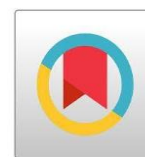## Public Perception of Women's Political Participation in the 2024 Legislative Election (Case Study of Dapil 2 and Dapil 4 in Palu City)

Persepsi Masyarakat terhadap Partisipasi Politik Perempuan pada Pemilu Legislatif 2024 (Studi Kasus Dapil 2 dan Dapil 4 di Kota Palu)

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

	ABSTRACT *This study aims to analyze public perception of women's political participation in the 2024 legislative election in Palu City, focusing on two constituencies: Dapil 2 and Dapil 4. A qualitative descriptive approach was used, with data collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and literature studies. Thirty informants, including male and female voters, were purposively selected. The findings reveal that Dapil 2 holds a positive perception of female candidates due to their active engagement in social initiatives and structured campaigns, while Dapil 4 reflects a more negative perception due to low visibility and male dominance. Local socio-cultural factors significantly shape these perceptions. The study recommends inclusive campaign strategies and gender-based political education to enhance women's political participation at the local level.*
	ABSTRAK Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis persepsi masyarakat terhadap partisipasi politik perempuan dalam Pemilu Legislatif 2024 di Kota Palu. Penelitian ini difokuskan pada dua daerah pemilihan (Dapil), yaitu Dapil 2 dan Dapil 4. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif, dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan studi literatur. Informan terdiri atas 30 pemilih laki-laki dan perempuan yang dipilih secara purposif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Dapil 2 memiliki persepsi positif terhadap calon perempuan karena keterlibatan aktif dalam kegiatan sosial dan kampanye yang komunikatif, sedangkan di Dapil 4 persepsi cenderung negatif karena minimnya keterlibatan dan dominasi kandidat laki-laki. Faktor sosial-budaya lokal menjadi penentu persepsi masyarakat. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan perlunya strategi kampanye inklusif dan pendidikan politik berbasis gender untuk meningkatkan keterwakilan perempuan dalam politik lokal.

Introduction

Political participation is the main foundation of an inclusive democratic system and *representative* (Lestari et al., 2023; Nursyifa et al., 2024). The active involvement of citizens in the political process, both as voters and as political participants, reflects the quality of a country's democracy (Manik & Ekayanta, 2024; Mulia, 2024). In this regard, it is important to ensure that all groups of society, including women, have equal access and opportunities to engage in the political process without discrimination (Iskandar & Ahmad, 2020; Muhammad & Iqbal Latief, 2023).

While there has been considerable progress in legal gender equality, the reality on the ground shows that women still face various obstacles in political engagement (Scott, Scott, 2020). Women's representation in the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia continues to increase, although it has not reached the ideal target of 30% as mandated by Law No. 10 of 2008. In the 2024 election, 128 women or 22.1% managed to sit in parliament, up from 9% in 1999. This trend shows progress in women's political participation, although more encouragement is needed to ensure that equal and inclusive representation is truly realized (GoodStats Data, 2024). This inequality is not only caused by structural factors such as the electoral system and the role of political parties, but also by social and cultural constructions that limit the role of women in public spaces (Ariany et al., 2024; Maulida, 2021; Rahmanto et al., 2021).

Several previous studies have highlighted the challenges women face in the world of politics. Research Putri and Fatmariza (2020) It shows that low public trust in women's leadership is a significant barrier, especially in areas that still uphold patriarchal values. Research Classroom (2023) explains that limited access to resources, patriarchal culture, and gender-based discrimination hinder women's involvement in politics, such as party support and funding. Furthermore, a study by Santi (2020) Uncovering women's representation in politics in the media is often under-trusted by the public due to gender inequality, limited access, and lack of experience.

Palu City as the capital of Central Sulawesi Province has a distinctive political dynamic (Galuh Larasati et al., 2023; Rusta et al., 2024). The area has a strong socio-cultural background, which in some ways influences people's mindset and attitudes towards women's leadership (Zuada et al., 2020). Traditional values and social norms in several communities in Palu City tend to still place women in domestic roles (Malihah et al., 2020; Nuraisyah & Samad, 2021; Saputra et al., 2021). This condition can have a direct impact on the low public support for female legislative candidates in the 2024 election.

