



SCROLLING WITHOUT LEARNING: POLITICAL MEME EXPOSURE, SOCIO-POLITICAL AWARENESS, AND YOUTH DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT IN URBAN PHILIPPINES

Aldrin P. Baes

*Department of Social Sciences, Cavite State University, Indang,
Cavite, Philippines*

ABSTRACT

The rise of various social media platforms and digital media contents, such as political memes, significantly impact the democratic processes within a country. In seeking to determine their capability in raising awareness, the researchers conducted a study aimed to determine the extent exposure to political meme culture as a political discourse; the level of socio-political awareness in terms of political information, societal events, and political interest; and the relationship between the extent exposure to political meme culture as a political discourse and socio-political awareness among selected youth. The study was conducted from March 2025 to May 2025 in selected barangays in the City of Imus, Cavite which are Buhay na Tubig, Carsadang Bago II, and Pasong Buaya II. Specifically, this study utilized Quantitative descriptive-correlational approach to effectively identify the relationship of the variables. The authors used a self-made survey questionnaire to gather data. Three hundred eighty-four (384) were purposively chosen in line with the criteria of the study. The results revealed that the respondents have frequently encountered political meme culture which implies that they are moderately exposed to political meme culture but not always. It was also found that the respondents have a high level of socio- political awareness in terms of political information, societal events, and political interest. However, Pearson R revealed that these two variables have no significant relationship.

Keywords: *political memes, youth political engagement, socio-political awareness, digital political communication, media ecology, Philippine youth, participatory politics*

INTRODUCTION

The rise of digital media has transformed the way people access and engage with political information. Among the various forms of online communication, political memes have emerged as a popular and influential medium, particularly among younger generations.

A political meme is a form of digital content that combines images, text, humor, satire, or symbolism to communicate political ideas, opinions, critiques, or commentary. Shared primarily through social media platforms, political memes simplify complex political issues into easily understandable and highly shareable messages. They serve as tools for political expression, persuasion, public engagement, and the dissemination of political information, influencing how individuals perceive and discuss political events, leaders, and policies. Hence, it has become a significant form of digital political communication in contemporary society, particularly among the youth who actively engage with social media platforms. As online interaction continues to expand, exposure to political memes has emerged as an important factor in understanding how individuals receive, interpret, and respond to political information in the digital age. The digitization of political communication has fundamentally reconfigured how citizens—particularly younger generations—encounter, interpret, and engage with political information. Within this transformation, political memes have emerged as a distinctive and pervasive form of digital political discourse, combining visual imagery, textual brevity, humor, and satire to convey political commentary in highly shareable formats (Wiggins, 2019; Shifman, 2014). From satirizing incumbents to mobilizing collective action, political memes have become constitutive features of contemporary online political culture (Ross & Rivers, 2017; Mortensen & Neumeyer, 2021).

In the Philippine context, political meme culture has particular significance. Long before the rise of social media, political satire was already a fixture of Philippine popular culture through television programs such as *Sic O'Clock News* (1987–2007) and *Mongolian Barbecue* (1991–1999), which used humor and parody to comment on political leaders and current events. With the expansion of the World Wide Web and the emergence of social networking platforms, this tradition of political satire evolved into the widespread use of political memes. Today, political memes are extensively shared across platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and X, serving not only as entertainment but also as a medium for political commentary, criticism, persuasion, and civic engagement. The Philippines, one of the world's most active social media markets, consistently ranks among the highest in social media usage and screen time, creating an environment where political memes can spread rapidly and shape public discourse (Kemp, 2021; Purnell, 2024), and Filipino youth have historically demonstrated political expressiveness through digital media—most visibly during the 2022 national elections, where meme-based content saturated platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok. Pages such as *Malacañang Catering Services*, *Pulpulitika*, and *Betsin-artparasites* have amassed millions of followers, illustrating the normalization of meme-mediated political discourse within Filipino digital culture (De Leon & Ballesteros-Lintao, 2021). Youth occupy a strategically important position within this landscape. As the largest demographic bloc in the Philippines, young people between 15 and 30 years of age are

