



Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Selected Trade Union Groups in Laguna, Philippines

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Abstract

This study was conducted to assess the factors that affect women's participation in two trade union groups in Cabuyao and Biñan, Laguna, Philippines. Specifically, the study aimed to (a) characterize the respondents; (b) determine the motivations of women in joining trade unions; (c) discuss the roles women have assumed in their organization; and (d) propose recommendations in further increasing women's participation based on the trade union's suggestions. The data collection involved personal observation, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and survey interviews. The data obtained from the focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) were incorporated in the discussions, along with the notes on personal observation. The data gathered from the interviews which employed complete enumeration were analyzed in terms of frequencies and presented in percentages as the research is descriptive in nature.

Results showed that the top motivation of women for joining the trade union is to advocate for workers' rights. The trade unions have high regards towards women unionists because even if they are not seated in leadership positions, they serve multiple functions in the organization and this helps the organization attain their goals. The top factor limiting their participation in the union is domestic responsibilities, specifically child-rearing as the majority of them already have their own families.

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The most frequently-mentioned suggestion of both the respondents and the trade union officers to further increase women's participation in the trade union is to maintain the regular conduct of educational discussions.

Keywords: participation; trade union; women; social development.

1. Introduction

The recognition of women's participation in the social development process has been viewed not only as a concern of human rights and social justice but also a support mechanism in addressing the persistent needs of salient and often marginalized sector of our society [16]. Similarly, there have been remarkable evidences explaining that the women's participation in development-oriented initiatives and engagement have gained benefits affecting at the individual, community and societal level [17].

The World Development Report in 2012 generated by World Bank substantiated the role of women among development agenda and paying attention among women as economically efficient. The comprehensive report also made an attempt to rethink the shift from current view for the purpose of strengthening gender equality as a process of socio- political change [24]. Likewise, a clear approach to enhance women's greater participation in development efforts is through female leadership positions in multifaceted dimensions of public life. This covers the areas of economic activity, professional organizations, labor or trade unions, and politics at the various levels [16].

The emergence of women's organizations in Asia and their increasing participation in public advocacy and leadership has been remarkable in the historical trajectory during the late 20th century [22]. This continues up to the 21st century. As a result, women's organization has improved its social capital. It has also utilized the opportunity structure in international agencies to their own advantage [21].

In the Philippines, women comprised of almost half of the labor force. They contribute to the country's economy through their paid work [18,19]. According to [12], while the women sector is half of the labor force in the country only 35% are union members and only few (14%) of them have been union presidents, concluding a lack of women representation in leadership roles. There was also a finding in some industries where women are hired because their gender is perceived as gentle and less likely to protest against company rules and regulations.

Author in [16] emphasized that the women's historical under-representation in trade unions was not caused by women being innately difficult to organize, rather because of the trade unions' lack of collective effort to invite women to be organization members. As a result, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions, except in women's committee and generally, they do not have voices in trade union's decision-making processes [10]. There were also cultural and institutional barriers which make it impossible to combine family and work among women [20]. At present, women at work continue to be undervalued, underpaid, and overworked [2]. Furthermore, according to author no [6], one of the most oppressive areas for women is the workplace, thus organizing or joining existing unions appeared to be a solution in addressing workplace difficulties [15].

Women are now considered an integral part in union development as they are a means to forward collective action although major gaps in terms of women leadership in trade unions remain a challenge. Looking from previous studies, it can be deduced that women's participation in the trade unions is constrained. Given this condition, the general question arises: what factors limit women's participation in the trade unions? Assessing the contribution of women's union participation will help to further promote gender mainstreaming. Discerning the role of women in trade unions could contribute in further strengthening the collective capacity of the union towards the advancement of their calls for just and humane working conditions. In addition, this study will further contribute to the body of knowledge on women, labor unionism, and organizational development in general.

There is a relatively substantial amount of women-centered studies within trade unions. However, there is always a need to conduct researches that are focused on working women as it could be a way towards further empowerment in the workplace.

The general objective of this study is to assess the factors affecting women's participation in the trade unions. Specifically it sought to : (a) characterize the respondents; (b) determine the motivations of women in joining trade unions; (c) discuss the roles women have assumed in their organization; and (d) propose recommendations in further increasing women's participation based on the trade union's suggestions.

