

# Public Opinion and Policy Impact: Assessing Church-State Separation in the Philippines

Yzian Khyle Napatotan<sup>1</sup>, Ryan Jade Abud<sup>2</sup>, Ralph Bryant Tarape<sup>3</sup>, Michael Ashley Pascual<sup>4</sup>,  
Mc Rollyn Vallespin<sup>5\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Student, Institute of Arts and Sciences, Far Eastern University-Manila, Sampaloc, Manila, 1008, Metro Manila, Philippines

<sup>2,4</sup>Student, Institute of Accountants, Business and Finance, Far Eastern University-Manila, Sampaloc, Manila, 1008, Metro Manila, Philippines

<sup>3</sup>Student, Institute of Architecture and Fine Arts, Far Eastern University-Manila, Sampaloc, Manila, 1008, Metro Manila, Philippines

<sup>5\*</sup>Faculty, General Education Department, Institute of Education, Far Eastern University-Manila, Sampaloc, Manila, 1008, Metro Manila, Philippines

Email: mrdvallespin@feu.edu.ph

**Abstract**— *The Philippines is a democratic country where the separation of church and state is enshrined in the Constitution. However, the separation of church and state is a complex and controversial issue in the Philippines. Despite the enactment of the 1987 Constitution's Article III Section 6, upholding this principle faces ongoing challenges, including the pervasive influence of religion on politics and the discrimination against religious minorities. In this paper, the researchers used descriptive analysis and ANOVA to analyze the data comprehensively. The findings of this paper show that personal experience and education are the most influential factors in shaping Filipinos' views on the separation of church and state. Also, the paper finds that most Filipinos support a strong separation of church and state. Moreover, the papers' results suggest that respondents' perception of church-state separation is similar. The paper concludes that the nation should continue to work towards developing everyone's attitude and acknowledge the reality that the state and the church need to have a determined boundary between them. It also recommends that the government continue developing a more inclusive society where individuals are free to practice their beliefs without fear of discrimination.*

**Keywords**— *Democracy: Filipino: Freedom: Politics: Religion.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is a democratic country where the government upholds the idea of religion and state separation. The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines Article III Section 6 asserts that "The separation of Church and State shall be inviolable." This article states that people can practice religion without fear of persecution or discrimination. Therefore, no law should establish or restrict religion, which gives the Filipino people the freedom to choose their religions, speech, and artistic expression. This principle is significant for individuals because it protects the freedom of religion and prevents the government from favoring one religion over another [1]. However, the complex and controversial concept of church-state separation has confused people and led to different notions. According to [2], the state and religion cause many problems for each individual. In light of these circumstances, the question arises as to whether the separation of church and state is one of the most effective means for the

Philippine government to uphold equality and safeguard the rights of Filipino citizens.

In the Philippine context, the separation of church and state is relevant to the challenges individuals face in expressing their beliefs freely. For example, same-sex couples can hold "holy unions," but these unions are not legally recognized as marriages. This lack of legal recognition can make it difficult for LGBTQ+ couples to express their faith freely, as they may not be able to participate in certain religious ceremonies [3]. Another challenge is the unfair treatment of religious minorities that erodes the separation of church and state and religious freedom [4]. Aside from that, there are also circumstances where some priests are involved in politics. This can blur the lines between church and state and lead to discrimination against those who do not hold the same religious beliefs [5]. The current issue of Pura Luka Vega, a drag artist who has been accused of blasphemous action due to portraying the image of Jesus Christ and performing using the religious song "Ama Namin" in the comedy bar [6]. This case highlights the potential for religious groups to use the law to censor and discriminate against those who express views that they disagree with. Hence, it is imperative to address the challenges to the separation of church and state, as they significantly impact individuals in society.

