

Influence of Social Media Platforms on Young Voters in the Barangay Elections

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Abstract:

This study investigates the influence of social media platforms on young voters during barangay elections, focusing on Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok and analyzing responses based on age, sex, highest educational attainment, and average family monthly income. Among the 278 respondents, the majority were female, over 23 years old, college graduates, and from families earning below ₱15,000 monthly. Findings reveal that Facebook is the most influential platform, primarily used for viewing political content, reading commentaries, and informing voting decisions—supporting Pariser's (2011) concept of algorithm-driven selective exposure. YouTube followed with moderate influence, offering in-depth political content such as documentaries and interviews, aligning with Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2014). TikTok showed the least influence, consistent with Zulli & Zulli's (2022) assertion of its entertainment-oriented nature. Statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test indicated that age and educational attainment significantly influenced perceptions of Facebook and YouTube, while only education showed a significant effect on TikTok. Sex and income were not statistically significant factors. Overall, Facebook emerged as the most impactful platform in shaping political behavior among older and more educated youth, with YouTube providing supplementary depth and TikTok having limited political relevance. The study highlights the critical role of digital literacy and education in fostering informed political participation and calls on educators, policymakers, and youth to utilize digital platforms for civic engagement and democratic development.

Keywords: Barangay elections, social media platforms, young voters

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

Social media has become an integral part of daily life for Filipinos, with platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok widely used for creating, sharing, and interacting with content (Caparas, 2024). The Philippines ranks among the top three countries globally in average daily internet use, spending approximately 8 hours and 56 minutes online (Inquirer.net, 2021). With a large portion of the population under 30, young Filipinos have become significant political stakeholders, making it essential to understand how social media shapes their political views and behaviors. This understanding aids institutions like COMELEC in fostering responsible youth engagement in the democratic process, as youth participation is vital to sustaining democracy (Sloam, 2014). Supporting this, SPIRALYTICS data reveal Facebook as the most used platform in the country, with 80.30 million users and nearly 27 hours of average monthly use, followed by TikTok with a higher monthly average of over 40 hours, and YouTube with a penetration rate of 61.4% and nearly 33 hours of average monthly use (Caparas, 2025).

A survey conducted by Meltwater revealed that TikTok has surpassed Facebook and YouTube in average time spent on social media in the Philippines, with Filipinos spending 40 hours and 46 minutes per month on TikTok, compared to 26 hours and 54 minutes on Facebook and 32 hours and 40 minutes on YouTube (Howe, 2024). The use of social media in politics was first notably demonstrated during Barack Obama's second presidential campaign, where it empowered supporters and revolutionized political engagement (Dexter, 2023). Today, social media platforms have replaced traditional media as the primary source of political information, especially for the youth, who now consume news, form opinions, and engage with political content online. This shift has raised concerns over misinformation, bias, and content manipulation, as social media has redefined political communication and influence (Chadwick & Stromer-Galley, 2016). In response to these challenges, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) issued Resolution No. 11064, which outlines guidelines for the ethical use of social media, AI, and internet technology in digital campaigns, aiming to ensure fair, transparent, and credible elections amid the growing threat of misinformation and AI-generated content (Garcia, 2024).

Given these concerns, this study becomes highly relevant. As a government employee, particularly employed in the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) as a Computer Maintenance Technologist, I have developed a strong inclination

to undertake this study to identify social media's influence on our young voters in barangay elections. Through this study, the researcher aims to formulate a strategic course of action to address issues and offer solutions that enhance the discernment of our young voters when selecting their future leaders. Additionally, the study seeks to mitigate the proliferation of false news and combat misinformation and disinformation.