simultaneously primary consumers of digital media and primary targets of civic mobilization efforts (National Youth Commission, 2020). Understanding the nature and depth of their engagement with political content online is therefore not merely an academic concern but a pressing issue for democratic governance, media policy, and civic education. Yet, despite the volume of research on political memes and digital political participation, a critical empirical gap persists: does exposure to political meme culture meaningfully correlate with enhanced socio-political awareness? Prior scholarship has largely focused on meme content analysis (Calimbo, 2016; De Leon & Ballesteros-Lintao, 2021), attitudes toward political humor (Kaur & Puyok, 2021), or meme virality mechanisms (McLoughlin & Southern, 2020). Few studies have systematically examined the quantitative relationship between meme exposure and political awareness outcomes, particularly in Southeast Asian urban youth contexts.

Political memes as digital political discourse

Political memes—broadly defined as digitally reproduced images, texts, or videos that convey political opinions, criticisms, or commentary (Shifman, 2014)—have emerged from a broader tradition of political satire with deep historical roots. In the Philippines, this tradition dates to the satirical television programs of the 1990s and transitioned to the digital realm with the rise of social networking platforms in the 2000s (Lestari et al., 2024). Today, political memes circulate widely across Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and X, produced by institutional actors, civil society groups, and everyday citizens alike.

Scholars have characterized political memes as possessing distinctive features that differentiate them from traditional political communication: humor, caricature, replicability, context collapse, hermeneutical layering, and low reputational cost (Anderau & Barbarussa, 2024). These features make memes simultaneously accessible and epistemically limited. As Cortesi and Gasser (2015) observed, memes present serious political matters in formats more engaging than traditional channels, particularly for younger audiences. Yet this accessibility comes at the cost of depth; the simplification of complex political narratives into bite-sized content risks producing superficial understanding and facilitating the spread of misinformation (Dupuis & Williams, 2019). De Leon and Ballesteros-Lintao (2021), analyzing Philippine political memes from 2016 to 2018, identified techniques including intertextuality, parody, and binary opposition as primary rhetorical strategies—mechanisms that simplify complex political narratives into emotionally resonant contrasts, often at the expense of nuance.

Humor, satire, and participatory politics

Political humor and satire have long served as vehicles for critique and democratic participation. Holbert (2014) argues that satire functions as a form of political discourse that exposes contradictions and flaws in political systems through exaggeration and irony. In the digital age, meme-based satire has democratized political commentary, allowing non-expert citizens to participate in political debate on equal symbolic terms with journalists and politicians (Ross & Rivers, 2017). Mortensen and Neumeyer (2021) identify political memes' playfulness as both their strength and their limitation: shared

humor fosters in-group solidarity and collective identity, but it also risks reinforcing polarization through 'us versus them' dynamics. Boulianne (2015) further notes that online interactions centered on meme sharing can strengthen social ties among young people, creating conditions for political mobilization—though the quality and depth of such mobilization remain contested.

Critically, Kaur and Puyok (2021) found that political satire helps youth perceive political issues from multiple perspectives, yet the informal and entertaining nature of such content may also trivialize serious political debates, reinforcing the entertainment-awareness decoupling that this study investigates.

Youth political engagement in digital spaces

The relationship between digital media use and youth political engagement is complex and context-dependent. While early optimism surrounding digital media's democratizing potential has given way to more cautious assessments, evidence consistently shows that social media platforms serve as primary information environments for young people (Cruz & Reyes, 2022; Tan, 2024). In the Philippines, Facebook and TikTok in particular function not merely as social networking tools but as primary news sources and political discussion forums for youth (Gadingan, 2024). However, the nature of engagement matters significantly. Bunquin (2020) documented extensive social media use among Filipino youth but found low levels of substantive political participation, suggesting that exposure does not automatically translate into engagement. Zyad (2021) similarly concluded that social media platforms primarily serve as expression channels for youth already possessing political knowledge, rather than tools for cultivating new political awareness. These findings challenge linear assumptions about digital media's capacity to enhance civic participation.