The modernization theory emphasizes fundamental social changes that define Church-State relations [7]. In the modern world, people have different opinions, and one may be acceptable, especially if values and preferences influence the other's decisions. The church and state separation principle should not be seen as a prohibition that would hinder state actors from taking actions related to public policies that may intersect with religious beliefs or religious organizations from shaping public sentiment and expressing their moral positions on executive policies and legislative issues. This indicates that individuals can make decisions, especially in democratic countries. Moreover, the traditional line between political and religious power has been broken, leading to a dispute between the government and the Catholic hierarchy [8].

The evolving complexities surrounding the separation of church and state in the Philippines, exemplified by recent controversies such as same-sex marriage, religious minorities, involvement of religious institutions in political activities and vice versa, and the Pura Luka Vega case, raise critical questions about the effectiveness of this constitutional principle in upholding equality and protecting the rights of Filipino citizens. It sparked serious debates on artistic expression, religious sensibilities, and the protection and impact of policies made for individuals within a secular context, considering there should be no violation of state law [9]. Thus, this paper aims to assess the level of agreeableness among Filipinos regarding the separation of church and state; determine which contributing factor greatly affects the level of agreeableness among Filipinos regarding the concept of church-state separation; to examine if there are significant differences among the demographic profile towards the level of agreeableness; and to comprehensively analyze the broader societal and political implications of church-state separation in the Philippines.

## II. METHODS

In this chapter, the researchers will give an overview of how they obtained their results and accomplished the objectives. They will describe the research design, data collection methods and procedures, sampling, interpretation techniques, and limitations encountered while conducting the study. This study used a quantitative research design to gather numerical data on participants' opinions regarding the separation of church and state. The researchers used a 35-item modified structured questionnaire. It utilized a purposive sampling method in which the target participants of this study were 20 public servants such as police, government officials, lawmakers, and teachers who are biologically determined and believe in binary orientation only, 20 religious leaders, including priests, and the pastors from Baptist, Christians, Iglesia ni Cristo, 20 LGBTQ advocates or activists, and 20 married couples under the Philippine Constitution. The survey data will be analyzed quantitatively to determine the extent to which Filipinos agree on the issue of church-state separation. The researchers used Google Forms, which can be distributed online, in-person, or with QR codes. Before conducting the survey, the researchers provided the participants with a consent form and data privacy agreement.

Researchers used Microsoft Excel and JASP to compile and analyze participants. Descriptive statistics have been used to comprehensively summarize the features shown by a dataset gathered from a sample population. However, even though the researchers have established their procedures for gathering the data, they may still experience some difficulties and challenges in collecting data, which can affect the result of the study, such as the availability of the participants. Nonetheless, the researchers' commitment to improving understanding of a chosen topic is shown by their decision to move towards finishing the study despite these limitations. Assuring transparency and aiding readers' comprehension requires clearly labeled and comprehensive sections within a research study, such as design, procedures, sources, and limitations.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The concept of church-state separation has been a subject of ongoing debate and discussion throughout history, particularly in societies where religion plays a significant role in shaping social norms, cultural values, and political dynamics. In the Philippines, the 1987 Constitution's Article III Section 6 implemented a separation of church and state; however, despite establishing this law, there are still ongoing issues faced by the Filipinos, particularly in individual freedom and discrimination against minorities [7]. This section of the study shows the findings based on the survey questionnaire gathered from different individuals regarding the separation of church and state.

### Section 1. Respondents' Demographic Profile

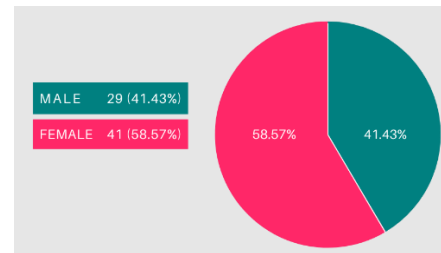


Figure 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Gender

Fig. 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondent's gender. Among the 80 respondents, female respondents represent the majority, with 41 individuals accounting for 58.57%. In contrast, male respondents constitute 41.43% of the sample, with 29 individuals.