2. Materials and Method

2.1 Locale of the Study

Both sites of the study are located in the province of Laguna, about 30 kilometers south of Metro Manila. It is in the CALABARZON area or the southern Luzon region. Its total land area is 175, 973 hectares. According to latest statistical report (April 2015) from the National Statistics Office (NSO), the province's population is 2,669,847. As of writing, there are 24 municipalities, six cities, and 674 barangays (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2015).

Cabuyao City. According to their official government website, Cabuyao City is 43 kilometers south of Metro Manila and is in the northern part of Laguna. It covers a total land area of 4,291.5648 hectares; major land use is on urban expansion area (3,973.5648 hectares). Cabuyao's total population is at 294,830. In 2012, it was officially endorsed as a component city of Laguna.

Some notable companies located and currently operating in Cabuyao are Nestlé Philippines, Asia Brewery Incorporated, San Miguel Corporation, Wyeth Philippines Incorporated, and Tanduay Distillers Incorporated. Other industries that abound in the city are in the lines of food processing, garments, textile, and electronics manufacturing. Evidenced by the strong and fast-growing commerce in the area, Cabuyao is classified as a first class city. The specific location of the study in Cabuyao is in Mamatid, one of the 18 barangays in the city.

Biñan City. Biñan City is about 31 kilometers south of Metro Manila. On its north is San Pedro; on its south is Santa Rosa City; and on its west is Carmona, Cavite.

The city has a land area of 4,350 hectares. As of 2010, Biñan’s population is 283,396.

It has the largest public market in the whole CALABARZON region. Termed as the “trading and commerce center of the South,” business opportunities as well as major industries are found in Biñan, further boosting the city’s economic gains. The specific study site in Biñan is the Laguna International Industrial Park (LIIP), located in Barangay Mamaplasan.

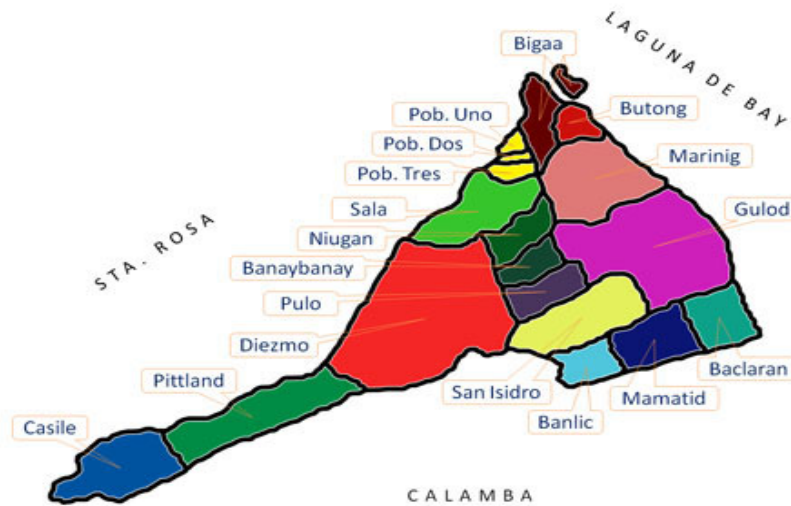


Figure 1: Map of Cabuyao City [26].



Figure 2: Map of Biñan City [26].

2.2 Scope and Limitations

This study tackled the various factors affecting women's organizational participation. It purposefully treated the local trade unions as autonomous institutions independent of the respondents' company or corporation of their current employment. On another note, as of writing, the researcher's requests for an interview with the human resource departments of both companies are still pending.

The major respondents were the women members of the labor unions. The study was limited to the two identified local trade union groups, thus the findings of this study might only be applicable for the selected unions or highly similar groups.

2.3 Research Design

A descriptive design was employed in this study. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were also conducted for the organizers of both trade unions. In addition, the trade union officers were engaged in focus group discussions (FGDs) to augment the data gathered from the survey interviews with women unionists and to verify the information obtained from the initial KIIs.

2.4 Respondents of the Study

The major respondents of the study were the women members of the two identified trade union groups: *Malayang Unyon ng Daiwa Seiko Philippine Corporation (MU-DSPC)* and *Pinagkaisang Lakas sa Clarmil Independent (PILAC)*. Complete enumeration or total count imparts a true measure of the whole population, yielding a type of sampling with no error and more detailed data can be obtained [4]. Such method in collecting data was preferred due to the relatively small number of women members in PILAC and MU-DSPC; 24 and 15, respectively, yielding descriptive statistics.