Misinformation, digital literacy, and political awareness

A critical dimension of political meme culture is its dual character as both an information medium and a vehicle for misinformation. Dupuis and Williams (2019) emphasize that political memes' rapid circulation, low production barriers, and entertainment orientation create fertile conditions for the dissemination of misleading or factually inaccurate content. In the Philippine context, where internet propaganda demonstrably influenced electoral outcomes in 2016 and 2019 (Bernido, 2022), the misinformation dimensions of meme culture carry direct democratic stakes. Alargan (2020) identified 'echo chamber' dynamics as a compounding factor, whereby algorithmic content curation ensures that youth primarily encounter memes aligned with preexisting beliefs, limiting exposure to diverse political perspectives and reinforcing epistemic closure. These structural features underscore the necessity of robust digital and media literacy interventions as prerequisites for meme-mediated political learning (McLoughlin & Southern, 2020)

The reviewed literature demonstrates that political memes have become a significant component of contemporary political communication, particularly among young

people who spend considerable time on social media platforms. Existing studies consistently recognize the ability of political memes to attract attention, encourage participation, facilitate political expression, and foster a sense of community among users. Through humor, satire, and visual storytelling, memes make political issues more accessible and engaging than traditional forms of political communication. However, the literature also reveals a persistent tension between engagement and understanding. While political memes may increase exposure to political content and stimulate online interaction, several scholars caution that their simplified, humorous, and emotionally driven nature may undermine critical reflection and nuanced understanding of political issues. The tendency of memes to reduce complex political realities into easily digestible narratives raises concerns regarding misinformation, polarization, and superficial political learning. Furthermore, studies on youth political engagement present mixed findings. Some studies suggest that digital platforms encourage civic participation, while others argue they mainly facilitate political expression rather than deeper political awareness. This distinction highlights that political engagement does not necessarily equate to socio-political understanding. Although research on political memes has expanded, most studies focus on their role in communication, participation, and opinion formation, with limited attention to whether frequent exposure to political memes enhances genuine socio-political awareness, particularly among Filipino youth. Additionally, the relationship between the amount of meme exposure and the quality of political understanding remains underexplored.

This gap is especially important in the Philippine context, where social media platforms have become primary sources of political information for young citizens and where political memes play a visible role in electoral discourse and public debate. Given the prevalence of meme culture and the growing concerns regarding misinformation and political polarization, there is a need to empirically determine whether exposure to political memes enhances socio-political awareness or merely creates an illusion of political knowledge and engagement. Therefore, this study was conducted to address this gap by examining the relationship between political meme exposure and socio-political awareness among youth. By doing so, it contributes to ongoing discussions regarding the educational, democratic, and communicative implications of meme culture in the digital age.

Research Questions

This study addresses this gap by investigating political meme culture as a political discourse and its relationship to socio-political awareness among selected youth in Imus City, Cavite, the Philippines. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of youth exposure to political meme culture as a political discourse?
2. What is the level of socio-political awareness among participants in terms of:
 - a. political information,
 - b. societal events, and
 - c. political interest?

3. Is there a significant relationship between extent exposure to political meme culture as a political discourse and socio-political awareness among selected youth?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. Descriptive- Correlation approach was utilized in this study which helped the researchers to determine the relationship between political meme culture as a political discourse and socio-political awareness in terms of political information, societal events, and political interest.

Moreover, the researchers used a descriptive method as it is the most compatible for this study as it relates to the frequency, classifications, metrics, and patterns. As stated by Shinija (2024) Descriptive research is used to describe and observe a phenomenon happening in its natural setting. The numerical data will be interpreted by using Likert Scale to determine if the participants were most likely to engage in political meme culture and use check forms for questions that can only be answered by checking boxes. On the other hand, Correlational research is an investigation to find the relationship between the variables of the study. This method will be used to have a better understanding of the quantitative data and to explain the study through multiple sources of information.

Study locale and participants

The participants of the study were the selected youth from the three barangays in Imus, Cavite namely: Buhay na Tubig, Carsadang Bago II, and Pasong Buaya II. The specific qualifications include: (1) between 15 to 30 years of age; (2) residing in either of the selected barangays; (3) uses social media platforms; and (4) exposed to political meme culture as a political discourse.

The researchers set the aforementioned qualifications for the participants as they provide answers that have political value rather than mere ideas. Moreover, the youth population were the best fit in this study as they were the ones who were exposed to mass media, and use various social media platforms to practice freedom of expression.