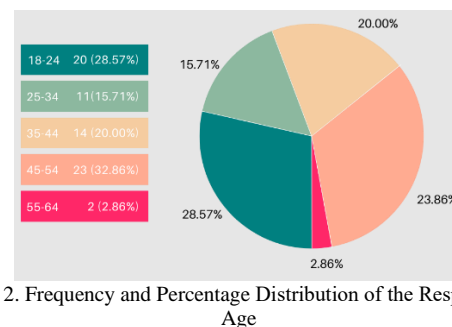


Figure 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Age

Fig. 2 illustrates the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents' age. The age group 45-54 years old holds the highest frequency, with 23 respondents representing 32.86% of the total. This is followed by the age group 18-24 years old, with 20 respondents accounting for 28.57%. The next most common age groups are 35-44 (14 respondents, 20%) and 25-34 (11 respondents, 15.71%). The lowest frequency and percentage are observed in the 55-64-year-old age group, with two respondents representing 2.86%.

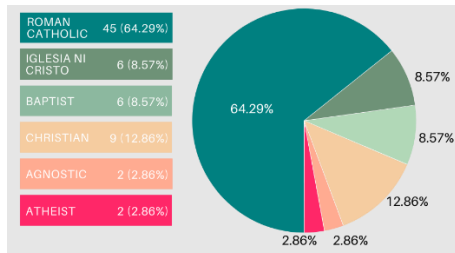


Figure 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Religion

Fig. 3 presents the respondents' religious affiliation frequency and percentage distribution. Roman Catholics constitute the majority, with 45 respondents representing 64.29%. Christians follow with nine respondents (12.86%), followed by Iglesia ni Cristo and Baptists, with six respondents (8.57%). The remaining respondents include 2 Agnostics (2.86%) and 2 Atheists (2.86%).

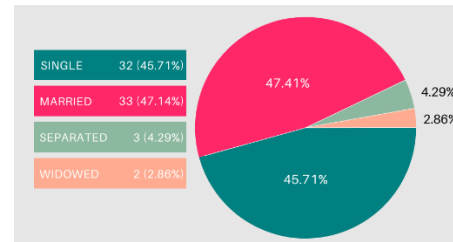


Figure 6. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Religion

Figure 6 illustrates the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondent's marital status. Married individuals constitute the majority, with 33 respondents representing 47.14%. Single respondents follow closely, with 32 individuals accounting for 45.72%. The remaining respondents include three separated individuals (4.27%) and two widowed individuals (2.87%).

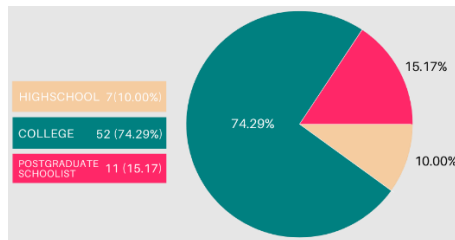


Figure 4. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Education Level

Figure 4 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondent's education level. Most respondents (74.28%) hold a college degree, with a frequency value of 52, while 15.17% have attained a postgraduate level, with a frequency value of 11. Lastly, 10% of the respondents are high school graduates, with a frequency value of 7.

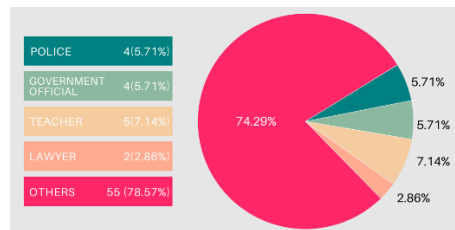


Figure 5. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Occupation

Figure 5 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents' occupations. Most respondents fall under "others," encompassing various professions such as businessmen, seafarers, drivers, pharmacists, and housewives. This group comprises 55 respondents, representing 74.29% of the total. Teachers constitute the next most common occupation, with five respondents (7.14%), followed by police officers and government officials, each with four respondents (5.71%). Lawyers represent the least frequent occupation, with two respondents (2.86%).