The city of Palu, as the capital of Central Sulawesi Province, offers a unique context in electoral political contestation, including in terms of women's political participation. The selection of two constituencies (Dapil 2 and Dapil 4) as the location of the study was based on differences in social, economic, and cultural characteristics which are believed to also affect public perception of female legislative candidates. This region-based study is important because the literature on women's political participation in Indonesia is still dominated by macro studies or national aggregates, while locality-based microstudies are still limited. Thus, this research is important and relevant to enrich academic treasures in the field of political science and gender studies, as well as to make practical contributions in formulating strategies to increase women's political participation that are more contextual, inclusive, and responsive to the socio-cultural dynamics of local communities.

The 2019 General Election, which was held on April 17, 2019, showed interesting dynamics in women's political participation in Palu City, especially between Constituency (Dapil) 2 and Dapil 4. In the 2019 election, Dapil 2 recorded relatively balanced gender representation, where the number of women elected was proportional to men. However, Dapil 4 shows a different pattern, where male dominance in the acquisition of legislative seats is still very strong (2025 Data Processing Results), This difference is even more striking in the 2024 election. In Dapil 2, there has been a significant increase in women's representation, surpassing the balance achieved in 2019. Meanwhile, Dapil 4 remains dominated by men, continuing the trend seen since 2019. This phenomenon raises important questions. Why is there a surge in women's representation in Dapil 2 in 2024 while Dapil 4 continues to be dominated by men from 2019 to 2024, here is a table of the recapitulation results of the determination of votes in 2024.

Table 1. Results of the recapitulation of the determination of the legal votes of Dapil 2 in the 2024 Palu City Regional House of Representatives Members

Name of Legislative Member	Party Name	Vote acquisition	Sequence Number
Ulfa, A.Ma.Pust.	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera	2.174	1
Vivin, S.E.	Partai Gerindra	1.220	2
Rustia Tompo	Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat	925	1
Mutmainah Korona, S.E	Partai Nasdem	745	1

Source: jdih.kpu.go.id/sulteng/palu

Table 2. Results of the Recapitulation of the Determination of Valid Votes for Dapil 4 in the 2024 Palu City Regional House of Representatives Members

Name of Legislative Member	Party Name	Vote acquisition	Sequence Number
Dr. Arif Miladi, S.Sos., M.Si.	Partai Golkar	1.627	3
Nurhalis Nur	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera	1.154	1
M.Sultan Amin B.	Partai Gerindra	1.450	2
Muslimun, S.E	Partai Nadem	832	1
Abdurahim Nasar Al'Amri	Partai Demokrat	2.263	1
Moh. Haekal Ishak	PDI Perjuangan	1.120	7
H. Moh Nasir Deang Gani	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa	948	1
Muchsin Ali, S.T	Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat	947	7

Source: jdih.kpu.go.id/sulteng/palu

In this case, why this research is specifically focused on Dapil 2 and Dapil 4 as the location of the research, because it sees significant differences that occur from year to year so that in the pattern of women's political representation in the 2019 and 2024 elections, where Dapil 2 shows an increase in women's participation and involvement which significantly leads in a positive direction, while Dapil 4 actually maintains male dominance in the acquisition of seats. This provides a strong empirical basis for examining the factors that encourage or hinder women's political involvement, making these two constituencies highly relevant and strategic to be analyzed comparatively in the context of gender representation in local politics.

This research will specifically explore how public perception of women's political participation in the 2024 legislative election case study of constituency 2 and constituency 4 in Palu City Public perception is very influential in determining the extent to which women can be accepted and supported in political contestation. By examining two different constituencies (dapil) in Palu City, this study aims to understand the local dynamics that affect the level of women's political participation, as well as the social, cultural, and political factors that play a role in shaping these perceptions. Women's political participation is not only an issue of representation, but also part of the struggle towards social justice and substantive democracy (Nursyifa et al., 2024). In various literatures, women's representation has been proven to be able to bring different perspectives in public policy, especially regarding

women's and children's issues, there is still a gap between theory and practice at the local level. Therefore, it is important to understand the participatory barriers faced by women empirically and contextually, so that the solutions offered are truly in line with local realities, some analyses of women's political participation are basically still many macro or too broad so there is a need for micro research with a focus on local-level research.