2.5 Research Instrument

Survey interviews were used to gather primary data from the major respondents. In specific terms, the questionnaires used in the survey interviews utilized the multiple choice design. The answers of the respondents were in the form of structured responses with free options wherein they could add other answers if not found in the given choices. For rating purposes, it made use of the Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1-poor; 2-fair; 3-good; 4-very good; and 5-excellent). Such scaling was employed when the respondents rated themselves and the performance of their trade union based on their perception. Likewise, there were sets of guide questions for the KIIs and FGDs.

After coordinating with the trade union organizers and set of officers, one-on-one interviews were conducted from March until May 2015. In the case of PILAC, the interviews were done during the Women's Day Celebration at Crossing, Calamba City, Laguna while for MU-DSPC, the interviews were administered during the Labor Day mobilization at the same location.

The researchers also coordinated with the human resource departments of both companies. However, as of writing, no concrete response from them was provided.

2.6 Data Analysis

The responses in the survey interviews were analyzed in frequency and presented in percentages. The data obtained from the FGDs and KIIs were presented through narration and the notes on personal observation were also incorporated in the discussions.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

The framework used in this study was adapted from author no [11] framework on the factors relating to women’s participation in international assignments. The said framework was modified considering the locality and context of the study.

The personal attributes pertain to women’s socio-economic characteristics, current workload and lack of self-confidence. On the other hand, elements such as household characteristics and the socio-demographic characteristics of their household members are classified under the interpersonal factors. These two general elements are deemed to have an influence on women’s participation in the trade unions.

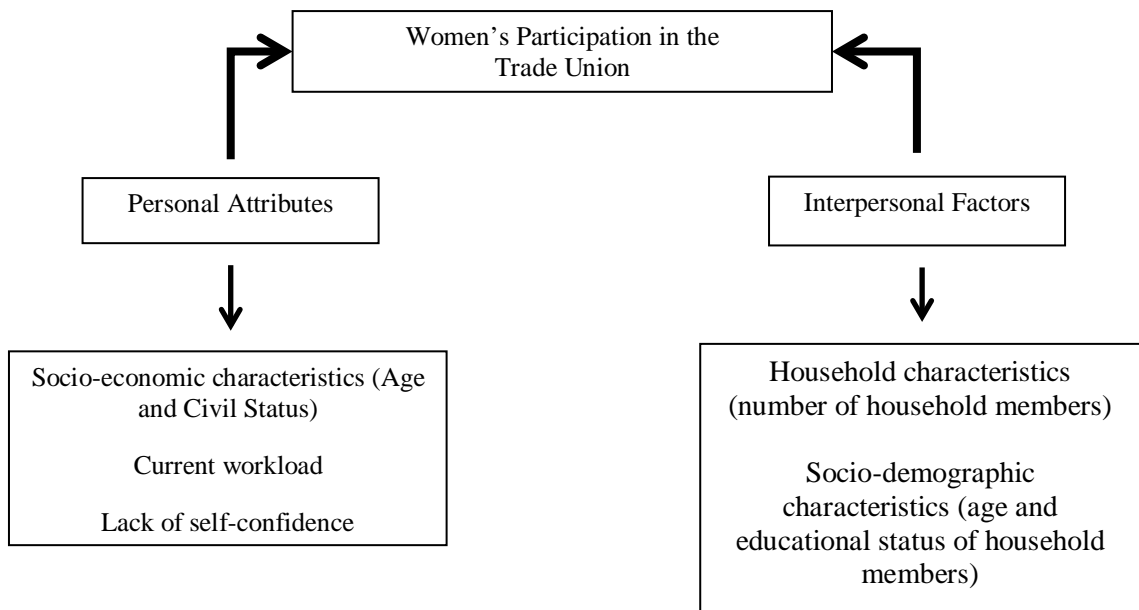


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework of the Study

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondents from MU-DSPC are relatively younger than the respondents from PILAC.

The majority of respondents are already married. In terms of educational attainment, MU-DSPC respondents have a higher formal education status than PILAC respondents. Almost all of them have working husbands and some respondents also have school-age children. Most women members who are in their adult years already have their own families.