Sampling Technique

The researchers used the Purposive-criterion approach which is a type of non-probability sampling. As stated by Newbold et al. (2013) Criterion Sampling is a method in research in choosing the participants based on specific qualities or characteristics that were important in the study. In addition, it helped the researchers to choose the participants that provide the most substantial data for the study. To guarantee that the resulting sample is representative of the population as a whole, the researchers selected

a sample based on predetermined quota. One-hundred and twenty-eight (128) youth individuals were chosen in each three (3) barangays with the highest population in the City of Imus, Cavite. A total of three-hundred and eighty-four (384) responses from registered youth voters were gathered.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before gathering any data, the researchers will first seek consent from their research instructors to use the instrument in the study. The researchers use self-made survey questionnaire parallel to the objectives of the study. An organized, self-made 4-point Likert scale will be used for this study's questionnaire. Each indicator will be evaluated on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest percentage. There were three (3) parts to this survey questionnaire. The first part in this survey questionnaire is the demographic profile of the participants. The second part of the survey questionnaire contains self-made, closed-ended questionnaire statements that focus on the extent exposure to political meme culture. Third part, the items that measured socio-political awareness, each of which contains the following indicators: (a) political information; (b) societal events; and (c) political interest. The aforementioned self-made survey questionnaire is in line with the previous readings, important unpublished papers, and academic works needed for the data collection. These questions were also validated by a statistician from the University. It also seeks to obtain the study's important results about political meme culture as a political discourse and socio-political awareness among selected youth. The data gathering procedure was conducted through face-to-face interaction. The researchers will explain and discuss the directions of the survey questionnaire to the participants before they begin answering the self-made survey questionnaire. In addition, the researchers will remind the participants' their rights such as the right to refuse and withdraw their participation. Once the researchers have been given permission to conduct the study, they will distribute consent forms, which participants must sign to confirm their participation in the study.

Part 2 was composed of 15 self-made questions in relation of the statement to the problem number 2 which determined the extent exposure to political meme culture. It was answerable by a four-point Likert scale: (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) frequently, and (4) very frequently.

A. Likert Scales

Four-point Frequency Likert Scale for Extent Exposure to Political Meme Culture.

Scale Value	Verbal Interpretation	Description
1	Never	Not Exposed
2	Rarely	Slightly Exposed
3	Frequently	Moderately Exposed
4	Very Frequently	Highly Exposed

- Scale value 1 (never) signifies that the participant has never been exposed in political meme culture that discusses societal and political issues.
- Scale value 2 (rarely) signifies that the participant has been exposed to minimal political meme culture but not too frequent.
- Scale value 3 (frequently) signifies that the participant has been exposed to a reasonable amount of political meme culture, but not always.
- Scale value 4 (very frequently) signifies that the participant has been exposed to political meme culture on a regular basis.

Part 3 was composed of 15 self-made questions in relation to statement of the problem number 3. It determines the participants' level of socio-political awareness in terms of political information, societal events, and political interest.

Scale Value	Verbal Interpretation	Description
1	Low Awareness	Minimal level of recognition
2	Minimal Awareness	Limited level of recognition
3	High Awareness	Strong level of recognition
4	Very High Awareness	Exceptional level of recognition

- Scale value 1 (low awareness) means that the participant has a minimal level of socio-political awareness. It signified that the participant's awareness of socio-political issues is at the lowest acceptable level.
- Scale value 2 (minimal awareness) means that the participant has a limited level of socio-political awareness. It signified that the participant is able to grasp a piece of information beyond the most basic facts.
- Scale value 3 (high awareness) means that the participant has a strong level of socio-political awareness. It signified that the participant has a well- established comprehension of socio-political issues.
- Scale value 4 (very high awareness) means that the participant engaged has an exceptional level of socio-political awareness. It signified that the participant has an advanced stage of understanding that transcends conventional critical engagement.