TABLE 1. Factors that Shape the Respondents' Opinion on Church-State Separation in the Philippines

No.	Items	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
9	Personal Experience	4.06	0.93	Strong influence	1
7	Education	4.06	0.90	Strong influence	2
3	Parents	3.97	1.08	Strong influence	3
1	Religious Organization	3.71	1.12	Strong influence	4
4	Relatives	3.44	1.10	Strong influence	5
8	Work Environment	3.43	1.04	Strong influence	6
2	Peers	3.37	0.78	Moderate influence	7
5	Social Media	3.04	1.07	Moderate influence	8
6	Mass Media	3.03	1.06	Moderate influence	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.57</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>Strong Influence</b>	

Legend: 4.21-5.00 (Very Strong Influence); 4.20-3.41 (Strong Influence); 3.40-2.61 (Moderate Influence); 2.60-1.81 (Weak Influence); 1.00-1.80 (No Influence).

Table 1 presents the average scores and corresponding interpretations of the factors influencing the respondents' opinions regarding Church-State separation. Personal experiences emerged as the most influential factor, with a weighted mean of 4.10, indicating a "strong influence." Education, parents, and religious organizations followed closely, with mean of 4.03, 3.99, and 3.70, respectively, all classified as "strong influences." Meanwhile, peers were categorized as having a "moderate influence," with an average of 3.42. The remaining factors, such as social media and mass media, had the lowest mean of 3.06 and 3.04, which also falls under the "moderate influence" category. Overall, with a grand mean of 3.57, the result shows that the said factors strongly influence the respondents' opinion regarding the separation of church-state in the Philippines.

The journal article of [10] stated that today's generation has different social, religious, and political experiences, which shapes the views and opinion of each individual in the context of the separation of church and state. There are different beliefs

regarding church-state separation in the Philippines because everyone had different practices varying from one person to another, whether this experience came from home, school, or just a realization within themselves. The research study of [11] stated that parents and relatives significantly influence children's religious and political ideology. Parents and relatives influence individuals because they are the one who guides children on how to become a moral person as they grow old. His study also emphasized that education and work environment can contribute to the person's viewpoint, especially if they are more likely to engage in religious and secular activities. Furthermore, the study of [12, 13] probed that the Catholic, Christian, and other denominations strongly influence public opinion on Church-State separation. The Philippines consist of 79% Roman Catholic, 6% belong to Christian cults, 6% to Islam, and 8% to other religious affiliation [14]. A country's diverse religious landscape inevitably leads to various individual practices and beliefs, which can significantly impact one's stance on the separation of church and state.

On the other hand, peers and the pervasive influence of social media, mass media, and other forms of technology present opportunities and challenges in shaping individual perceptions of the relationship between non-secular and secular societies [15]. In today's technology-driven world, individuals are constantly bombarded with information from various media sources. This access to information empowers individuals to evaluate critically and fact-check information, enabling them to form informed opinions on various topics, including the relationship between non-secular and secular societies.

In conclusion, the factor that greatly contributes to the level of agreeableness of Filipinos is their personal experience and education. It is followed by the parents, religious organizations, relatives, and the work environment. Finally, peers, social media, and mass media are the least contributing factors. Therefore, these factors can be considered significant determinants of individual viewpoints and contribute to agreeableness on the Church-State separation.

It is widely held that making a personal religious commitment, as well as the statements above about the virtues of church-state separation, can positively impact an individual's life [16]. The data in Table 2 examines how the respondents understand freedom considering these declarations about church-state separation. By calculating all the weighted mean, the first question stating that "Choosing a religion" ranks first by having 3.97; it indicates that somewhat free is in verbal interpretation. The second rank is associated with the fourth question, "Access to information about different religions and beliefs," by having 3.79 as its weighted mean, which is also somewhat free. The second and third questions, "Expression" and "Assembly and Association," are ranked third and fourth as they are not far from each other by having 3.51 and 3.41 weighted mean, respectively; they still show a somewhat free in the verbal description.