At present, all of the respondents from PILAC are production workers in the company while some respondents (33%) from MU-DSPC are in the line of manufacturing. The current occupations of MU-DSPC respondents are more diverse than that of PILAC as there are other lines of works such as quality control (27%), and production control, purchasing, material control, planning, and support staff, all at 7% each.

Majority (75%) of the respondents from PILAC have no other source of income aside from their jobs in the company; most (94%) of the respondents from MU-DSPC also stated that they have no other source of income. With their wages from their current occupation, more than half (67%) of PILAC respondents earns PhP 15,001 to PhP 20,000 every month. Similarly, more than half (60%) of the respondents from MU-DSPC earns a monthly income of PhP 15,001 to PhP 20,000.

Majority of the respondents are not original residents in the current area they live in. They have come from either within Laguna area only or from different provinces in the country (63% for PILAC respondents and 53% for MU-DSPC). Majority (80%) of these migrant respondents from PILAC and MU-DSPC (63%) have been living in their current address for more than 10 years already. All respondents from MU-DSPC moved to Laguna in search of employment, while more than half (67%) of the respondents from PILAC moved in the area for the same reason. The remaining 33% from PILAC transferred to Laguna upon marrying as their husbands are from the province. Furthermore, it was found out that the geographical variation of migrant respondents is more diverse in PILAC than in MU-DSPC. More than half (53%) of them originally came from the Luzon area (CALABARZON, NCR, and Bicol regions); Visayas and Mindanao account to 13% each while all of the migrant respondents from MU-DSPC were from Luzon only (Laguna, Cavite, Batangas, NCR, and Bicol region).

3.2 Motivational Factors in Joining the Trade Union

Results showed that the top reason of women unionists from PILAC and MU-DSPC in joining the trade union is to advocate for workers' rights. In this particular study, the collective reasons obtained from women unionists include fighting for workers' rights, company recognition, organized resistance, network to other women unionists and to other sectors of the society, deeper understanding of national issues, and legacy to the next generations. Wage increase, additional benefits, and job tenure are classified as personal motivations in joining the trade union, according to author in [16]. Author in reference [23] disclosed that women lack complete grasp of the various gains that they can obtain from trade unions. This study proved otherwise as the respondents were able to provide numerous reasons when they decided to join the trade union and they were articulate when asked why they chose to unionize. The categorization used in this study is based on Kirton's analysis on the influence of women in trade union participation.

Table 1: Motivational Factors for Joining the Trade Union

Reason or motivation for joining the trade union	PILAC		MU-DSPC	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
	(n=24)	(%)	(n=15)	(%)
To advocate for workers' rights	24	100	15	100
Company recognition	13	54	5	33
Organized resistance	3	13	5	33
To help fellow workers	13	54	7	47
Job tenure	17	71	9	60
Wage increase	18	75	4	27
Additional benefits	15	63	8	53
Leadership skills	3	13	2	13
Legacy	2	8	1	7
Network to others	14	58	1	7
Deeper understanding of national issues	18	75	11	73

According to author in [21], workers join trade unions to have better incomes and added benefits as unions are recognized to be the sole and exclusive bargaining agents (SEBA) in the workplace. In addition, security in their jobs also applies. Mostly, Smith cited personal reasons in joining trade unions. The respondents, on the other hand, had some other motivations other than those personal ones.

To quote one respondent from MU-DSPC who has been in the trade union for five years,

I joined the trade union because I desire to be knowledgeable about my basic rights not only as a worker but also as a human being. The company did not inform us about our rights to unionize in the workplace so I was clueless at first, but union officers had succeeded to demand from the company that all regularized workers be automatically included in the roster of union members. Another reason that I joined the trade union is to have a sense of security in my job.

I heard that firing workers in some industries to cut the company's costs is rampant and this makes me insecure because many of us are newly regularized, but with the trade union, I feel that I have a better chance in keeping my job.

Another respondent from PILAC who has been a unionist for more than a decade now also divulged both collective and personal reasons in joining the trade union:

When we initially organized into the trade union, our fellow workers and I decided to join because we wanted to help one another towards a united goal, which is to have better working conditions and humane treatment from the company. Better working conditions mean higher wages and additional benefits based on our work inside the production area. To reiterate, women unionists from both trade unions have clear visions on why they personally chose to join their trade unions.

