

Youth and Elections: Exploring Mobilization and Participation Influences

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Abstract. This study delved into the nuanced factors influencing youth mobilization and participation during elections, particularly focusing on the Filipino context. Despite the recognition of youth involvement as pivotal for nation-building, concerns persist regarding the perceived apathy among Filipino youth towards electoral engagement. Employing a quantitative approach, this research utilized survey questionnaires to gauge the influence shaping the decisions of young voters. Randomly selected respondents from various barangays form the sample pool, providing insights into the factors driving or hindering youth mobilization. Surprisingly, the findings revealed that traditional influential factors fail to significantly impact youth mobilization and participation. Moreover, demographic characteristics such as age, gender, religion, education, and employment status demonstrate limited correlation with electoral engagement levels. These findings prompt a reevaluation of existing assumptions and highlight the need for targeted strategies to enhance youth participation in electoral processes while upholding the fundamental Right of Suffrage.

Keywords: Elections; Youth; Barangays; Youth mobilization; Youth participation; Young voters; Electoral engagement; Right of suffrage.

1.0 Introduction

Recent years have witnessed a close examination of the electoral involvement of young individuals, who are identified as the demographic with the lowest likelihood of participating in voting processes, according to Juelich and Coll (2020). Despite efforts to increase youth involvement, many young people show declining interest in voting, viewing it as a basic form of engagement. Pastarmadzhieva, Pastarmadzhieva, and Sakal (2021) claimed that various surveys and analyses across numerous Western democracies consistently highlight the limited engagement of the younger cohort in electoral activities. The discourse surrounding youth political involvement recurrently addresses the “disengagement” of young individuals with electoral affairs. Moreover, Putnam (2000) argued that traditional viewpoints portray younger demographics as being less connected to the voting process compared to older age groups, while Bergh et al. (2019) perceived them as being relatively less involved in politics, resulting in lower voting frequency. Additionally, studies by Galston (2004) and Frisco, Muller, and Dodson (2004) underscore this trend in countries like Canada, the UK, and the USA.

Jose P. Rizal, regarded as the Philippines’ national hero, emphasized the importance of youth engagement in securing the nation's future, a sentiment echoed by the Philippine government, as enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, particularly in Article II, Section 13. This section acknowledges the youth's responsibility in maintaining the country's stability, promoting their welfare, fostering patriotism, and encouraging their participation in political affairs. The importance of youth participation, particularly in elections, extends beyond numerical votes, as highlighted by COMELEC Chairman J. Andres Bautista in his 2015 speech at Far Eastern University's “Project resibo ko, boto ko para sa bayan ko.” While youth voting power significantly influences

election turnout, its impact on governance remains limited, often attributed to perceived impatience among youth. Chairman Bautista suggests that channeling this impatience into advocacy for governance reforms could serve as a potent force for change, urging the youth to demand much-needed reforms actively.

Previous scholars have explored Filipino youth's electoral participation. The issue of a large portion of the youth abstaining from electoral participation has garnered attention since the 1990s and has been highlighted by various scholars including Pacheco (2008), Iyengar and Jackman (2003), Kimberlee (2002), Henn, Weinstein, and Wring (2002), White, Bruce, and Ritchie (2000), and Institute for Social and Economic Research (1995). Indeed, while the youth are often perceived as a pivotal force driving reform and change through their active engagement, there remains a portion who abstain from mobilization and fail to exercise their Right of Suffrage. Although significant factors influencing the electoral choices of the Philippine electorate have been identified, it remains unclear whether these factors exert a similar impact on the youth, or if the mobilization and participation of the youth are influenced by distinct factors.

Hence, this study was conducted, seeking to ascertain whether certain determinants affect youth mobilization and participation during elections, and to what extent these factors influence the youth demographic. Moreover, it aims to elucidate the underlying challenges facing the country's youth electorate, notwithstanding its status as one of the most established democracies in Asia.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study is characterized by its descriptive and correlational methodology. Descriptively, it aims to identify and characterize the perceived mobilization and participation of youth respondents by analyzing their responses. Furthermore, the study adopts a correlational approach by examining the relationships between various variables, such as factors influencing youth mobility, respondents' profiles, and levels of youth mobilization and participation.

2.2 Research Participants

The study was carried out in thirteen (13) randomly selected barangays in one of the first-class municipalities in Central Visayas, Philippines. The study included a sample of three hundred seventy-nine (379) youth from the thirteen barangays. These individuals are aged between 18 and 30, encompassing both registered and non-registered voters. They were chosen using the random sampling technique.