Next in line is the fifth question, "Participate in the political process without religious interference," which ranked fifth with a result of 3.16 in the weighted mean, indicating that it is neither free nor restricted in the verbal description. Then, the sixth and

last question, "LGBTQ+ people live freely and without fear of discrimination," ranked last out of all the questions in this table, possessing 3.03 in the weighted mean and also indicates that it is neither free nor restricted. To complete the table, the researchers computed the Grand Weighted Mean, which has a result of 3.48, indicating a "Somewhat free" on all of the questions among the respondents regarding the impact of separation of church-state on individual freedom. Therefore, as can be seen in the table above, most respondents agree with [17] that being a member of the LGBTQ+ community in the Philippines is not easy, and neither is full participation in the political process free of religious interference or the absence of fear of discrimination. Moreover, the participants perceive that they have a bit of discretion in religious affiliation, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and access to information about beliefs and religions.

TABLE 2. Impact of Separation of Church and State on Individuals' Freedom

No.	Items	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1	Choosing a Religion	3.97	1.14	Somewhat free	1
4	Access information about different religions and beliefs	3.79	1.08	Somewhat free	2
2	Expression	3.51	0.97	Somewhat free	3
3	Assembly and Association	3.41	0.92	Somewhat free	4
5	Participate in the political process without religious interference	3.16	1.11	Neither free nor restricted	5
6	LGBTQ+ people lives freely and without fear of discrimination	3.03	1.38	Neither free nor restricted	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.48</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>Somewhat free</b>	

Legend: 4.21-5.00 (Free); 4.20-3.41 (Somewhat free); 3.40-2.61 (Neither free nor restricted); 2.60-1.81 (Somewhat restricted); 1.00-1.80 (Restricted).

The third table summarizes people's ideas about the controversial and unending argument for separating state and church. The table shows how respondents support the separation of church and state, evident in the first question that gained the most agreement from the respondents. The first question discusses how the respondents are interested in the strict separation of state and church. People were asked if the government should accommodate religious beliefs in public policy. Still, most participants have a high level of agreeableness (Weighted mean 3.51). While acknowledging the close ties between church and state, people believe that the government still has a fundamental obligation to safeguard the well-being of its citizens. Most respondents also make their presence clear about their trust in the government and the due process it can provide to the community by agreeing that the Supreme Court is the only place to decide on the controversies about the separation of state and church (Weighted mean 3.49).



TABLE 3. The Role of the State in Religious Activities in the Philippines

No.	Items	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1	“Supports the promotion of strict separation between church and state.”	3.82	0.93	Agree	1
5	“The government should accommodate religious beliefs in public policy.”	3.51	1.10	Agree	2
2	“The Supreme Court is the best place to decide controversies about the separation of church and state.”	3.49	0.96	Agree	3
4	“State-appointed religious leaders promote social peace.”	3.37	1.05	Neutral	4
3	“The government regulates religious practices only for public safety.”	3.27	1.11	Neutral	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.49</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

Legend: 4.21-5.00 (Strongly Agree); 4.20-3.41 (Agree); 3.40-2.61 (Neutral); 2.60-1.81 (Disagree); 1.00-1.80 (Strongly Disagree).

Meanwhile, both questions that gain neutralism are about how the government regulates religious practices only for public safety, which gained a mean of 3.27. In this matter, respondents emitted their non-involvement presence to the situation. People also show neutralism when they ask about the religious leaders bringing and promoting social peace. The people's pulse became neutral, with a mean of 3.37. The grand weighted mean, 3.49, provided the respondents' approach to the questions related to the state's role in religious activities in the Philippines and showed most results about the high level of Filipino agreeableness. The Filipinos support the strict inviolability of the separation of state and church.

