Z behavior on d-learning: A unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) approach. International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning, 14, 20-33. https://doi.org/10.3991/IJET.V14I05.9993

Pomante, M. J., & Schraufnagel, S. (2015). Candidate age and youth voter turnout. American Politics Research, 43, 479-503. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X14554829

Prion, S., & Haerling, K. A. (2014). Making sense of methods and measurement: Spearman-rho ranked-order correlation coefficient. Clinical Simulation in Nursing, 10(10), 535-536.

Putra, T., Wahyuni, R. T., Meilani, N., Anjani, M., & Sari, D. K. (2024). Partisipasi politik Gen Z: Eksplorasi peran media sosial dalam pembentukan kesadaran politik remaja. Jurnal Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan dan Politik. https://doi.org/10.61476/bpkxy103

Santos, A. R., Prasetyo, Y. T., Persada, S. F., & Nadlifatin, R. (2022). Filipinos' preference on delivery of credible news information on social media: A conjoint analysis approach. Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Industrial and Business Engineering. https://doi.org/10.1145/3568834.3568901

Setiawan, H. D., & Djafar, T. M. (2023). Partisipasi politik pemilih muda dalam pelaksanaan demokrasi di pemilu 2024. Populis: Jurnal Sosial dan Humaniora. https://doi.org/10.47313/pjsh.v8i2.2877

Sitanggang, P. B., Ancok, D., Kuncoroyakti, Y. A., & Lubis, A. Y. (2024). The relationship between political image and voting behavior in first-time voters: Demographics of generation Z voters in the 2024 election in Indonesia. International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies. https://doi.org/10.55677/ijssers/v04i6y2024-01

Sumatra, E. J. (2023). A conjoint analysis of cooperative savings product preferences among generation Z college students in Davao City. Journal of Interdisciplinary Socio-Economic and Community Study. https://doi.org/10.21776/jiscos.03.2.03

Swedan, S. F., Khabour, O. F., Alzoubi, K. H., & Aljabali, A. A. (2020). Graduate students reported practices regarding the issue of informed consent and maintaining of data confidentiality in a developing country. Heliyon, 6. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04940

Timoteo Jr., E. N. (2021). Millennial votes in the 2019 Philippine national election: A quantitative approach. Applied Quantitative Analysis. https://doi.org/10.31098/quant.558

Vira, A., Sumantri, P., & Azis, A. (2024). Peranan tokoh intelektual muda dalam perkembangan politik di Indonesia pada era digital. Polyscopia. https://doi.org/10.57251/polyscopia.v1i1.1235

Yandug, J. S., Ponce, F. D., & Ong, A. K. (2023). Application of conjoint analysis and 5Ps marketing mix in identifying customer preference of alcohol consumption among youths in the Philippines. Foods, 12. https://doi.org/10.3390/foods12071401

Zickar, M. J., & Keith, M. G. (2022). Innovations in sampling: Improving the appropriateness and quality of samples in organizational research. Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-120920-052946