2.3 Research Instrument

The researcher employed a researcher-made questionnaire as well as interview methods to collect pertinent data for the study. The questionnaire consisted of structured questions, offering respondents a range of choices with checkboxes for selection. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire underwent evaluation by two Master of Public Administration (MPA) graduates who hold governmental positions and possess expertise in the subject matter. Subsequent to the input of the experts, the researcher implemented revisions to refine the instruments accordingly.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to distributing the questionnaires to the respondents, a pre-test involving thirty (30) youth, comprising both registered and non-registered voters, was conducted to assess the reliability of the study's questions. Additionally, a formal request letter was sent to the respective Barangay Captains of the thirteen barangays, seeking their authorization before disseminating the questionnaires. Subsequently, the questionnaires were distributed to each barangay in adherence to schedules arranged by the Barangay Captains, and the survey was administered in batches based on respondent availability. However, due to scheduling conflicts, certain questionnaires were distributed by barangay officials themselves, accompanied by a request letter affirming the confidentiality of survey results and all other information gathered.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The respondents received comprehensive explanations regarding the study's objectives. They were also provided with the autonomy to decide whether they wished to participate. Rigorous protocols were instituted to ensure the

protection of data confidentiality, including the personal details of the respondents. Moreover, the respondents were allowed to exit the study at any time without experiencing negative repercussions. Subsequently, all collected data were securely maintained confidentially and anonymously. The researcher assured the respondents that their involvement in the study would not result in any harm.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Registration Before the Election

Table 1 shows the status of the respondents in terms of their registration before the election. As indicated above, a huge majority of the respondents (98.15%) are registered voters and only about 2% are not. These findings imply that the majority of the youth have exercised one of their basic political rights under the Right of Suffrage. However, this large number of registered voters does not equate to the overall mobilization and participation rate of the youth during elections as discussed by the late Senator Meriam D. Santiago during her inaugural speech at Ateneo de Manila University in 2014.

Table 1. Respondents' registration prior to the election

Question: Are you a registered voter?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	372	98.15
No	7	1.85
Total	379	100.00

Santiago clearly defined the terms *political participation* and *youth activism*. First, according to her, political involvement generally encompasses the activities undertaken by ordinary citizens to impact or endorse governmental affairs and political processes. She then proceeded to elaborate on the three kinds of youth political participation observed throughout history. One is the so-called Conventional Participation, which adopts or follows the traditional activities of the electoral process such as voting, joining political organizations or meetings, lobbying, and party affiliation among others. However, the second type, Unconventional Participation, has something to do with more aggressive and rebellious approaches such as strikes, boycotts, petitions, personal violence, and the like. This connotes that voting alone is not the only means of political participation and that casting one's vote is not sufficient to be considered a form of mobilization. Moreover, Miller et al. (2021) conjectured that many times, these initiatives driven by the youth stem from communal suffering and a sense of injustice, inheriting the ideals of earlier activists who sought to revolutionize our society. Generation Z, being noted as the most racially heterogeneous cohort, places a strong emphasis on values such as social equity, justice, and the pursuit of societal transformation.

Although the majority of the youth are registered voters, the number does not guarantee that all these registered voters cast their votes during the last three elections. In fact, some of the respondents disclosed during the interview that they did not vote during the elections despite being registered voters. They stated it was due to personal reasons, such as the need to go somewhere else to work, which then resulted in their failure to transfer their registration. Others simply said that they did not find the time to vote. Wattenberg (2020) postulated that the turnout of young voters fell short of the levels required to provide politicians with the necessary support, both in terms of voter participation and the magnitude of support. Looking ahead to 2020, a pivotal election year, questions arise about the potential outcomes. Wattenberg went on to say that even by late 2019, media outlets were highlighting the generation gap as a pivotal division among democratic voters, signaling its significance in shaping electoral dynamics.

However, some of the unregistered voters divulged that although they were unable to vote in the 2016 election, they managed to participate in political events by campaigning for their or their family's favored candidate and by attending campaigns and education drives.

3.2 Extent of Election Mobilization and Participation of the Respondents

Table 2 shows the respondents' extent of election mobilization and participation during the last three elections (2010, 2013, and 2016). The respondents were asked to rate their mobilization and participation during the previous elections. Results then revealed that the youth's election participation and mobilization were moderate. This implies that the respondents moderately participated and were moderately mobilized during these elections.