To conclude, Filipinos desire a stronger separation of church and state, but the lack of effective implementation of existing laws tempers their enthusiasm. The Filipino people

await the government's commitment to upholding this fundamental principle. Furthermore, Filipinos continue to seek and appreciate the government's involvement in various religious practices and events. It was stated in the article of [18] that HB 6942 firmly establishes the unwavering right to freely exercise and enjoy religious profession and worship without discrimination or preference. It explicitly states that no action by the government or its agencies, instrumentalities, officers, or employees shall burden, curtail, impinge upon, or infringe upon an individual's right to practice their religious beliefs, freedom, and liberty of conscience. Furthermore, the government is mandated to prevent any act committed by an individual, legal entity, or group that infringes upon this fundamental right. The Filipino people recognize the government's ongoing commitment to safeguarding this right for all citizens, regardless of their religious affiliation.

TABLE 4. Beliefs and attitudes of Respondents towards Church-Go State Separation

No.	Items	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
2	"Religious organizations should not interfere in government matters."	3.79	0.93	Agree	1
3	"Religious teachings should not influence government policies."	3.77	1.10	Agree	2
5	"Church-state separation is important for protecting the rights of religious minorities."	3.75	0.83	Agree	3
1	"The government should not interfere in religious matters."	3.55	0.96	Agree	4
4	"Religious freedom is more important than church-state separation."	3.33	0.95	Neutral	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.64</b>	<b>0.19</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

Legend: 4.21-5.00 (Strongly Agree); 4.20-3.41 (Agree); 3.40-2.61 (Neutral); 2.60-1.81 (Disagree); 1.00-1.80 (Strongly Disagree)

Table 4 provides a complete summary of beliefs and attitudes about church-state separation. Participants largely believe that the government should not meddle in religious matters (Weighted Mean: 3.55) and that religious groups should not meddle in government affairs (Weighted Mean: 3.79). Furthermore, there is agreement that religious teachings should not be used to influence government decisions (Weighted Mean: 3.77). A neutral position emerges when asked whether religious freedom or church-state separation is more essential (Weighted Mean: 3.33). On the other hand, participants feel that church-state separation is critical for protecting the rights of religious minorities (Weighted Mean: 3.75). The total mean, which summarizes general sentiment across all assertions, is 3.64, showing that most participants agree on the significance of church-state separation. In summary, most respondents in this poll favor the notion of a firm separation between religious and governmental domains, focusing on religious minorities' rights.

Furthermore, most participants believe the government should not interfere in religious affairs. Many respondents are favorable to the idea that Religion and government both require

independence to thrive, but history has proven that a full divorce is healthy for neither [19]. The majority believed governments might build inclusive policies that respect and honor the rights and opinions of persons from diverse religious backgrounds by avoiding direct influence from spiritual teachings [7]. Additionally, the separation of church and state guarantees that all religious groups are treated equally under the law, without preference or prejudice. This idea is fundamental to defending religious minorities' rights and avoiding the emergence of a dominant or favored religion. As seen above, most respondents agreed with [20] that church-state separation protects religious minorities from potential persecution. There is a potential that the dominant religion would influence policy to the detriment of minority communities, resulting in discrimination, limitations, or even persecution.

In conclusion, Table 4 reflects a consistent and strong agreement among respondents regarding their beliefs and attitudes toward church-state separation. Most participants firmly believe that the government should refrain from interfering in religious matters and that religious organizations should not interfere in governmental affairs. This sentiment

extends to the belief that religious teachings should not hold sway over government policies. The neutrality in the comparison between religious freedom and church-state separation suggests a nuanced perspective, but overall, participants emphasize the latter's importance. The findings reveal an overall theme: a realization of the need for church-state separation in protecting the rights of religious minorities. Participants exhibit collective confidence in this separation's protective role, coinciding with scholarly ideas that argue for the independence of religious and governmental spheres to avoid excessive influence and to create inclusion.