Statistical Treatment

The study employed the Cochran Formula to determine the ideal sample size based on the desired level of precision. According to Cochran (1963), this formula is widely used to estimate proportions or percentages within a large population while ensuring that the sample accurately represents the target population. It is particularly appropriate for studies involving large populations because it provides a statistically reliable estimate of the minimum number of respondents needed to achieve valid and generalizable results. In this study, the Cochran Formula was utilized to determine the required sample size of the participants since the selected locales have relatively large

populations, thereby ensuring that the findings would be representative and statistically reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Extent exposure of the participant to political meme culture

This part presents the extent exposure of the participant to political meme culture. It demonstrates a measurement of the central tendency and variability of the given ten statements. The table presents the mean, standard deviation, and verbal interpretation. One of the objectives of the study is to determine the respondent's level of exposure. The extent exposure of the youth to political meme culture was discussed below:

The results unfold that Statement No. 1 got the highest mean score of 3.6. It indicates that the participants very frequently see political memes on different social media platforms. On the other hand, Statement No.5, and Statement No. 9 both got a mean score of 2.4, which means that the participants rarely engage to political meme culture.

The overall mean score of 3.03 suggested that the participants frequently see political meme culture on different social media platforms. It indicates that the youth were exposed to a reasonable amount of political meme culture. These findings imply that the youth have been frequently exposed to political meme culture and the advent of digital technologies is one of the factors. Political memes, amongst its various roles, have a major role when it comes to conveying information and giving political commentary. It plays an important part in the social life of people as it helps in forming opinions. Statements no. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 have a verbal interpretation of very frequently which implies that political memes serve as an informal but widespread method in terms of sharing political contents. Then, statements no. 8 and 10, reacting and familiarity of political meme trends as well as statements no. 5, 6, and 9, suggest that active participation such as sharing, following political meme pages, engaging in discussions are low, the frequent exposure indicates a potential for political memes to shape perspectives even passively.

Table 1. Extent exposure of the participant to political meme culture as a political discourse

STATEMENT	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
1. Sees political memes on different social media platform.	3.6	0.56	Very Frequently
2. Sees text based political memes.	3.33	0.73	Very Frequently
3. Sees video based political memes.	3.39	0.69	Very Frequently

4. Sees image based political memes.	3.46	0.68	Very Frequently
5. Follows different social media meme pages that incorporate political memes.	2.4	0.97	Rarely
6. Engage in meme discussions about political issues in social media platforms.	2.41	0.97	Rarely
7. Encounters political memes that provide humorous commentary on political figures.	3.3	0.71	Very Frequently
8. Reacts to political memes in socio-political issues.	2.77	0.96	Frequently
9. Shares political memes on various social media platforms.	2.4	0.95	Rarely
10. Familiar of various political meme trends.	3.2	0.78	Frequently
TOTAL	3.03	0.80	Frequently

Frequent exposure suggests that political memes provide a democratized space where individuals, regardless of expertise, can engage with political discourse in an informal yet impactful way. The findings indicate that the youth primarily consume political memes rather than create or actively discuss them, which may limit their impact on deeper political engagement. Although passive consumption is dominant, political memes can serve as catalysts for political activism, especially when paired with broader movements or campaigns. As political communication increasingly shifts to digital spaces, political meme-based discourse may become a recognized tool for shaping public opinion and political narratives. However, the humor and simplification inherent in political memes may lead to misinterpretation or biased portrayals of political issues. Moreover, Political meme culture may reinforce ideological bubbles, where users primarily consume content that aligns with their preexisting beliefs, reducing exposure to opposing viewpoints.

2. Level of socio-political awareness of the participant

This part presents the level of socio-political awareness of the participant. It is properly assessed from different areas, particularly the political information, societal events, and political interest. The table presents the mean, standard deviation, and verbal interpretation.

A. Political Information

Table 2 demonstrates a measurement of the central tendency and variability of the given ten statements for assessing the level of socio-political awareness of the participant in terms of political information.

The results shows that statement no. 8 got the highest mean score of 3.41. It indicates that the participants have a high level of awareness in terms of issues that affect

our country. Meanwhile, statement no. 7 which pertain to organizations involved in politics got the lowest mean score of 2.95. The overall weighted mean for the level of socio-political awareness of youth participants regarding political information is 3.09, interpreted as having a high level of awareness. This suggests that youth have a high recognition in terms of political information. Among the factors that lead to having a gap between political information of their societal events and political interest were the different ranges of ages the level of maturity, and understanding in a particular political information.