Table 2. Extent of election mobilization and participation of the respondents (n = 379)

Question: How would you rate your mobilization and participation on the following elections;	w$\bar{x}$	Verbal Equivalent	Extent of Mobilization
2010	3.01	Sometimes	Moderate
2013	3.09	Sometimes	Moderate
2016	3.08	Sometimes	Moderate
Composite	3.06	Sometimes	Moderate

It is important to acknowledge that a portion of the respondents may have recently turned 18, potentially rendering them ineligible to register and vote in previous elections. Additionally, while the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) elections were not abolished, they were postponed, leading to missed opportunities for youth participation in voting. However, Senator Santiago's perspective underscores that traditional voting methods are not the sole avenues for mobilization and participation. Thus, youth could have engaged in alternative forms of political participation. Overall, the findings suggest that despite some respondents being underage during prior elections, they exhibited moderate levels of mobilization and participation. In essence, the respondents, as a whole, did not engage in the seven identified practices of youth political participation.

According to Erpyleva (2021), age may indeed present a barrier to participation; however, it has to be recognized that electoral engagement is not the sole form of mobilization and participation available to the younger demographic during elections. While historical perspectives in the West often consider children insufficiently developed for political involvement, adolescence represents a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood, blurring conventional boundaries.

Additionally, Erpyleva examined adolescents' recent wave of protest movements in Russia and observed the emergence of grassroots activism such as the 'For Fair Elections' movement spanning 2011 to 2012, along with the subsequent anti-corruption demonstrations from 2017 to 2018. In-depth interviews were conducted with high school-aged protesters from both periods and through these, a shift in adolescents' self-perception as political actors emerged. Whereas participants in the earlier movement viewed themselves as immature, by the latter period, they embraced their roles as active political agents. This evolution reflects the alterations in the political upbringing of teenage demonstrators, suggesting broader implications beyond the Russian context (Erpyleva, 2021).

3.3 Types of Respondents' Election Mobilization and Participation

Table 3 contains results for the respondents' type of election mobilization and participation. It can be gleaned from the table that the respondents have "low" mobilization and participation ratings in all 7 items.

Table 3. Types of respondents' election mobilization and participation (n = 379)

Question: Were your mobilization and participation during elections includes the following:	w$\bar{x}$	Verbal Equivalent	Extent of Mobilization
Campaigning for education drive	2.57	Rarely	Low
Volunteering for elections (watcher during polls)	2.52	Rarely	Low
Joining a political party	2.42	Rarely	Low
Filing for candidacy	2.35	Rarely	Low
Attending voter education drive	2.27	Rarely	Low
Campaigning for a politician	2.22	Rarely	Low
Reporting observed election issues and anomalies	2.20	Rarely	Low
Composite	2.36	Rarely	Low

Kitchen (n.d.-b) highlighted a significant departure from traditional views on election mobilization and participation, noting that shifts in the spatial; distribution of voters, electoral regulations, and the economic activities of oligarchs have created new avenues for engaging voters. Despite this evolution, there remains a discrepancy between the introduction of various forms of political participation and their actual utilization, particularly evident in the tepid engagement of youth in the political process.

In the current study, the reluctance of the youth to embrace these emerging modes of mobilization can be linked to their geographic context, predominantly rural areas with barangays situated far from urban centers. This spatial

distinction may foster distinct perspectives or priorities compared to their urban counterparts, with political engagement potentially ranking lower on their list of concerns.

Furthermore, the absence of comprehensive statistical analysis on youth election mobilization and participation complicates the assessment of these trends. Existing data primarily focus on voter turnout and its decline, failing to capture shifts specific to youth engagement. Aboejo's (2015) work, for instance, primarily explores the prevalence of vote buying in the Philippines, emphasizing its impact on voter behavior but overlooking broader patterns of youth mobilization and participation.

3.4 Factors Affecting the Decision Making of the Respondents in Their Election Registration

Table 4 shows the extent of influence of the factors affecting the respondents' mobilization and participation in terms of registering in the local COMELEC. The results revealed that the factors enumerated in the table rarely influence the respondents' decision to either register or not register in the COMELEC.

Table 4. Factors affecting the decision making of the respondents in their election registration (n = 379)

Question: Are you likely to be influenced by the following on registering at the COMELEC;	w$\bar{x}$	Verbal Equivalent	Extent of Influence
Personality Endorsement	2.60	Rarely	Low
Profit/Incentive (Money, Favors)	2.57	Rarely	Low
Social Affiliation	2.47	Rarely	Low
Political Parties	2.47	Rarely	Low
Mass Media	2.46	Rarely	Low
Church	2.41	Rarely	Low
Family	2.40	Rarely	Low
Charisma	2.32	Rarely	Low
Political Platform	2.26	Rarely	Low
Composite	2.44	Rarely	Low