Current State of Knowledge

Social media platforms have become more effective than traditional media in disseminating political information, especially for small or less-resourced candidates who use these platforms to directly engage with constituents and raise visibility without the constraints of traditional media (Chadwick & Stromer-Galley, 2016). Platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok offer young voters diverse access to information, active campaign engagement, and visibility on barangay issues often overlooked by mainstream outlets. Social media fosters political participation by making political information more accessible and enabling users to interact through likes, shares, and comments, which increases awareness and encourages involvement in local politics (Boulliane, 2015). Research further shows that content on social media significantly influences voting behavior, with platforms like Facebook seen as reliable by a majority of users, particularly among youth aged 18–28 (Ravi Kumar et al., 2021; Musa Kamal, 2019).

Social media has increasingly influenced political engagement among young Filipino voters, particularly since the 2016 presidential election, which marked the country's first "social media election" (Arugay, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic further amplified candidates' reliance on platforms like Facebook and YouTube to share political ideologies and campaign messages. Surveys revealed that 85% of users considered Facebook important for political engagement, with 70% stating it influenced their vote, and by 2021, YouTube surpassed Facebook in usage (We Are Social, 2021). These platforms have proven effective in mobilizing grassroots support, especially in barangay elections, even in rural areas. However, while social media promotes political awareness and engagement, it also poses risks such as the spread of disinformation, which can distort public opinion (Samson, 2024; Siar, 2021). With 86.75 million Filipino users spending an average of 3 hours and 34 minutes daily on social media (Howe, 2024), digital literacy has become crucial. To combat misinformation, NGOs like Limitless Lab, in partnership with the ASEAN Foundation and Google.org, are training Filipinos to identify fake news, as 51% still struggle to distinguish credible content (ASEAN Foundation, 2022).

Social media platforms have become powerful tools in shaping young voters' behavior and participation in barangay elections by offering unfiltered access to information, enabling political engagement, and amplifying peer influence. According to Falck et al. (2014), the shift from traditional media to digital platforms like blogs and Facebook stems from users' desire for ideological alignment and freedom from editorial bias. Supporting this, Bond et al. (2012) and Jones et al. (2017) found that peer influence through Facebook significantly increased voter turnout during U.S. elections, highlighting the role of social networks in political mobilization. Similarly, Rotesi (2018) emphasized Twitter's impact on political awareness and participation, particularly in fostering real-time communication and interaction. Kulkarni (2022) further noted that social media serves both as a tool for civic engagement and a channel for misinformation, reflecting the dual nature of its influence. Collectively, these studies provide valuable insights into how social media affects young voters' awareness, participation, and decision-making, while also posing challenges related to digital misinformation and opinion polarization.

Youth engagement in Philippine politics has significantly evolved with the rise of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok, which have become venues for political discourse and content sharing, influencing young voters' preferences through peers, influencers, and political leaders (Bunquin, 2020). These platforms foster critical thinking and increase awareness of societal issues, encouraging active political participation. Facebook is widely used by candidates to connect with voters and shape decision-making, especially in provinces like Lanao del Sur (Salic, 2023). The 2016 presidential election marked a shift in youth political engagement, as digital platforms enabled more informed and participatory behavior among the youth (Valencia, 2023). While technologies like Natural Language Processing help understand electoral trends (Gorro et al., 2022), concerns about data privacy and bias remain. Ong (2022) also highlighted the misuse of social media through disinformation and troll farms during campaigns, emphasizing the need for digital literacy and regulatory measures. Collectively, these studies provided the researcher with foundational insights and highlighted the gap in literature specific to barangay-level elections in the Negros Island Region.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The study is anchored on the influence theory, which is founded on the expectation that the influence of social media can somehow affect shaping voter decisions. It focuses on how influence spreads in structured systems and how it affects a person's behavior, decision-making, and information. The theory is very relevant to the proposed study, as it emphasizes the integration of concepts from logic, philosophy, and network science to identify how influence operates in a complex system (Cialdini & Goldstien, 2004).

In social influence theory, social media platforms are the perfect way for young voters to get involved in political discussions. The youth see different political stories through social discussions, viral political campaigns, and endorsements from content creators and online influencers. The popularity of echo chambers, algorithm-driven content, and popular hashtags can make it so that only certain points of view will be heard, which can influence people's opinions or strengthen ideas that they currently have. Fear of missing out (FOMO) on political talks can also encourage young voters to participate in the election process.