Table 2. Level of socio-political awareness of the participant in terms of political information

STATEMENT	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
1. Political processes in the country.	3.17	0.71	High Awareness
2. Government's policies and programs.	3.12	0.67	High Awareness
3. Social and political consequences of different policies.	3.08	0.7	High Awareness
4. Political developments in the country.	3.05	0.74	High Awareness
5. Political memes as a source of political information.	3.02	0.84	High Awareness
6. Political memes as a source of political information.	3.13	0.76	High Awareness
7. Organizations involved in political issues.	2.95	0.77	High Awareness
8. Political issues affecting the country.	3.41	0.71	High Awareness
9. Political ideologies that influence various political movements in the country.	3	0.75	High Awareness
10. Discussion on political information with family, friends, or online.	2.99	0.86	High Awareness
TOTAL	3.09	0.75	High Awareness

This shows that the youth have enough knowledge to know and understand the difference in political information that they have encountered. One reason for this heightened awareness is that they were exposed in both digital and traditional media where they can get different information that were inclined in politics. This constant connectivity allows the youth participants to see a variety of opinions and easily share their own thoughts. Along with this, many youths are also actively looking for political information because they want to understand the world better. They see that it is indeed necessary to participate in discussions that talk about social and political matters such as

poverty, educational crisis, unemployment, and many more. Due to this desire, they were urged to learn and engage which helps them become more aware of political matters.

The findings suggest that the youth are attentive to national issues, highlighting the importance of civic education in developing informed and responsible citizens. Awareness of social and political issues helps young people understand their rights and responsibilities, strengthens civic participation, and enhances their critical thinking and understanding of community challenges. However, the results also reveal a gap in their political knowledge, particularly regarding organizations that represent marginalized sectors, indicating a need for greater awareness of these groups and their roles in society.

B. Societal Events

Table 3 demonstrates a measurement of the central tendency and variability of the given ten statements for assessing the level of socio-political awareness of the participant in terms of societal events.

The result unfolds that statement no. 1 got the highest mean score of 3.54, followed by statement no. 5 that has a 3.49 mean score. It indicates that the level of awareness of youth in terms of societal implications of corruption and status of education, healthcare employment in the country was very high. Meanwhile, statement no. 9 which pertains to familiarity in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community groups working on social issues in the Philippines got the lowest mean score of 3.

The overall weighted mean for the level of socio-political awareness among youth participants regarding societal events is 3.32, indicating a very high level of awareness. This suggests that the participants have an exceptional recognition of societal events, demonstrating their genuine concern for various issues that affect them.

Table 3. Level of socio-political awareness of the participant in terms of societal events

STATEMENT	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
1. Societal implications of corruption in the country	3.54	0.66	Very High Awareness
2. Role of social media in shaping public opinion on societal events and issues in the country.	3.45	0.66	Very High Awareness
3. Issues affecting different social groups in the country (e.g., marginalized, indigenous communities, women, youth, etc.).	3.25	0.72	Very High Awareness
4. Issues surrounding gender equality and women's rights in the country.	3.41	0.69	Very High Awareness

5. Status of education, healthcare, and employment in the country.	3.49	0.65	Very High Awareness
6. News pertaining to social justice, equality, and human rights in the country.	3.42	0.68	Very High Awareness
7. Social programs made to address public welfare issues.	3.17	0.74	High Awareness
8. Social movements and activism taking place in the country.	3.09	0.76	High Awareness
9. Familiar with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community groups working on social issues in the Philippines.	3	0.81	High Awareness
10. Discussion on social issues such as poverty, healthcare, and education in the country.	3.37	0.7	Very High Awareness
TOTAL	3.32	0.71	Very High Awareness

One primary reason for this very high level of awareness in terms of social events is that the youth witness and experience the effects of national issues on individual livelihoods. For instance, when discussing corruption, one of the most significant problems of the country, the youth become increasingly aware of how such issues profoundly impact their lives. Consequently, these challenges heighten their understanding of the substantial effects these problems have on their daily experiences. Moreover, another factor for this is the influence of their friends and family. They feel comfortable talking about social and political issues that affect their lives with these people. These open discussions help them hear different opinions and ideas, keeping them more informed about what is happening in the Philippines. Due to this, it encourages them to join and participate and believe that they can make a difference. When they see their friends standing up for what they believe in, it creates a sense of urgency and responsibility, motivating them to speak out and take action on important issues.