The observed limited impact challenges the foundational tenets of the Socialization Theory. Pioneered by early theorists such as Hess and Torney (1967), Yates and Youniss (1999), Torrney-Purta (2000), Jennings and Niemi (2015), Greenstein (1970), Connell (1971), and Sapiro (1998), this theory posits that political attitudes and behaviors are ingrained in individuals during childhood and adolescence through influential socialization agents like family, school, and religious institutions. Furthermore, it suggests that civic participation is shaped by functional conduits such as religion, political parties, and social networks, rather than being solely determined by institutional structures, social class, or individual socialization experiences. Additionally, this theory elucidates that individuals' engagement in electoral politics may be influenced by the persuasive efforts of others (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). Psychologist Robert Cialdini delves into the concept of "social proof," a theory suggesting that individuals frequently look to the actions and conduct of others to assess what is right or suitable across diverse contexts. In the aspect of electoral politics, the social proof theory proposes that when voters observe respected or influential figures publicly backing a certain candidate, they tend to perceive that candidate more positively and see them as a worthwhile choice. Such endorsements hold a substantial influence that signals to the voters that the endorsed candidate merits their support and has what it takes to lead (Mortensen & Cialdini, 2009).

Given the contrasting implications of the study's findings, it becomes apparent that the Socialization Theory does not neatly align with the outcomes of this particular research endeavor. However, there is a notable reevaluation of the "Personality Endorsement" factor by the researcher. Despite receiving a relatively low rating, it retained a degree of influence, emerging as the foremost factor among the others. This persistence in influence could be attributed to the prevalence of television advertisements and social media endorsements by celebrities ("artistas"), affirming their voter registration status, thereby potentially motivating the youth to follow suit.

3.5 Factors Affecting the Decision-Making of the Respondents Being a Volunteer during Elections

Table 5 presents the findings regarding the degree of influence exerted by various factors on youth mobilization and participation, specifically in terms of volunteering during elections. The data suggest that the factors analyzed have a minimal impact on the youth's decision to volunteer, indicating a low level of influence overall. Put simply, these factors seldom sway the youth's decision-making process.

Senator MDS has highlighted the importance of alternative forms of participation, particularly emphasizing the communitarian approach evident in volunteerism and social engagement during elections. However, despite this acknowledgment, existing studies have largely neglected to delve into the extent of youth involvement in volunteer activities during elections, nor have they explored the consistency of youth participation in volunteering endeavors. Furthermore, there is a notable absence of research examining the factors that potentially influence youth volunteerism during electoral processes.

Table 5. Factors affecting the decision making of the respondents being a volunteer during elections (n = 379)

Question: Are you likely to be influenced by the following on being a volunteer during elections;	w$\bar{x}$	Verbal Equivalent	Extent of Influence
Profit/Incentive	2.61	Sometimes	Moderate
Family	2.60	Rarely	Low
Personality Endorsement	2.59	Rarely	Low
Political Parties	2.58	Rarely	Low
Mass Media	2.56	Rarely	Low
Charisma	2.39	Rarely	Low
Church	2.30	Rarely	Low
Political Platform	2.20	Rarely	Low
Social Affiliation	2.16	Rarely	Low
Composite	2.44	Rarely	Low

The Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), a prominent election monitoring body affiliated with the Church, has made fervent efforts to promote volunteerism, establishing it as a cornerstone of its mission. According to the organization's historical account on its official website (ppcrv.org), PPCRV was founded out of a commitment to volunteerism, driven by a collective desire to combat the pervasive corruption plaguing society.

What sets PPCRV apart is its ability to forge alliances across religious and cultural divides, particularly with Muslim Filipinos, including the Bangsamoro Civil Society Organizations and the Darul Ifta. Despite differing religious and cultural backgrounds, these parties united as watchdogs of Philippine politics, united in their pursuit of advocating for free, fair, and transparent elections. This collaboration saw Christian and Muslim volunteers working hand in hand, not just as partners, but as a cohesive family unit.

The volunteers of PPCRV are a diverse group, hailing from various walks of life, with many coming from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Among them are numerous young people, driven by a common aspiration to contribute to the electoral process without prejudice or expectation of personal gain.

Walker (2006) delineated a notable division in young people's engagement, distinguishing between their involvement in civic matters versus political affairs. While they exhibit less interest, responsibility, and identification with the political realm, they actively participate in community activities, offering assistance and volunteering for various organizations. This dichotomy arises from the tangible rewards and immediate satisfaction derived from community engagement, which aligns more closely with their ideals.