Therefore, the social influence theory examines how social media platforms influence our youth in shaping their voters' decisions, whether through direct engagement with political content or subtle pressures from their online communities. Understanding the process helps us better understand how social media platforms affect voters' behavior at the barangay level. The evidence shows the positive effect of making individuals more politically aware, and the negative effect is spreading misinformation and disinformation. We used this framework to determine the extent to which digital communications boosted young people's political engagement during barangay elections.

Objectives

The study aims to determine the level of influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections, which will be the basis for an action plan. More specifically, it aimed to determine: 1) the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment and average family monthly income; 2) the level of influence of social media platforms on young voters according to Facebook, YouTube, and Tiktok; and 3) the significant difference in the level of influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections when grouped and compared according to the variables.

Methodology

This section presents a discussion of the research methodology used, the subjects and respondents of the study, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the procedure for data gathering, and the statistical tools and procedures for data analysis.

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design to determine the level of influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections. For data collection, surveys were distributed among registered voters using Likert scales to measure the influence level across the areas. This study used a statistically significant sample size from different clustered precincts within a specific Barangay, and the collected data have been analyzed to identify significant differences among groups.

According to McCombes (Revised, 2023), the goal of descriptive research is to precisely and methodically describe a population, circumstance, or phenomenon. It can respond to inquiries about what, where, when, and how, but not why. The descriptive design allowed the researcher to collect quantifiable data on the influence of social media platforms on young voters' decision-making without manipulating any variables.

A descriptive research design encompasses a diverse range of research methods that can be employed to examine one or more variables. In contrast to experimental research, the researcher does not exert control or manipulation on any of the variables; rather, their role is limited to observation and measurement.

Study Respondents

This study involved 278 registered voters from a barangay in a fourth-class city in the Negros Island Region, representing diverse age groups, sexes, educational backgrounds, and income levels. The respondents were proportionally distributed across nine clustered precincts: A (27), B (26), C (31), D (38), E (31), F (27), G (33), H (27), and I (39). Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure fair representation from each precinct, with the lottery method used for random selection to eliminate bias. Stratified random sampling, as defined by Hayes (2023), involves dividing the population into subgroups or strata based on shared characteristics, then randomly sampling within each stratum. The lottery method, described by Kothari (2004), involves randomly selecting numbered slips from a container, ensuring equal chances of selection for each unit.

Instruments

To assess the influence of social media on young voters in the barangay elections, data was collected using a researcher-made Likert scale survey questionnaire, which underwent validity and reliability testing. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: Part 1 gathered demographic information (age, sex, highest educational attainment, and average family monthly income), while Part II focused on determining the level of social media influence on young voters. It included 5 items on respondent profile, 10 items on Facebook influence, 10 items on YouTube influence,

and 10 items on TikTok influence, totaling 30 items across the three platforms. Respondents rated each item using a 5-point scale, with 5 meaning "Extremely influential," 4 "Very influential," 3 "Somewhat influential," 2 "Slightly influential," and 1 "Not at all influential". It was subjected to validity (4.81-excellent) and reliability (0.975-excellent). All of them were interpreted as worthy and good; respectively.

Data Gathering Procedure

After establishing the validity and reliability of the research instrument, the researcher came up with the idea to utilize the use of online survey questionnaires to be filled out by the respondents. Using Google Forms, the respondents answered the online survey questionnaires at their comfort using mobile phones, laptops, or desktop computers. The researcher shared the online survey questionnaire with the respondents using QR code or a shared link. Also, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and included instructions on how the questionnaire could be answered objectively and honestly. As part of the protocol, they were assured of the confidentiality of the data.

The researcher included a guide before proceeding to the proper survey question section. The respondents were asked "yes" or "no" if they were willing to answer the online survey forms honestly and voluntarily participate in the research before filling out the questionnaire. The researcher personally retrieved the instruments thereafter. The data gathered were then categorized, tabulated, and prepared for subsequent statistical treatment.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective No. 1 used the descriptive analytical scheme and frequency count and percentage distribution to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, and average family monthly income.