3.3 Women's Roles in the Trade Unions

Since the conception of the trade unions, most (75%) of the respondents from PILAC have not had an experience in handling positions in their organization although some of them have been shop stewards and a few have been board of directors in the past 10 years. For MU-DSPC, most of them also did not have positions in the past. Only a few have been secretary and committee chair. Most PILAC respondents do not hold positions in their organization at present. Currently, women unionists of PILAC hold only a small percentage in leadership positions as board of directors and *Kilusang Manggagawang Kababaihan* (Movement of Women Workers) coordinator. Similarly, only a few of MU-DSPC respondents are committee chairs and treasurers in the organization.

The trade union officers mentioned that some of the women members are working under at least one committee of their own choice. For PILAC respondents, almost half of them are under the women's committee. On the other hand, some of MU-DSPC respondents are under the education committee.

Aside from these identified roles, the researcher was able to observe some of the trade unions' dynamics during one of their assemblies and during the two big mobilizations (Women's Day and Labor Day) covered by the duration of the survey interviews. In one of their general membership meeting, it was noteworthy that women were seated in front. Whenever their chairperson seeks out the union members' opinions and suggestions, the women were always asked first and most of the times, they were able to voice out their concerns which the trade union officers duly acknowledge. In mass mobilizations, they are not assigned as front liners, but they have an almost perfect attendance.

There is approximately 1:8 and 1:12 ratio of female to male union members for PILAC and MU-DSPC, respectively. In terms of leadership positions, there is a 1:22 female to male ratio for both trade unions. Despite the number of literature stating that women are underrepresented in trade unions, this study showed there are certainly more male members than women in both trade unions, thus the sex composition in leadership positions is only reflective of the composition of the whole trade union and does not necessarily mean that women are underrepresented.

This phenomenon was explained by author in [14], citing that “the [trade union] leadership should look like its membership”, which only means that if there is a much larger number of male unionists in the organization, it is expected that they would also get to be seated in most leadership positions. It must also be noted that both industries in this study are predominantly composed of males.

Although women are not assigned in top leadership roles, it is relevant to note that some of them are functioning under the committee system in their respective trade unions. According to the trade union organizers which was also complemented by the officers, in these committees, women assume various roles such as being file-keepers, coordinators, negotiators, organizers, advisers, and consultants among others. Some of them even assist in preparing food for the trade union members during mobilizations. In addition to these, one officer related that the management have high regards towards women unionists so the trade union ensures that women are always present during their collective bargaining agreement negotiations. “A trade union with a strong women force is a strong trade union,” he added.

3.4 Perceptions on Women’s Participation

More than half of the respondents from PILAC rated themselves “good”, while some of them provided a “very good” rating and only some of them rated themselves “excellent”. Some of them gave themselves a low rating because they believe that their participation is being limited by a number of factors.

Inputs from male officers regarding women’s participation in the trade union also provide other perspectives on the roles of women in the organization.

To quote one officer from PILAC,

We treat our women members dearly. They are considered vital elements in the success of our organization. They are always of help to the union, may it be in the smallest form such as helping prepare food during mobilizations or in providing suggestions on how to manage internal and external conflicts as they have exceptional problem-solving and decision-making skills.

He further stated that women are always consulted not only to ensure that they are included in the decision-making process in the organization but also because the trade union believes in women’s ability to think straightforwardly and efficiently find ways to cope with existing conflicts. MU-DSPC officers gave more specific response regarding the role that women in their trade union fulfill. According to them, most women members are currently under the education committee where they function as coordinators and file-keepers.

When asked about why most of their women members have rated themselves relatively low, a PILAC officer stated,

We notice that sometimes, women lack self-confidence. Probably, they are just timid in giving high ratings for themselves. They participate well though most of the time, they also have outside duties.

As the women unionists have rated themselves in terms of their own participation in the trade union, the officers were also rated their female counterparts in the organization. Both sets of trade union officers have reached consensus and they collectively rated their female counterparts “very good”. They confirmed that they also believe that women’s trade union participation is limited.



Figure 4: Self-rating of the Respondents

On another note, trade union officers perceived their women members as excellent conflict-handlers and decision-makers. They also observed that women have perseverance and solicitude, among others. Both sets of trade union officers have collectively rated their female counterparts “very good”. However, they confirmed that they also believe that women’s trade union participation is limited.