Conversely, the uncertainty surrounding the efficacy of political participation dissuades young people from actively engaging in the political process. There's skepticism regarding the potential for meaningful change through political action and doubts about the competence of those involved in governance (Olajide et al., 2022; Gainous & Martens, 2012)

Consequently, there is a pervasive lack of trust in the impact of political involvement, significantly influencing young people's decisions to either participate in or abstain from voting procedures, as claimed by Glasford (2008). Additionally, young individuals often feel downgraded within the political arena, perceiving government institutions as ineffective and tainted by corruption, according to Shea and Green (2007). Their findings also show that youth cohort size exerts a negative effect on young people's electoral participation. Correspondingly, Nkansah and Papp (2022) found that this influence is particularly pronounced among young individuals who primarily rely on their peers for information. Their findings mark a significant advancement in understanding

how the size of a cohort influences its political behavior, a subject that has thus far received little attention in the literature concerning youth political engagement.

Nevertheless, the findings of the present study suggest that the impact of factors influencing youth volunteerism is predominantly "low." However, there exists one notable exception: Profit/Incentive emerged as a factor with a "moderate" level of influence on young people's decision to volunteer during elections. This indicates that monetary rewards, particularly those offered by political parties seeking to secure loyalty, may incentivize young voters, particularly in roles such as poll watchers. This finding resonates with the Rational Choice Theory, which posits that individuals make decisions, including whether to vote or not, through a cost-benefit analysis. In this context, the prospect of financial gain can sway young voters towards volunteering. It is worth noting, however, that while Profit/Incentive demonstrates a notable level of influence, it falls short of being considered high, indicating a moderated impact within the decision-making process.

3.6 Factors Affecting the Decision-Making of the Respondents on Campaigning for a Candidate

Table 6 offers insights into the degree of influence exerted by various factors on the decision-making process of youth regarding campaigning for a candidate. According to the findings, the overall influence of these factors is deemed moderate. Notably, among the nine factors considered, the Church emerges as the most influential. This prominence of the Church factor can be contextualized through the lens of Mobilization Theory, which posits that citizen participation in political processes is shaped by various channels, including religion, political parties, and social networks.

Thus, the coalition formed by the Church could potentially sway individuals to support or aid in the promotion of political candidates endorsed or approved by religious authorities. However, it is essential to clarify that this does not necessarily imply endorsement of block voting practices, as such actions would contradict the principles of a free and fair election. Ultimately, citizens retain the fundamental right to exercise their suffrage freely, allowing them to vote based on their own personal convictions and choices.

Table 6. Factors affecting the decision making of the respondents on campaigning for a candidate (n = 379)

Question: Are you likely to be influenced by the following on campaigning for a candidate during elections:	w$\bar{x}$	Verbal Equivalent	Extent of Influence
Church	2.95	Sometimes	Moderate
Family	2.92	Sometimes	Moderate
Mass Media	2.85	Sometimes	Moderate
Political Platform	2.80	Sometimes	Moderate
Profit/Incentive	2.80	Sometimes	Moderate
Political Parties	2.79	Sometimes	Moderate
Social Affiliation	2.67	Sometimes	Moderate
Charisma	2.59	Rarely	Low
Personality Endorsement	2.29	Rarely	Low
Composite	2.74	Sometimes	Moderate

Additionally, political entities such as advocacy groups, candidates, parties, and campaigns often perceive little incentive to engage with this demographic due to their lower likelihood of voting (DelliCarpini, 2000). Even when civic organizations make efforts to involve young adults, they frequently encounter inefficiencies and minimal returns on their investments (Gainous & Martens, 2012). This issue is also pointed out by Dikshit (2024) in the article "Voices of the Nation: Indonesia Prepares for the 2024 Election." Accordingly, the weakening in civic participation and the low voter turnout are closely linked to the neglect of youth's concerns within the political sphere. Put simply, when the political process disregards young people, they consequently disengage from the political system (Berson, Campos, Egea, Owens, & Bellara, 2013). Nevertheless, the findings of Ginting and Fauzan (2024), in their study conducted in Indonesia, revealed that numerous mass organizations, notably the Karya Youth Association, have actively engaged in the democratic process, particularly during the Karo regional head election, leading to the victories of certain political figures.

On the contrary, CBCP Permanent Committee on Public Affairs member, Fr. Jerome Secillano, emphasized that church leaders and the religious community are citizens entitled to voice their opinions on national matters, even

if their perspectives may diverge from the general public's. This perspective sheds light on why the Church, despite having a moderate influence, ranks highest among the factors influencing youth when it comes to campaigning for a candidate.