Objective No. 2 used the descriptive analytical scheme and mean to determine the level of Influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections in the areas of Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok.

Objective No. 3 used the comparative analytical scheme and Mann-Whitney U test to determine the level of Influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections when the respondents are grouped and compared according to the variables.

Ethical Consideration

Research ethics have become a central issue in educational research, and no research can be conducted without due regard to ethics. Regulatory frameworks and regulatory bodies have been established to manage and approve research ethics protocols. Hence, data gathering for an educational research project can only begin once ethical clearance has been sought and approved and a certificate of ethical clearance has been issued (Ramrathan, Grange & Shawa,2016). As to the informed consent, the participants were fully informed about the procedures and risks involved in the research and were asked for their consent to participate. As such, participants were entirely enlightened about the procedures of the entire research.

Additionally, several safeguards are put in place to minimize harm in a research protocol that involves vulnerable participants or sensitive topics. (Peter, 2015). As to the confidentiality of the results, the participants were assured that identifying information would not be made available to anyone who was not directly involved in the study. In terms of anonymity, there were strict standards in which the participants should remain anonymous.

Results and Discussion

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data that were gathered consistent with its predetermined objectives.

Table 1

Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Younger (below 23 years old)	126	45.32
	Older (23 years old and above)	152	54.68
	Total	278	100
Sex	Male	126	45.32

	Female	152	54.68
	Total	278	100
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower (High School Graduate)	135	48.56
	Higher (College Graduate)	143	51.44
	Total	278	100
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower (less than P15 000)	188	67.63
	Higher (P15000 and above)	90	32.37
	Total	278	100

Table 1 presents data on the profile of respondents according to the variables of age, sex, highest educational attainment, and average monthly income. Two hundred and seventy-eight young voters in a barangay in 4th class city in Negros Island Region were surveyed. The majority, or 152 (54.68%), were aged above 23 years old and above, while 126 (45.32%) were below 23 years old. The majority of respondents, or 152 (54.68%), were female, while 126 (45.32%) of young voters were male. In terms of highest educational attainment, the majority of those surveyed (143), or 51.44%, were college graduates, while the remaining 48.56% (135) were high school graduates. Meanwhile, the majority of the respondents, 188 (67.63%), had an average monthly family income below 15,000 pesos. In comparison, 90 (32.37%) of the young voters had an average family monthly income of 15,000 pesos and above.

The findings imply interpreting the level of influence of social media platforms on political behavior. The slightly older and more educated respondents have a higher level of engagement seen on the platforms such as Facebook and YouTube. Particularly for research, political content consumption, and decision-making, may be explained by the predominance of older and more educated respondents.

These demographics support the relevance of previous studies. For instance, Rotosi(2018) and Aguray(2022) argue that age, educational attainment, and income influence how social media platforms are utilized for political participation. Boulianne (2015) also found that older youth tend to demonstrate higher political awareness and engagement online. It shows that respondents with a high educational background tend to engage more critically with content (Gil de Zuñiga et al., 2014). While social media platforms bridged income gaps by providing free access to political information (Smith & Anderson, 2018).

The results support the earlier research that shows the influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections influenced by demographic factors, particularly age, sex, highest educational attainment, and average family monthly income. Social media platforms are used as tools for political engagement.