3.5 Factors Limiting Women’s Trade Union Participation

Although the age and civil status vary among the respondents, duties at home remain a top factor that hinders women from devoting most of their time in the trade union. Among the various duties at home, taking care of their children is the most frequently specified factor affecting their participation in the organization. In addition, health concerns might also arise with age of the respondents. To quote one respondent who is already in her mid-40s,

With my age, I find it difficult to actively participate in our activities, most especially during our mobilizations outside the province. I am easily tired most of the time as I am also suffering from diabetes. I really find it hard to participate in the same way that I have participated when I was younger and still new to the trade union.

The trade union officers also observed that older women unionists are less active in their participation in the trade union, also citing health concerns among their members. Along with age, the status of the respondents, whether single or married are also taken into account as this would further help in determining the factors that hinder their full participation in their organization. Supported by author no [5], age and civil status both have an influence on women’s organizational participation. Due to the long-standing social convention that women must put her family above all else, it is expected of them to temporarily leave all other responsibilities from time to time.

On the other hand, their familial status could also be a contributory factor in their effective functioning in the organization as families are considered to be powerful breeding grounds of trade union values [8]. Although this was not apparent in the survey interviews, an officer from one of the trade unions repeatedly asserted that women unionists are excellent decision-makers and conflict-handlers because they have vast experience in those areas in their own families, to which other trade union officers agreed.

Author in reference [5] also claimed that having knowledge could aid in efficient and effective societal functioning and more specifically, organizational functioning. However, in the context of this study, the level of their formal education was not found to be a major factor that enables them to fulfill tasks efficiently. Furthermore, author in reference [13] claimed that women's lack of educational background prevents them from attaining leadership positions. Nevertheless, this study proved that the level of their formal education does not significantly affect their opportunities in terms of acquiring leadership positions as the respondents and the trade union officers claimed that they are given equal opportunities regardless of their educational attainment.

In 1980s, a Canadian study indicated that women with families find it difficult to lend time in union activities and even after a span of 10 years, the same results were released after a study of trade unions in the United States [9]. In 2011, Miranda stated that the responsibility of fulfilling household duties remain an unshared burden for women as they are the primary actors when it comes to domestic roles. However, their unpaid work in their homes is still bounded by their "love and emotion" for their own families [25]. This justifies their prioritization of childcare over any other duties.

The respondents' perceived lack of expertise in organizational functioning; stating that they are not yet well-versed was the next identified factor affecting their participation. They reasoned that they do not see themselves as excellent as their current set of officers in the trade union. Although they all attend and sit through their scheduled educational discussions, they believe that they are still in the process of learning to be at par with their male counterparts in the organization. Their perceived lack of full knowledge on how to handle duties in the trade union could mean two things. The first one is that the major factors limiting women's participation include their lack of self-confidence budding from their perceived lack of skills and awareness of their trade union. [13,1] True enough, this was later on supported by the trade union officers, having observed that most of their women unionists lack confidence. Women's behavior of seemingly lacking self-confidence in their trade union participation and more so in leadership positions was explained by author in reference [3], citing that women are frequently absent in trade union affairs, thus they believe that they do not possess the necessary knowledge and skills. Secondly, it could be because the majority of them have not had experience in union leadership, making it difficult for them to state that they are fully-knowledgeable in all the organization's pursuits.

Some respondents also made mention of their current workload. Author no [18] identified this as a limiting factor in terms of women's performance in their trade union. Those who stated no limiting factor to their union participation was found out to be composed of respondents with single status.

Table 2: Factors Limiting Women's Participation

Factors Limiting Participation	PILAC		MU-DSPC	
	Frequency (n=24)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (n=15)	Percentage (%)
Duties at home	18	75	13	87
Health concerns and/or illnesses	9	38	1	13
Lack of expertise	7	29	4	27
Current workload	4	17	3	20
Security reasons	1	4	0	0
None	1	4	0	0

3.6 Suggestions in Increasing Women's Participation

Women and men alike suggest proceeding with their educational discussions. Other suggestions raised were to conduct seminars on life-work harmonization. Some trade union officers also made mention of strengthening their outside linkages with women unionists from other industries.