Furthermore, data from Table 6 revealed that "Charisma" and "Personality Endorsement" (celebrities) are the least influential factors in respondents' decision-making processes. This suggests a departure from the traditional paradigm where voting decisions were swayed by the popularity of politicians or the endorsements of famous figures. This shift in political behavior was noted by Political Science professor Ador Torneo, who observed a transition from voting for well-known candidates in 1995 to selecting politicians based on their image or character advantage in 2003. However, in the context of this study, endorsements by celebrities were found to have minimal impact on the voting decisions of young people.

3.7 Factors Affecting the Decision Making of the Respondents on Campaigning for Voter Education

Table 7 shows the results regarding the factors that are likely to influence the respondents' decision to campaign for voter education. Here, the respondents disclosed that political parties sometimes influence them in their drive to campaign for voter education.

Table 7. Factors affecting the decision-making of the respondents on campaigning for a voter education (n=379)

Are you likely to be influenced by the following on campaigning for voter education;	w$\bar{x}$	Verbal Equivalent	Extent of Influence
Political Parties	2.82	Sometimes	Moderate
Charisma	2.61	Sometimes	Moderate
Profit/Incentive	2.54	Rarely	Low
Mass Media	2.47	Rarely	Low
Personality Endorsement	2.44	Rarely	Low
Political Platform	2.41	Rarely	Low
Social Affiliation	2.28	Rarely	Low
Church	2.20	Rarely	Low
Family	2.19	Rarely	Low
Composite	2.44	Rarely	Low

In a study conducted in the United States, as highlighted in the article "Most & Least Politically Engaged States" [II-2], it is noted that many states do not prioritize civic education within their school systems. This deficiency is underscored by the fact that a significant portion of the public struggles with basic knowledge tests, such as understanding whether voter identification is required in their state. The lack of emphasis on civic education inevitably leads to adverse consequences for the political engagement of young Americans. Moreover, the passing requirements for social studies courses in high school are often less stringent compared to other subjects. This diminished emphasis on social studies exacerbates the knowledge gap among high school students, particularly regarding fundamental aspects of the political system, such as the role of the Electoral College and distinctions between political parties. Furthermore, there is scant attention given to local or state elections within the curriculum, further contributing to students' limited understanding of the electoral process. These factors collectively contribute to a sense of inadequacy among teenagers regarding their knowledge and readiness to participate in the voting process, resulting in a notably low voter turnout. Consequently, the effectiveness of voter education campaigns is undermined due to the limited exposure of young Americans to these critical matters (Zhu, 2021).

Nevertheless, Political Party Affiliation (Pol Par) and Charisma emerged with a moderate level of influence. Notably, certain political parties eschew the traditional "party coalition" approach, which typically revolves around presenting oppositional and incumbent candidates. Instead, these parties, along with party-list groups such as ANAKBAYAN and ANAKPAWIS, advocate not only for specific politicians but also for broader initiatives such as voter education and the promotion of people's rights. This alignment with Mobilization Theory suggests that political parties, along with religion and social networks, play a pivotal role in shaping individuals' participation in electoral politics.

According to Rosenstone and Hansen (1993), civic engagement can often stem from interpersonal persuasion. However, the current study's findings infer that, overall, these factors have limited influence on the decision-making processes of youth regarding campaigning for voter education initiatives.

3.8 Factors Affecting the Decision Making of the Respondents on Attending for Voter Education Drive

Table 8 presents the extent of influence of the factors that likely affect the youth's decision to attend the voter education drive. The data indicate that Mass Media has a moderate influence on the respondents' decision-making and ranks highest among the rest of the factors in terms of extent of influence. This may be due to the availability of televised announcements, radio broadcasts, and social media.

Table 8. Factors affecting the decision making of the respondents on attending for voter education drive

Question: Are you likely to be influenced by the following on attending voter education drive:	w$\bar{x}$	Verbal Equivalent	Extent of Influence
Mass Media	3.00	Sometimes	Moderate
Political Platform	2.90	Sometimes	Moderate
Church	2.85	Sometimes	Moderate
Social Affiliation	2.78	Sometimes	Moderate
Political Parties	2.75	Sometimes	Moderate
Profit/Incentive	2.75	Sometimes	Moderate
Personality Endorsement	2.75	Sometimes	Moderate
Family	2.72	Sometimes	Moderate
Charisma	2.54	Rarely	Low
Composite	2.78	Sometimes	Moderate