Table 2

Level of influence of social media platforms on young voters on Facebook

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a young voter, I use Facebook to...</i>		
1. monitor news about politics and politicians	3.60	High Level
2. help me stay informed about barangay candidates and their platforms.	3.38	Moderate Level
3. research on election candidates' political platforms	3.37	Moderate Level
4. follow political candidates that I am inclined to vote	3.31	Moderate Level
5. follow political candidates that I am not likely to vote	3.28	Moderate Level
6. watch political advertisements of candidates	3.76	High Level
7. read, listen to, and watch documentaries or interviews of political candidates	3.76	High Level
8. read and watch commentaries about political candidates' track record, accomplishments, and misgivings	3.78	High Level
9. determine the popularity and winnability of a political candidate	3.61	High Level
10. decide whether to vote for a candidate or not	3.71	High Level
Overall Mean	3.56	High Level

The information in Table 2 reflects the level of influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections in the area of Facebook. The overall mean score is 3.56, interpreted as "high level". Item number 8, "read and watch commentaries about political candidates' track record, accomplishments, and misgivings," obtained the highest mean score of 3.78, interpreted as "high level," while item number 5, "follow political candidates that I am not likely to vote," got the lowest mean score of 3.28 interpreted as "moderate level" of influence. This research

shows that Facebook is commonly used for political content and shaping decisions. The research shows that Facebook is the most commonly used social media platform for political content and influencing young voters' decisions. Youth tend to engage more with content that aligns with their interest or supports them in making decisions, compared to content that offers general or opposing points of view (Rana et al., 2019).

This supports the previous studies that show that social media platform algorithms reinforce users' current ideas by filtering content that is aligned with their preferences. This contributes to selective exposure and political echo chambers (Pariser, 2011).

Table 3

Level of influence of social media platforms on young voters on YouTube

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a young voter, I use YouTube to...</i>		
1. monitor news about politics and politicians	2.72	Moderate Level
2. get to know about political candidates' profiles	2.79	Moderate Level
3. research on election candidates' political platforms	2.82	Moderate Level
4. subscribe to political candidates that I am inclined to vote	2.81	Moderate Level
5. interact in real-time with the content creator issue about politics and politicians	2.82	Moderate Level
6. watch political advertisements of candidates	3.01	Moderate Level
7. watch documentaries or interviews of political candidates	3.05	Moderate Level
8. watch commentaries about political candidates' track records, accomplishments, and misgivings	3.03	Moderate Level
9. determine the popularity and winnability of a political candidate	2.95	Moderate Level
10. decide whether to vote for a candidate or not	3.03	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	2.90	Moderate Level

Table 3 represents data on the level of influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections in the area of YouTube. The overall mean is 2.90, which is of moderate level. Item number 7, "watch documentaries or interviews of political candidates," got the highest mean score of 3.05, interpreted as "moderate level." Item number 1, "monitor news about politics and politicians," got the lowest score of 2.72, interpreted as a "moderate level" of influence.

This implies that although young voters use YouTube for political engagement, its role is more supplementary than that of platforms like Facebook. Interviews, commentaries, or any long-form content got slightly higher influence, which aligns with YouTube's nature as a video-centric platform, where users would want deeper insights instead of real-time updates or short posts. These results are consistent with prior research, which indicated that YouTube is often viewed as a secondary source for political engagement, mostly utilized for long political consumption rather than active interaction or real-time decision-making (Sternquist, 2020).

Table 4

Level of influence of social media platforms on young voters in TikTok

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a young voter, I use TikTok to...</i>		
1. monitor news about politics and politicians	2.34	Low Level
2. learn more about barangay candidates and their platforms	2.34	Low Level
3. research on election candidates' political platforms	2.36	Low Level
4. watch short videos that make me more inclined to support candidates featured positively	2.48	Low Level
5. interact with the content creator's issues about politics and politicians	2.43	Low Level
6. watch political advertisements of candidates	2.50	Moderate Level
7. watch short videos or interviews of political candidates	2.56	Moderate Level
8. get reliable information about the barangay elections	2.47	Low Level
9. reconsider my initial voting preference	2.52	Moderate Level
10. decide whether to vote for a candidate or not	2.59	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	2.46	Low Level

Table 4 contains data on the level of influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections in the area of TikTok. The overall mean is 2.46, interpreted as "low level". Item number 10, "decide whether to vote

a candidate or not," got the highest mean score of 2.59, interpreted as "Moderate level," Meanwhile, items numbers 1, "monitor news about politics and politicians," and 2, "learn more about barangay candidates and their platforms," obtain the same score of 2.34, interpreted as "low level."