The respondents' consensus supports the idea that a firm separation of religion and state is necessary to avoid potential discrimination or persecution of minority religious groups. The findings support the notion that church-state separation is viewed as a measure to guarantee individual religious freedom and as a device to prevent any religious organization from dominating legislation. Respondents' agreement with scholarly opinions shows a larger social understanding of preserving a clear barrier between religious and governmental sectors. Overall, the findings in Table 4 support the premise that most respondents support a strong church-state separation to protect the rights and well-being of religious minorities.

TABLE 5. Societal and Political Implications of Church-State Separation

No.	Items	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
2	“Church-state separation can help to promote social harmony”	3.96	0.73	Agree	1
8	“Religious organizations should be inclusive of all.”	3.94	0.87	Agree	2
1	“Church-state separation is essential for democracy.”	3.80	0.81	Agree	3
3	“Church-state separation can help reduce religious conflict”	3.77	0.89	Agree	4
6	“The government should not be allowed to promote any particular religion”	3.77	0.89	Neutral	5
7	“Public funds should not be used for religious activities.”	3.63	0.98	Agree	6
4	“Church-State separation promotes secularism and progress.”	3.60	0.86	Neutral	7
5	“Church-state separation reduces religious influence.”	3.43	0.97		8
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.74</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

Legend: 4.21-5.00 (Strongly Agree); 4.20-3.41 (Agree); 3.40-2.61 (Neutral); 2.60-1.81 (Disagree); 1.00-1.80 (Strongly Disagree)

Table 5 shows the respondents' views on church-state separation's societal and political implications. Based on the findings, the respondents generally agree with the statements regarding church-state separation. The highest weighted mean score of 3.96 is given to the statement, "Church-state separation can help to promote social harmony. This suggests that the respondents believe keeping a clear distinction between religious institutions and the government can contribute to a more harmonious society." The second highest weighted mean of 3.94 is "Religious organizations should be inclusive of all." It is suggested that many people agree with the statement. This is a positive indication of the general public's support for inclusivity and acceptance within religious communities. The high-weighted mean scores received by statements highlighting the "Church-state separation is separation for democracy" (3.80) and "Church-state separation can help reduce religious conflict" (3.77) are indicative of the widespread recognition and support for such principles. These sentiments are further reinforced by the explicit mention of church-state separation in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, affirming the nation's dedication to a democratic framework that respects religious institutions' autonomy and upholds all citizens' rights and liberties. Although the principle recognizes the differences between temporal and spiritual functions, it also upholds a special working partnership between the Church and the State focused on all welfare [7]. "The government should not be allowed to promote any particular religion" (3.77).

These scores indicate that the respondents recognize the importance of church-state separation in maintaining democratic principles, minimizing religious conflicts, and preventing the government from favoring any specific religion. Democratic states must uphold residents' rights to privacy and allow for differences in culture and religion [21]. The statement

"Church-state separation promotes secularism and progress" received a slightly lower weighted mean score of 3.60. This suggests that while the respondents generally agree that church-state separation contributes to progress, there may be some variation in their opinions on the role of secularism in this context. The statement "Church-state separation reduces religious influence" received a weighted mean score of 3.43, indicating moderate agreement. This suggests that the respondents believe that church-state separation can limit the influence of religious institutions on government affairs. Lastly, the statement "Public funds should not be used for religious activities" received a weighted mean score of 3.63, indicating agreement among the respondents. This suggests that the respondents believe public funds should not be allocated to support religious activities. Overall, the grand weighted mean score for all the statements is 3.74, indicating a general agreement among the respondents regarding the societal and political implications of church-state separation.

The Church-state separation in the Philippines is essential for safeguarding religious freedom, promoting tolerance, and ensuring a balanced political landscape. It fosters harmony, reduces religious conflict, and upholds individual liberties, strengthening democratic principles. It offers a suitable platform for every member of society to exercise whether they want to practice their beliefs. Furthermore, it encourages harmony and lessens religious conflict and tension across the country. In maintaining individual religious freedom across the entire country, this concept fosters unity and supports fundamental democratic principles.