This research focuses on the city of Palu as a research scope where the city of Palu has unique political dynamics in the local political context of two voting areas, namely constituency 2 and constituency 4 of Palu City, considering the striking differences between constituency 2 and constituency 4 in public perception of women's political participation in the 2024 Legislative Election. Looking at this contrast, where Dapil 2 shows positive acceptance and Dapil 4 tends to be negative, this finding is strengthened by the results of interviews and data obtained through surveys that show the differences between the two constituencies, so that it can be directly compared how local socio-cultural factors in Palu greatly determine the views of the community. Therefore, Palu is a unique lens to understand these dynamics and formulate inclusive campaign strategies and gender-based political education that are relevant to their specific contexts. This research offers a novelty in a unique way because it not only identifies but also analyzes barriers to women's participation at the local level, so that it can fill the gap between theory and practice. This research is also expected to identify opportunities that can be used to increase women's political participation at the local level. The role of communities, religious leaders, local media, and gender-based political education programs that are able to encourage changes in people's mindsets. The results of this study can be a foothold in developing more effective intervention strategies to increase women's involvement in politics in a sustainable manner.

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach (Scott, 2023). The informants consisted of 30 male and female voters in Dapil 2 and Dapil 4 Palu City who were elected purposively. Data were collected through semi-structured online/offline interviews, field observations, and literature studies. The analysis process is carried out using the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. In this study, data analysis was carried out through tnik *thematic analysis* which involves three levels *open coding, axial coding,* and *selective coding* based on the results of interviews with informants from Dapil 2 and Dapil 4 Palu City, to improve the validation of the results of the analysis, an inter-coder reliability method involving three researchers was used. Each

researcher coded the interview excerpts independently, then the code results were compared to assess similarities and differences. The inter-coder reliability table is compiled to measure the consistency of interpretation between researchers, if there is a difference of opinion, a discussion will be held to reach an agreement. The results in the agreed code are then grouped into two categories, namely positive views and negative views in this category, helping to interpret how the community in Dapil 2 and Dapil 4 considers the involvement of female candidates in legislative elections. The table of informant characteristics and the list of informants in this study are attached to the table below:

Table 3. Characteristics of Informants

Characteristics of Informants	Information
Age	17 years and above according to the age requirements as a voter
Gender	Men and women
Education	Different categories of education levels
Religion	Various religions practiced in Palu City
Work	Various professions and occupations
Constituencies	Dapil 2 and Dapil 4 Palu City

Table 4. List of Informants of Dapil 2 and Dapil 4

Name of the Informant	Age	Work	Address
MS	47	Security	Dapil 2
NF	22	Student/Student	Dapil 2
WHAT	24	Student/Student	Dapil 2
NH	22	Staff of Fkm Ump	Dapil 2
CR	24	Hospital Health Workers	Dapil 2
WD	22	Student/Student	Dapil 2
INI	24	Student	Dapil 2
AAR	22	Student	Dapil 2
FDl	28	Pns	Dapil 2
MI	52	Pns	Dapil 2
FD	49	Pns	Dapil 2
SWl	24	Student/Student	Dapil 2
RA	24	Student/Student	Dapil 2
NRl	25	Student/Student	Dapil 2
DN	23	Student/Student	Dapil 2
SB	47	Hunt Past Daily	Dapil 4
FH	23	Private Employees	Dapil 4
GN	23	Student	Dapil 4
AR	20	Students	Dapil 4
AW	51	Mechanic	Dapil 4
RN	33	Self employed	Dapil 4
MM	33	Personal badminton	Dapil 4
FT	22	Student/Student	Dapil 4
MJ	24	Self employed	Dapil 4
RI	47	Irt	Dapil 4
MR	22	Student/Student	Dapil 4
RL	56	Merchant	Dapil 4
IS	29	Irt	Dapil 4
UW	24	Student/Student	Dapil 4
KL	50	Irt	Dapil 4