This implies that while TikTok may have a limited impact overall, short, engaging, and emotionally appealing content can still subtly affect the political perspectives of young users.

These results support earlier research showing that TikTok is more often utilized as a form of entertainment rather than critical political engagement. Its algorithm prioritizes trending and attention-grabbing content, which may not necessarily encourage political discussion (Zulli & Zulli, 2022). Young voters are less prone to rely on TikTok for political content. Therefore, while TikTok may influence users through its viral content, it is less effective in delivering political knowledge.

Table 5

Difference in the level of influence of social media platforms on young voters in Facebook when grouped and compared according to variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	126	119.13	7010.000	0.000	0.05	Significant
	Older	152	156.38				
Sex	Male	126	137.58	9334.000	0.716	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	152	141.09				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	135	115.19	6370.500	0.000	0.05	Significant
	Higher	143	162.45				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	188	137.36	8057.500	0.520	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	90	143.97				

Table 5 data presents comparative data on the level of influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections in the areas of Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok when grouped and compared according to age, sex, highest educational attainment, and average family monthly income.

The data in the table reveals the *p-values* obtained based on ratings given by respondents according to the aforementioned variable. There is no significant difference in the level of influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections in the area of Facebook when grouped and compared according to variables of sex and average family monthly income because the *p-values* 0.716 and 0.52 are above the 0.05 significance level.

Therefore, the variables sex and average family monthly income, the null hypothesis states, "*There is no significant difference in the influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections in the area of YouTube when the respondents are grouped and compared according to aforementioned variables,*" is accepted.

However, there is a significant difference in the level of influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections in the area of Facebook when grouped and compared according to the variable age because the *p-value* of 0.00 is less than the significance level, which is 0.05.

Therefore, the variables age and highest educational attainment, the null hypothesis states, "*There is no significant difference in the influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections in the area of YouTube when the respondents are grouped and compared according to aforementioned variables,*" is rejected.

This implies that variable age emphasizes that younger voters are more likely to allow social media platforms to influence them compared to older young voters. This result aligns with existing literature, which suggests that younger generations are more digitally connected and rely heavily on social media for news, opinions, and decision-making (Smith & Anderson, 2018). Their exposure to social media makes them prone to political content and a higher chance of influencing their attitude and voting behavior.

In conclusion, the results suggest that variable age and highest educational attainment are crucial factors in how social media shapes the political perceptions of young voters. These findings highlight the importance of designing targeted digital political campaigns that consider age and educational background to enhance effectiveness and engagement among the young in the electoral process.

Table 6

Difference in the level of influence of social media platforms on young voters in YouTube when grouped and compared according to variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	126	129.39	8302.500	0.055	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	152	147.88				
Sex	Male	126	138.67	9471.500	0.875		Not Significant
	Female	152	140.19				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	135	126.95	7958.500	0.011		Significant
	Higher	143	151.35				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	188	142.83	7833.500	0.316		Not Significant
	Higher	90	132.54				

Table 6 shows data on the difference in the level of Influence of Social Media on Young Voters in the Barangay Elections in the area of YouTube when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables. Statistical data in the table reveal that there is no significant difference in the level of influence of social media on young voters in the barangay elections when grouped and compared according to variables Age, Sex, and Average Family Monthly Income because the *p-values* 0.055, 0.0875, and 0.316, respectively, are all greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

Therefore, the variables age, sex, and average family monthly income, the null hypothesis states, "*There is no significant difference in the influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections in the area of YouTube when the respondents are grouped and compared according to aforementioned variables,*" is accepted.

On the other hand, a significant difference exists in the level of influence of social media on young voters in the barangay elections in the area of YouTube when grouped and compared according to the variable Highest Educational Attainment because the *p-value* of 0.011 is less than the significance level, which is 0.05.