In today's digital age, young individuals seeking to engage in politics often leverage various forms of media, particularly the Internet, including social media platforms, to promote their causes and expand the reach of their organizations. As observed by Ma. Angela Teresa Sebastian in her piece "Are Filipino Youth Apathetic?" published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer on June 8, 2014, the dynamics of civic and political engagement have transformed in tandem with the rise of digital media. While youth utilize online platforms such as social networks to enhance engagement in civic and political affairs, the level of activity exhibited online does not always translate into offline participation. Senator Miriam Santiago echoed similar sentiments in her discussion on activism within social media platforms, emphasizing that despite the attention garnered by online protests, technology itself remains neutral, and the effectiveness of platforms like Twitter and Facebook is limited. Additionally, she highlighted that while "new media activism" may facilitate rapid mobilization, it does not necessarily sustain momentum in the long term, citing the "Million People March" as an example of a movement that failed to enact government reforms. However, according to the perceptions of the respondents, the factors outlined in Table 8 exert only a moderate influence on their decision to attend voter education campaigns. Consequently, this level of influence appears neither particularly strong nor exceptionally impactful.

3.9 Factors Affecting the Decision-Making of the Respondents on Filing for Candidacy during Elections

Table 9 illustrates the degree of influence exerted by various factors on the likelihood of young individuals deciding to run as candidates during elections. Notably, Political Parties emerges as the most influential factor among the nine listed. This finding aligns with the common practice wherein political parties actively recruit or persuade individuals to join their candidate rosters. An illustrative example of this phenomenon is the well-known case of President Rodrigo R. Duterte, who was strongly encouraged by PDP-Laban to run for the presidency. This instance underscores the significant role that political parties play in influencing individuals' decisions to seek candidacy.

Once again, this observation resonates with the principles outlined in the Mobilization Theory, which suggests that individuals' engagement in electoral politics can often be attributed to persuasion from others (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). In the Philippines, various elected positions are subject to specific age requirements. On election day, these requirements vary: candidates aspiring for roles such as Governor, Vice-Governor, and members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan in highly urbanized cities are required to be a minimum of 23 years old. Similarly, individuals vying for analogous positions in component cities and municipalities must be at least 21 years old. For members of the Sangguniang Panglungsod, Sangguniang Bayan, and Sangguniang Barangay, including

Punong Barangay, the minimum age requirement is 18 years old. Additionally, candidates seeking to become Sangguniang Kabataan members should be between 15 and 21 years old. For Party-List Representatives (Sectoral representatives), the minimum age is 25 on election day, except for the youth sectoral representative, who must be between 25 and 30 years old. Additionally, individuals aspiring to become District Representatives in the Philippine Congress must be at least 25 years old on election day.

Table 9. Factors affecting the decision making of the on filing for candidacy during elections (n=379)

Questions: Are you likely to be influenced by the following on filing for candidacy during elections;	w$\bar{x}$	Verbal Equivalent	Extent of Influence
Political Parties	2.75	Sometimes	Moderate
Political Platform	2.56	Rarely	Low
Profit/Incentive	2.56	Rarely	Low
Mass Media	2.51	Rarely	Low
Family	2.47	Rarely	Low
Charisma	2.46	Rarely	Low
Church	2.34	Rarely	Low
Personality Endorsement	2.34	Rarely	Low
Social Affiliation	2.31	Rarely	Low
Composite	2.48	Rarely	Low

These age requirements align with the age brackets used in the current study to define youth as individuals between 18 and 30 years old. Therefore, if young individuals possess the necessary interests and qualifications, they are eligible to file for candidacy for various positions in the government. Nevertheless, in the current study, the overall extent of influence of the factors is still low, which means that these factors rarely affect the youth's decision to run for a political position.

To date, the predominant focus of research has been on explaining the disproportionate representation of older individuals in elected positions, often by examining either the attributes of younger cohorts or the structures of political institutions. Investigations recently carried out in the United States have indicated that the younger demographic tends to display reduced political aspirations. This is often attributed to their perceptions of elected officials as inefficient or crooked, a sense of disconnection from contemporary political processes, and a belief in their ability to effect change more effectively through alternative community-based methods, according to Shames (2017) and Lawless and Fox (2015).

Conversely, comparative analyses across nations have underscored institutional factors as primary contributors to the aging of governmental bodies. These factors include higher minimum age requirements for various elected positions, electoral systems favoring candidates with extensive experience and financial resources, and the absence or ineffectiveness of mechanisms such as youth quotas (McClean & Ono, 2024; Belschner & Garcia de Paredes, 2020). That being considered it could be argued that influencing young voters becomes a challenging task when they are inherently detached due to their distinct perspectives on political engagement.

4.10 Factors Affecting the Decision-Making of the Respondents on Reporting Election-Related Issues

Table 10 contains data that reveal the extent of influence of the factors affecting the youth's decision to report election-related issues to the authorities during campaign periods and Election Day. The highest in rank among the 9 factors that would likely influence the respondents' decision-making is Social Affiliation. This implies that group membership or being part of an organization can influence young people to report electoral anomalies.