Result and

Discussion

Thematic Identification Based on Interview Results

The results of interviews with informants, where this informant is a respondent in an interview that includes local communities and community leaders in Dapil 2 and Dapil 4 Palu City, from the two Dapil have different views in the perception of women's political participation, in Dapil 2 the majority of informants show a positive view of the presence of female legislative candidates who are more concerned and active in campaigns and responsive to social issues. Female candidates use social media and build emotional relationships through social activities. This forms a positive perception of the public. On the other hand, Dapil 4 shows doubts about women's ability in politics , informants assess female candidates as less active, and are still trapped in gender stereotypes. Patriarchal cultural factors and the lack of active involvement of female candidates, as quoted from informants

> *"Their liveliness on the pitch makes us feel closer to them. They not only speak in front of the camera, but also go directly to the community"* (APA/25/01/2025)-informant (Dapil 2)

> *"I feel that female candidates should interact more with us, so that we can better know who they are and what they stand for"* (GN/26/01/2025)-informant (Dapil 4)

Positive Perception in Dapil 2 Social Care

The results of the interview with the first informant, MS, showed that female candidates in Dapil 2 were considered more active in listening to the aspirations of the community.

> MS stated, *"I see that female candidates are more concerned about social problems in society. They are often directly involved in social activities, which proves that they are committed to these issues* (MS, 2025)*."*
> This illustrates that prospective women have an emotional closeness to society

through active involvement in social activities.

Direct and Digital Campaign Activities

According to the second informant, the NF campaign carried out by female candidates in Dapil 2 is considered very structured and effective.

> NF revealed, *"I feel that this female candidate is very clear in conveying her vision and mission. They actively use social media, which is very helpful in reaching more people* (NF, 2025)*."*

The optimal use of social media by female candidates seems to be one of the factors that makes it easier for them to reach a wider range of voters. APA, as the third informant, argued that the presence of female candidates in the campaign was more pronounced.

He said, *"Their liveliness on the pitch makes us feel closer to them. They not only spoke in front of the camera, but also went directly to the community (APA, 2025)."* This shows that female candidates are not only relying on virtual campaigns, but also going out into the field to interact directly with the community.

Focus on Women's Issues and Education

The fourth informant, NH highlighted the concern of female candidates for education and women's empowerment issues.

He stated, *"I see that female candidates are more likely to hold events that focus on women's empowerment and education for girls in our environment (NH, 2025)."* This shows that female candidates in Dapil 2 are very concerned about women's education and empowerment issues as part of their social commitments.

Negative Perceptions in Dapil 4

Low Involvement of Female Candidates

On the other hand, the results of interviews in Dapil 4 show several challenges faced by female candidates. Informant sixteenth, SB, stated that female candidates in Dapil 4 are less active.

"We rarely see female candidates go directly to the community. Their campaign seems less visible compared to the male candidates (SB, 2025)," said Sulbahri.

This shows that female candidates in Dapil 4 face challenges in terms of visibility and direct involvement with the community.

Firhan, the seventeenth informant, argued that a change in people's views of women could occur if more female candidates were active.

"When society sees more women involved, they will start to see women as legitimate leaders (FH, 2025)," said FH. This shows that increasing the involvement of female candidates in campaigns can help change public perception of women's roles in politics.

GN as the eighteenth informant, considers that the lack of direct interaction with the community is one of the reasons why female candidates in Dapil 4 are less in demand.

"I feel that female candidates should interact more with us, so that we can better know who they are and what they stand for (GN, 2025)," said BR. This shows that a more personal and direct communication approach with the community is needed to increase acceptance of female candidates.

AR, the nineteenth informant, stated that female candidates in Dapil 4 had difficulty standing out in the campaign.

He said, "*I think they need to be more brave to come forward and introduce themselves so that people can see their potential (AR, 2025)."*

This indicates that female candidates need to be more proactive in introducing themselves and highlighting their capacity in order to compete with more well-known male candidates. In addition, AW the twentieth informant, suggested that gender-based political education could be one way to change public perception.

> *"We need more campaigns that educate the public about the importance of women's role in politics* (AW, 2025)*."* He said.

Gender-based political education can help raise public awareness about the importance of involving women in the political process. RN sees that although female candidates in Dapil 4 face many challenges, they can change the perception of the public with a more personalized approach.