Table 6 shows the results of the ANOVA test conducted on respondents' demographic profiles toward their level of agreeableness regarding the separation of church and state. The P value is greater than the level of significance, indicating that

the demographic profile towards the level of agreeableness is insignificant, and the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Therefore, the finding suggests that the perception of participants in terms of church-state separation does not vary between groups. This aligns with the idea that agreeableness is a personality trait that is relatively stable and doesn't vary much based on external factors such as demographic characteristics.

TABLE 6. Significant differences among the demographic profiles towards the level of Agreeableness.

Demographic Profile	P-Value	Verbal Interpretation
Gender	0.444	Not Significant
Age	0.811	Not Significant
Religion	0.535	Not Significant
Education Level	0.313	Not Significant
Occupation	0.689	Not Significant
Marital Status	0.773	Not Significant

Level of significance,  $p < 0.05$

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The results and discussion of the study have significantly indicated that 32.86% of the respondents are within the age range of 45–54 and are mostly females, that is 58.57% of the entire population. Most of the people who answered the survey were Roman Catholic, representing 64.25% of the total, and are college degree holders, with a percentage of 74.28%. The study also indicates that most participants have prestigious and high-profile professions, such as businessmen, seafarers, and pharmacists, owning 78.57% of them. Since the study solely includes one higher-tallied married person compared to the single person, the gap between the married and single groups does not seem to exist. Only 32 people are considered single, compared to 33 who are married.

This study demonstrates that education, along with personal experience, is the most influential factor in shaping the respondents' views on the country's separation of church and state. This conclusion can be drawn from the respondents' college degrees. In addition to this, the study indicates that the decision to choose a religion is perceived as somewhat liberated due to the influence that the separation of church and state has on the freedom of individuals. It is also clear that most of those who participated in the survey favor establishing a profound separation between the state and the church. Moreover, a harmonious community is also believed to be a highly contributing factor to the societal and political implications of the issue. With this, the ANOVA test findings reveal no statistically significant difference among the assertions on the different tables.

As a result, the nation should continue to work toward developing everyone's attitude and acknowledge the reality that the state and the church need to have a determined boundary between them. This will make it easier for everyone to freely practice their faith by their perception without the fear of being forced by the government. Religious organizations should strengthen their inclusiveness to embrace everyone. In general, the study successfully met and answered the objectives, which required the researchers to determine the factors that contributed to the separation of church and state and assess the

extent to which they contributed. This study also included reviews of people's perspectives on the separation of church and state, along with the social and political implications of these perspectives.

#### V. RECOMMENDATION

This research exploration aims to find out Filipino citizens' perspectives regarding church and state separation. This study also thoroughly evaluates the level of agreeableness and determines which contributing factor greatly affects that level. With this, the results and findings of the paper will redound and be beneficial to the following groups mentioned below:

To achieve a fair and more inclusive society where individuals are free to practice and follow their beliefs, this study strongly recommends establishing and implementing a policy that prohibits discrimination based on religion in appointing political officers, public services, and other legal matters. Additionally, the government should consider the issue of "transparency" in funding distribution to various religious organizations. *Every member of the government* must take note of the possibility of fostering the promotion of secularism. Implementing public policies founded on the population's practical and feasible demands can accomplish this goal. Furthermore, *lawmakers* ought to safeguard the restrictions that currently exist, which include Article II, Section 6 of the Philippine Constitution, to prevent religious organizations from directly influencing the government's policymaking process. Consequently, the legislation should be rational and founded on premises that do not constitute religious affiliation. Organizers should arrange public discussions addressing issues about the subject to promote and enhance comprehension of all perspectives regarding the separation of church and state through time. Lastly, to *future researchers*, the research findings suggest that this study can serve as a guide in creating a significant research paper on the separation of church and state. The researchers aim to guide and assist future researchers to achieve better and more useful study results.

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