For instance, the group or program called "Boto Mo, I-Patrol Mo," which was first popularized as a segment in the news program *TV Patrol* before it extended into a social media movement, created an avenue or outlet where citizens could come forward to "patrol" (meaning "report") their votes and foster clean elections. Being a "Boto Patroller" requires one to register and join the group's nationwide movement, which empowers and encourages the members to report observed anomalies. In other words, with "Boto Mo, I-Patrol Mo," people are urged to take notice of what is happening and then do something about it. It is, in a sense, "people power with new technology," according to Maria A. Ressa, managing director of ABS-CBN News and Public Affairs.

The Mobilization Theory acknowledges social networks as influential channels shaping citizen participation. However, the survey findings indicate that Social Affiliation or group belonging, among other factors, only exhibited a moderate influence, suggesting that its impact may not be sufficiently strong.

Table 10. Factors affecting the decision making of the respondents on reporting election related issues (n=379)

Question:Are you likely to be influenced by the following on reporting election related issues to the authority during campaign periods and election day;	w$\bar{x}$	Verbal Equivalent	Extent of Influence
Social Affiliation	3.02	Sometimes	Moderate
Political Platform	2.96	Sometimes	Moderate
Church	2.91	Sometimes	Moderate
Political Parties	2.88	Sometimes	Moderate
Charisma	2.83	Sometimes	Moderate
Profit/Incentive	2.74	Sometimes	Moderate
Family	2.65	Rarely	Low
Mass Media	2.53	Rarely	Low
Personality Endorsement	2.46	Rarely	Low
Composite	2.78	Sometimes	Moderate

4.11 Factors Affecting the Decision-Making of the Respondents in Joining a Political Party During Elections

As shown in Table 11, the extent of influence of the factors affecting the decision-making of the youth in terms of joining a Political Party is low. Thus, it can be inferred that the respondents' decisions to align with a political party during elections were not significantly influenced by any of the factors listed in the table. This lack of impact could possibly stem from the chaotic perception associated with Philippine political parties, which may have deterred the young electorate from engaging with them.

Table 11. Factors affecting the decision making of the respondents in joining a political party during elections

Are you likely influenced by the following on joining a political party during elections;	w$\bar{x}$	Verbal Equivalent	Extent of Influence
Mass Media	2.26	Rarely	Low
Profit/Incentive	2.24	Rarely	Low
Church	2.21	Rarely	Low
Family	2.17	Rarely	Low
Political Parties	2.15	Rarely	Low
Charisma	2.14	Rarely	Low
Personality Endorsement	2.11	Rarely	Low
Social Affiliation	2.00	Rarely	Low
Political Platform	1.98	Rarely	Low
Composite	2.14	Rarely	Low

As Rocamora (1998) noted, Philippine political parties carried negative associations, particularly during the 1990s. They were viewed as feeble entities utilized by the biased upper classes as tools for advancing their own agendas, rather than serving as advocates for the interests of the impoverished and marginalized. Despite comprising predominantly young individuals from rural areas, most political parties adhered to the ideologies of the elite, leaving the populace yearning for meaningful political change during this period.

4.0 Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from the study emphasize several key findings. First, civic education initiatives demonstrate a positive impact on young voters' registration and intent to participate in elections, indicating the significance of early engagement in fostering informed citizenship. However, challenges such as time constraints, disillusionment with politics, and lack of education about political participation persist among young people. Next, gender and economic status do not significantly influence youth mobilization and participation in elections, and religion also has a limited impact on civic and political engagement, irrespective of individuals' faith or church involvement. Additionally, voter registration does not necessarily correlate with active political engagement, as other forms of participation exist that do not require voter registration. The influence of factors affecting voting

decisions varies among respondents, possibly due to demographic differences, highlighting the need for tailored engagement strategies. Despite advancements in information technology and media outreach, youth motivation for political engagement remains fragile, and politicians often fail to genuinely value youth contributions.

Moving forward, policymakers and organizations should recognize the diverse factors influencing youth engagement and develop tailored strategies to address them. Empowering youth leadership, enhancing education and awareness, and promoting diversity and inclusion are crucial steps in fostering meaningful youth participation in politics. Political leaders and government agencies need to reevaluate their approaches to engaging youth, ensuring that initiatives resonate with young people and effectively capture their interest. Overall, while strides have been made in promoting youth participation in politics, persistent challenges and gaps in engagement strategies remain, emphasizing the need for ongoing innovation and adaptation in youth mobilization efforts.

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All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest

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