> He explained, *"Female candidates need to speak directly to the community more often, attend community events, and show that they can contribute more in terms of policies that are close to everyday life* (RN, 2025)*."*

A personal approach is considered an effective way to increase support for female candidates in Dapil 4.

Lack of Visibility on Social Media

MM, the twenty-second informant also noted that the people in Dapil 4 know male candidates better than female candidates. He explained,

> *"We see male candidates more often in the media and public events. They appear more often, so we feel more familiar with them* (MM, 2025)*."*

This experience reflects that the existence of male candidates is more dominant in the media and public activities in Dapil 4, which reduces opportunities for female candidates to be known more widely. In addition, the twenty-third FT informant noted that female candidates in Dapil 4 have not made the most of social media.

> *"If they want to be better known, they need to be more active on social media, especially to attract the attention of the younger generation* (FT, 2025)*,"* FT said.

Limitations in utilizing social media can be an obstacle for female candidates to reach young voters who are increasingly dominant in elections.

The Strong Stereotypes of Patriarchal Culture

MJ, the twenty-fourth informant, highlighted the negative perception of female candidates in Dapil 4 who are influenced by local traditions and culture.

> *"Here, many people still think that women should only take care of the household. That makes us less confident in choosing female candidates* (MJ, 2025)*,"* it is said.

Gender stereotypes that are still strong in Dapil 4 are one of the big challenges faced by female candidates to gain support from the community.

In a follow-up interview, the Indonesian informant twenty-five, revealed that many people feel more comfortable choosing male candidates because they feel more familiar with them.

> *"This is one of the reasons why female candidates in Dapil 4 receive less attention* (RI, 2025)*."* said RI.

Familiarity with male candidates who are already known before is one of the factors that influence voters in choosing candidates. Meanwhile, MR, the twenty-sixth informant, said that although there are active female candidates, they are not well known by the public in Dapil 4.

> *"Actually, there are several female candidates who have potential, but they need to increase their visibility* (MR, 2025)*,"* said MR.

This shows that while there is potential in female candidates, a lack of visibility is one of the obstacles in increasing support. RL revealed that the public is starting to open up to female candidates, but they feel that there is still a significant difference in support for female candidates compared to male candidates.

> He stated, *"Although there is an increase in women's involvement, people in Dapil 4 tend to prefer male candidates who have been known for a long time* (RL, 2025)*."*

These differences show that despite the potential, it still takes time to build trust and recognition of potential women in the region. IS assesses that female candidates need to strengthen their campaigns by bringing issues relevant to the needs of society.

> *"If female candidates can focus more on practical issues such as health and education, I am sure the public will be more interested* (IS, 2025)*,"* He said.

This shows that a relevant issue-based approach can attract more attention and bring female candidates closer to the community in Dapil 4.

Table 5. Thematic Quotes from Interviews

Report	Quotation	Theme
MS (Dapil 2)	Prospective women are more concerned about social problems and are active in community activities.	Social care
NF (Dapil 2)	Female candidates actively use social media and The campaign is structured.	Digital campaign effectiveness
NH (Dapil 2)	They often hold women's empowerment and education events child.	Commitment to gender issues
SB (Dapil 4)	Female candidates are lacking seen active in the community.	Lack of direct involvement
MJ (Dapil 4)	Many people still think that women should just take care of themselves household.	Patriarchal cultural stereotypes
FT (Dapil 4)	They are less active on social media, even though The young generation is active there.	Disadvantages of digital campaigns
RN (Dapil 4)	Female candidates need to talk directly to the community more often.	Lack of personal approach

Source: Results of Dapil 2 and Dapil 4 Interviews

From all the interviews, it can be seen that in Dapil 2, the majority of informants consider female candidates to be more concerned and active in campaigns and responsive to social issues. Female candidates use social media and build emotional relationships through social activities. This forms a positive perception of the public. On the other hand, in Dapil 4, informants assessed that female candidates were less active, rarely appeared in the media or public activities, and were still trapped in gender stereotypes. The difference in views between positive and negative perceptions is based on only one view of the researcher but through the process of analysis with the researcher where the consistency of the coding results achieved through the inter-coder reliability process shows that the themes identified have gone through the process of validation of interpretation between researchers where these results show a significant difference between Dapil 2 which tends to receive positive and Dapil 4 which still faces challenges structural, cultural, and political communication, so that the results of this analysis provide a strong basis to conclude that patriarchal cultural factors, lack of direct involvement, social concern, and low direct campaigns are obstacles

to positive public perception. This finding is in line with political representation theory and literature on the influence of local culture