Despite having identified that household duties are the main constraint in their full participation in the trade union, the observance of their regular educational discussions was still one of the respondents' top suggestions. According to them, before they were even fully-inducted in the organization, it was made known to them that as a part of the trade union's pursuit to enrich workers' knowledge on different issues and key aspects of union organizing, they will have a series of regular educational discussions, which is scheduled once a month and which they are required to attend. They added that ever since then, they have always reserved a day for their educational discussions and thus adjusted for their other schedules.

In addition, most of them recognized the importance of such learning as they were able to learn about their rights and other social issues through the discussions. The author in [10] disclosed that in order to intensify women's participation and involvement in the trade union, they have to undergo trainings and education. Conducting educational discussions equip women in continuously evaluating their values and this aids them in discussing issues inside and outside their organization [7].

Table 3: Suggestions in Increasing Women's Participation

Suggestions	PILAC		MU-DSPC	
	Frequency (n=24)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (n=15)	Percentage (%)
Continuation of regular educational discussions	23	96	9	60
Support group inside the trade union	14	58	7	47
Women-centered linkages outside the organization	18	75	10	67
Special assignments for women	1	4	4	27
Constant reminder of upcoming activities	14	58	8	53
Seminars on work-life harmonization	15	63	11	73
Monitoring of labor laws	9	38	7	46
Strengthen women's committee	0	0	1	7

4. Summary and Conclusions

The respondents from MU-DSPC are relatively younger than the respondents from PILAC as 38% of PILAC respondents are within the age range of 41-45 while 33% of MU-DSPC respondents are aged 31-35.

The majority of respondents are already married. In terms of educational attainment, MU-DSPC respondents have a higher formal education status as the majority of PILAC respondents are secondary graduates while the majority of MU-DSPC respondents are college graduates. The majority of the respondents belong to the Catholic denomination. Almost all of them have working husbands and some respondents also have school-age children.

All respondents divulged that they joined the trade union in order to advocate for their basic rights as workers in the industry. Other responses were to help fellow workers in the industry, network to other workers outside their company, and deeper understanding of national issues as their collective reasons. The more personal motivations included wage increase, additional benefits, and job tenure. Ever since the formation of the trade unions, the percentage of women in leadership positions is relatively low. However, this is only reflective of the composition of the trade union as there are more males in both unions. It was found out that even if women are not seated on top leadership positions, they perform multiple tasks, especially in the committee system.

Collectively, PILAC respondents have rated themselves higher than that of MU-DSPC respondents. To further engage women in trade union participation, more considerations are given to women. Both trade unions acknowledge the significance of their women force inside their organization. The trade unions look up to their women members when it comes to handling conflicts as they believe that women's ability to deal with challenges is highly-influenced by their families and is therefore advantageous to the organization. They gave a rating of "very good" to their women members in terms of their participation.

Among the identified factors limiting the respondents' participation in the organization, women's duties at home place on top of the list. This was followed by health concerns and/or illnesses. Perceived lack of skills and expertise in union responsibilities was also mentioned as a limiting factor.

5. Recommendations

5.1 For the Trade Unions

Basing from the results when asked about the suggestions of women unionists, it would be helpful for the trade union to conduct or facilitate a seminar on time management so the women members would have added input on how they will harmonize their work and personal life. As both trade unions have their regular schedules of educational discussions, it would be beneficial for the whole organization for this to be maintained, as per suggestion of the respondents themselves. The women's committee in both trade unions must also be strengthened in order to be able to address women's concerns in the organization immediately. Furthermore, a re-orientation of the trade union must be briefly conducted as this study showed that not all women members are aware the vital information about their trade union profiles.

5.2 For the women unionists

All their issues concerning the trade union must be consulted with their union officers so any conflicts that may arise will be resolved immediately and collectively.

Strengthening ties with other women unionists through KMK would also help them as they could share experiences and good practices with other women members of various trade unions in the region.

5.3 For further studies

The researcher highly suggests that a more detailed study be done and that identifying and compiling the best practices of the trade unions also be considered as this could be a guide for other union organizations in further intensifying women's participation. A similar study could also be conducted with trade unions that have a larger proportion of women and compare it with the findings of this study to determine if larger women membership has a different effect in the leadership composition of the trade unions. In addition, another aspect that may be looked into is the aspect of organizational development and the impact of women's function to the overall organizational development of the trade union.

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