Therefore, the variable with the highest educational attainment, the null hypothesis states, "*There is no significant difference in the influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections in the area of YouTube when the respondents are grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variable.*" is rejected.

This implies that the difference observed in the highest educational attainment highlights a key factor in how young voters engage with political content on YouTube. Those respondents with higher educational backgrounds may possess greater digital literacy, critical thinking skills, and a greater understanding of political processes, enabling them to give you better analysis of content online. This supports previous studies showing that individuals with higher educational levels tend to be more advanced, active, and politically informed on digital platforms (Velasquez & Rojas, 2017).

The results emphasize the need for voter education initiatives that focus on increasing access to digital content and improving young voters' capacity to evaluate and respond to political messages. In an age where misinformation is rampant online, strengthening media information literacy could empower more youth to make informed electoral decisions.

Table 7

Difference in the level of influence of social media platforms on young voters in TikTok when grouped and compared according to variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
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Age	Younger	126	134.59	8957.500	0.353	Not Significant
	Older	152	143.57			
Sex	Male	126	145.25	8852.000	0.277	Not Significant
	Female	152	134.74			
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	135	129.56	8311.000	0.045	Significant
	Higher	143	148.88			
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	188	140.61	8250.500	0.738	Not Significant
	Higher	90	137.17			

Table 7 shows data on the difference in the level of Influence of Social Media on Young Voters in the Barangay Elections in the area of TikTok when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables. Statistical data in the table reveal that there is no significant difference in the level of influence of social media on young voters in the barangay elections when grouped and compared according to variables Age, Sex, and Average Family Monthly Income because the *p-values* 0.353, 0.277, and 0.738, respectively, are all greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

Therefore, the variables age, sex, and average family monthly income, the null hypothesis states, *"There is no significant difference in the influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections in the area of TikTok when the respondents are grouped and compared according to aforementioned variables,"* is accepted. On the other hand, a significant difference exists in the level of influence of social media on young voters in the barangay elections in the area of TikTok when grouped and compared according to the variable Highest Educational Attainment because the *p-value* of 0.045 is less than the significance level, which is 0.05.

Therefore, the variable with the highest educational attainment, the null hypothesis that states, *"There is no significant difference in the influence of social media platforms on young voters in the barangay elections in the area of TikTok when the respondents are grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variable,"* is rejected.

According to Boulianne (2015), individuals with higher levels of education are positively correlated with increased political knowledge and engagement, particularly when mediated through digital platforms.

In conclusion, these results reinforce the idea that education is a key driver in how young voters engage with and are influenced by political content on TikTok. Although factors like age, sex, and income may affect exposure and access, the educational background shapes how youth interpret and respond to political content. These findings imply that improving social media literacy through educational initiatives may be a vital step toward helping to inform and critical digital citizenship among the youth.

Conclusions

The study revealed that social media platforms, particularly Facebook, significantly influence young voters in barangay elections, with 278 respondents—mostly female and over 23 years old—indicating a high level of political engagement through the platform, especially via political content and commentaries. Facebook recorded the highest influence (mean = 3.56), followed by YouTube (mean = 2.90) which provided deeper insights through documentaries and interviews, while TikTok (mean = 2.46) was the least influential due to its entertainment-centric nature. Statistical analysis showed that age and educational attainment significantly affected influence levels on Facebook and YouTube, while only education impacted TikTok engagement. These findings align with scholars like Pariser (2011), Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2014), and Zulli & Zulli (2022), emphasizing how algorithmic exposure and platform design shape political awareness and behavior. The study concludes that digital media, particularly Facebook, has become a modern tool for civic engagement, advocating for increased media literacy, regulated digital campaigning, and enhanced use of these platforms by COMELEC and related institutions for voter education. Recommendations include maximizing Facebook for political education, leveraging YouTube for analytical discourse, and creatively using TikTok to reach younger audiences, alongside calls for curriculum integration of media literacy and expanded internet access for inclusive participation.

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