Comparison of Perceptions of Dapil 2 and Dapil 4

Involvement in Communication

The results of interviews with informants in Dapil 2 and Dapil 4 showed significant differences in the level of involvement and public perception of female candidates. In Dapil 2, female candidates are considered more active in listening to the aspirations of the community and being directly involved in social activities. This emotional closeness built between female candidates and voters reflects the basic principles of political representative theory, which emphasizes the importance of strong relationships between representatives and constituents. This leads to an increase in voter trust in the commitment of female candidates in solving existing social problems. As explained in the research by Setiyani (2022), female candidates who engage directly with society, both in physical and virtual events, are able to build emotional closeness that is very important in politics.

The importance of the social involvement of female candidates can be seen through their activities that directly involve the community (Ford Dowe, 2022; Grabe & Dutt, 2020; Malihah et al., 2020, 2023; Rubel et al., 2024). Female candidates in Dapil 2 are not only active in virtual campaigns, but also present in various community activities. This engagement shows that aspiring women seek to not only rely on technology to introduce themselves, but also to get closer to society through direct interaction. Findings Ramadhona and Parapat (2020) supports this, suggesting that direct involvement can increase the visibility of female candidates in the eyes of voters, which is an important element in political representation theory.

Campaign Intensity

A structured and effective campaign, including the maximum use of social media, is an important factor in reaching more voters (Koc-Michalska et al., 2021; Yadav, 2023). Research by Sitompul *et al* (2024) suggests that effective use of social media can help female candidates reach a wider audience, especially young voters who are increasingly using these platforms as a source of political information. The use of social media is very important to introduce female candidates to a wider and more diverse voters. In addition, female candidates in Dapil 2 also showed seriousness in conveying their vision and mission. They clearly explain their goals in bringing about social change, thus making them better known

to the public. Research by Yanti (2022) revealing that the clear delivery of a vision and mission can strengthen a candidate's social legitimacy, as well as increase the level of public acceptance of them.

On the other hand, Dapil 4 presents greater challenges for female candidates. One of the main problems faced is the lack of active engagement in campaigns, both in terms of physical presence and social media utilization. This leads to low visibility of female candidates compared to male candidates who are more dominant in public events and media. Hidayah and Hamidah (2022) explained that strong gender stereotypes in the area are one of the main obstacles for female candidates to gain public attention. Gender stereotypes in Dapil 4 often affect people's views of female candidates. Many informants stated that society still has a traditional view that sees women as not competent enough to lead in the political realm. This view shows that women are often considered inappropriate to be involved in politics, let alone to lead. In line with research by Ana *et al* (2023), this kind of gender stereotype can discourage women from taking an active role in politics, as it is considered more in line with domestic roles.

The Effectiveness of Digital Communities

Another challenge faced by female candidates in Dapil 4 is the limited use of social media. Unlike Dapil 2, where social media is used effectively, female candidates in Dapil 4 still find it difficult to take advantage of this platform. This affects their visibility, as social media is one of the most effective tools for contacting voters, especially among young voters who use the internet more often as the primary source of information. Research by Rizki Putra and Nurcholis (2021) shows that without the proper use of social media, female candidates can lose the opportunity to reach a wider range of voters. The strong gender stereotypes in this area serve as a major obstacle in the campaign of female candidates. Some people still view that women should only take care of the household and do not need to be involved in the political realm. This view is rooted in local traditions and culture, which makes it more difficult for female candidates in Dapil 4 to get support from the community. As mentioned by Shafira *et al* (2024), societies with traditional views often underestimate women's ability to lead. However, this challenge is not without a way out. One way to overcome gender stereotypes is to increase the direct involvement of female candidates with society. Face-to-face interactions, public discussions, and community activities involving social issues can help build trust and introduce aspiring women as leaders who are committed

to social change. Research by Dewanti and Sari (2021) emphasized that direct social interaction is an important strategy to reduce the distance between candidates and society.

In addition, female candidates in Dapil 4 need to use social media more effectively. With the increasingly dominant role of social media in political life, the use of these platforms can be key to expanding the reach of their campaigns. As stated by Sitompul et al (2024), social media can be a very effective tool for introducing female candidates to younger and more informed voters. Communities, religious leaders, and local media can play an important role in supporting female candidates. In interviews, some informants suggested that religious leaders could give legitimacy to female candidates in the eyes of society, thereby increasing their chances of being accepted by the public. Research by Gemilang and Muchimah (2021) It also highlighted the importance of support from religious leaders in strengthening the position of female candidates in the eyes of the public.

Local media also play a big role in providing space for prospective women to convey their vision and programs. In Dapil 2, local media has helped introduce female candidates more widely to the public. This underscores the importance of cooperation with the media in promoting female candidates in the political realm. As stated by Yoteni *et al* (2023), local media can serve as a platform to increase the visibility of female candidates in politics.

Gender Perceptions of the People

Gender-based political education is one of the solutions that is urgently needed to accelerate changes in people's mindsets (Monk et al., 2021; Thwala & Gana, 2023; Triningsih, 2021). Gender-based political education programs can help people understand the importance of women's participation in politics and change the negative perceptions that are still developing. In research by São Paulo, Sã *et al* (2024), gender-based education is considered an effective strategy to change society's view of women's role in politics. This gender-based political education is expected to help form a fairer perception of female candidates, so that they can compete more equally in the political arena. By increasing the political awareness of the community, women candidates can get greater support and reduce existing barriers. As expressed by Pangathousands and Ivanna (2024), changes in public perception of women can accelerate the increase in women's participation in politics. It is also important to strengthen the support network for female candidates. In interviews, several informants mentioned that a strong support network can help prospective women in overcoming various obstacles they face (Carson, 2022). As shown in research by Nursyifa et al (2024), support networks involving communities, women's organizations, and other

social institutions can increase women's chances of succeeding in politics. In addition, female candidates also need to focus more on issues that are close to people's daily lives. In interviews, several informants mentioned that female candidates who focus on social issues, such as education, health, and economic empowerment, will find it easier to get attention and support from voters. Research by Dewanti and Sari (2021) It also shows that female candidates who raise issues relevant to the needs of society can increase the credibility and appeal of their campaigns.

Thus, campaign strategies that focus on social issues can help strengthen the relationship between female candidates and society. These issues become a bridge that connects candidates with voters, and helps build a positive image for female candidates. As mentioned by Md Yunus et al (2020), choosing issues that are relevant to people's lives is the main key to gaining voter support. Although the challenges faced by women candidates in Dapil 4 are quite large, the opportunity to increase women's political participation remains wide open. Through a more issue-based approach, as well as increased use of social media and gender-based political education, female candidates can overcome existing barriers. As stated by Nursyifa et al (2024), gender-based political education has great potential to change public perceptions of women's roles in politics, thereby opening up greater opportunities for female candidates. Overall, this study provides important insights for strategies to increase women's participation in politics, especially in local political contexts. Support from various parties, such as the community, local media, and religious leaders, is essential to strengthen the position of female candidates in the political world. The involvement of various parties in supporting female candidates can reduce the influence of gender stereotypes that still exist and increase their chances of success in politics. With the right steps, female candidates in Dapil 4 can turn challenges into opportunities, so that they can contribute more significantly in the political arena.

Table 6. Presenting a Summary of Differences in Public Perception

Aspects	Dapil 2	Dapil 4
Involvement in Communication	High (frequent direct visits and down the field)	Low (low interaction between the community and candidates)
Gender Perceptions of Society	Positive (caring and communicative)	Negative (doubt about women's abilities)
The Effectiveness of Digital Communities	Active in social media	Lack of exploration of digital media both online
Campaign Intensity	active in virtual campaigns, but also present in various community activities	Lack of active involvement in campaigns, both in terms of physical presence

Discussion

The public's attitude in considering women to take part in the 2024 Legislative Election in Palu City is related to women's political participation, looking more at the active or not active female candidates in campaign activities that involve face-to-face meetings, being active on social media, and the influence of local culture that is still strong. For Dapil 2, the attitude of the community is more positive towards female candidates because they are considered to be actively present in the field, provide social services, and are sensitive to community issues both in the field of education and in the field of women's empowerment. Meanwhile, for Dapil 4, the reaction The public tends to be less favorable to female legislative candidates due to the lack of involvement with the community, lack of face-to-face interaction, and strong stereotypes against the patriarchal culture that often assigns women to domestic roles.

The findings reinforce the results of previous research. For example, Setiyani (2022) and Ramadhona & Parapat (2020) emphasize that the direct involvement of female candidates increases emotional bonds with voters and increases public trust. Sitompul et al. (2024) and Yadav (2023) also focus on the importance of social media in reaching young voters. On the other hand, the findings in Dapil 4 are consistent with studies by Ana et al. (2023) and Hidayah & Hamidah (2022), which show how gender stereotypes and patriarchal culture are significant barriers for women in gaining political support. Therefore, the findings of this study do not contradict other previous studies, but rather reinforce and confirm that the structural, cultural, and personal factors of female candidates are very important in shaping voters' perceptions of women in politics.

This study makes a recent contribution with respect to the study of women's politics in the scope of locality. In fact, most previous research did not distinguish between thinking

at the constituency level and more focused on the state scale. In this study, I applied a micro approach by comparing two constituencies in one city that have different socio-cultural backgrounds. In addition, this study fills the gap by creating new propositions, namely community leaders, local communities, the media, and health issues about the formation of perceptions from a legislative perspective that were minimally encountered in previous research. This research discusses the need for gender-based political education to target women as a strategic solution to change conservative views.

In theory, the results of this study enrich the literature on voter behavior with a locally-based approach to political representation and gender awareness. In practical terms, these findings make a real contribution to the formulation of more inclusive and normative campaign strategies for female candidates, as well as an important reference for policymakers and gender activists in developing more contextual and effective political education programs. This study also provides practical implications for election organizers and political parties, not only encouraging women's candidacy administratively but ensuring that their capacity, visibility and social acceptance are built to be more systematic.

The difference between this study and other studies or other regions lies in the dynamics of local politics and the complexity of women's political representation in the context of regional politics, which in this case has not been widely researched, especially in regions in Eastern Indonesia, in previous studies more focused generally on low overall female representation or on homogeneous participation patterns. In addition, discoveries in Palu City, especially in Dapil 2 and Dapil 4, show a more contrasting and unique dynamic in one city. In this case, one Dapil has experienced a significant increase in women's representation. While other Dapils are only dominated by men, this condition shows that cultural, social, local politics, and strategies in the candidate's personal party affect very different representation even though they are in the same administrative area. In this case, it can make a very important contribution to enriching the gender political discourse which has been dominated by studies from the western region of Indonesia.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study that shows that there is a significant difference in public perception of female candidates between Dapil 2 and Dapil 4, strategic efforts are needed to increase women's political participation, especially in Palu City. One of the important steps is to increase the visibility of female candidates, especially in Dapil 4, by organizing campaigns that are more active, planned, and directly touch the community. This

can be done through activities such as citizen forums, public discussions, and social activities that allow for direct interaction between candidates and the community.

In addition, gender-based political training and education are important aspects in equipping female candidates with political communication skills, effective campaign strategies, and a deeper understanding of relevant political issues. This not only increases the capacity of candidates, but also strengthens voter trust.

The use of social media must also be optimized, given its wide reach and influence in conveying campaign messages, building a positive image, and expanding support networks. In addition, collaboration with local communities, religious leaders, and community leaders is crucial in creating broader legitimacy and support. Theoretically, these findings strengthen the contextual approach in the study of political representation where local dynamics such as culture and gender perceptions greatly influence electoral outcomes (Krook, 2009; Phillips, 1995). In practical terms, the results of this study can be used as a basis for the KPU (General Election Commission) to design gender-based voter education for political parties in strengthening women's regeneration and for local governments in formulating region-based women's political empowerment policies.

Finally, the expansion of gender-based political education to the community is also very important to build collective awareness of the importance of women's representation in politics. Through an inclusive and sustainable approach, women's political participation in Palu City is expected to increase significantly.

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