The findings indicate that the youth in Buhay na Tubig, Carsadang Bago II, and Pasong Buaya in Imus, Cavite have a very high level of awareness of societal events. Their understanding of important social issues enables them to voice their opinions, advocate for change, and participate in national and community discussions. This high level of awareness also empowers them to engage in civic activities, foster a sense of social responsibility, and contribute to addressing community challenges and promoting positive social development.

C. Political Interest

Table 4 demonstrates a measurement of the central tendency and variability of the given ten statements for assessing the level of socio-political awareness of the participant in terms of political interest.

As shown in the table, statement no. 6 got the highest mean score of 3.45. It indicates that the participants have a very high level of awareness when it comes to the challenges that the Philippine government faces in terms of corruption and governance.

On the other hand, statement no. 5 which pertains to the existence of different marginalized political parties/organizations in the country got the lowest mean score of 3. The overall weighted mean for the level of socio-political awareness among youth participants is 3.21, indicating that they have a high level of political interests. This shows that these youth have a strong understanding of what matters to them politically.

Table 4. Level of political interest

STATEMENT	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
1. Role of social media in shaping political opinions and spreading political messages.	3.42	0.69	Very High Awareness
2. Role of political dynasties in the Philippine political system.	3.18	0.76	High Awareness
3. Role of different political parties/organizations in the country.	3.14	0.74	High Awareness
4. Cultural and historical context that shapes Philippine's politics today.	3.16	0.71	High Awareness
5. Existence of different marginalize political parties/organizations in the country.	3	0.8	High Awareness
6. Challenges that Philippine government faces in terms of corruption and governance.	3.45	0.7	Very High Awareness
7. Candidates involved in the political race.	3.38	0.74	Very High Awareness
8. Legislative process on which how laws are passed in the Philippines.	3.04	0.74	High Awareness
9. Issues surrounding accountability of public officials in the Philippines, including government investigation and reforms	3.26	0.77	Very High Awareness
10. Key legislative bills, laws, or reforms being discussed or passed in the Philippines Congress.	3.08	0.76	High Awareness
TOTAL	3.21	0.74	High Awareness

Youth political interest is essential because it encourages young people to express their views, participate in policymaking, and engage in issues that affect their lives. Increased access to information through various media enhances their awareness of political issues and exposes them to diverse perspectives, helping them develop informed opinions. Participation in local government initiatives and political activities further strengthens their understanding of political processes and motivates active civic engagement. The findings indicate that the youth in Buhay na Tubig, Carsadang Bago II, and Pasong Buaya in Imus, Cavite demonstrate a high level of political interest, suggesting that they are well-informed about political matters and motivated to remain engaged in civic affairs.

Table 5 demonstrates the summary table to assess the overall level of socio-political awareness of the participant. The results show that in the given indicators, societal events received the highest mean with a score of 3.32 (SD = 0.71), compared to political interest with a mean of 3.21 (SD = 0.74), and political information with a mean of 3.09 (SD = 0.75). The overall summary is 3.21 (SD = 0.73), equivalent to high awareness.

Table 5. Overall level of socio-political awareness of the participant

INDICATORS	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	VERBAL INTERPRETATION	MEAN RANK
Political Information	3.09	0.75	High Awareness	3
Societal Events	3.32	0.71	Very High Awareness	1
Political Interest	3.21	0.74	High Awareness	2
TOTAL	3.21	0.74	High Awareness	

Legend:

3.25 – 4.00 = Very High Awareness
 2.50 – 3.24 = High Awareness
 1.75 – 2.49 = Minimal Awareness
 1.00 – 1.74 = Low Awareness

The findings indicate that youth are most aware of societal events because these are immediate, visible, and directly affect their daily lives, making them more likely to engage in discussions and connect these events to broader political issues. Their high level of political interest suggests a willingness to understand political developments and participate more actively in civic life. However, political information ranked the lowest, indicating that while youth are aware of current events, they are less likely to seek in-depth political knowledge or verify information, often relying on incidental learning through social media and influences from family, peers, school, and their community. This gap between societal awareness and political knowledge supports previous research, emphasizing the need for programs that strengthen political literacy and interest to promote more informed and meaningful political participation.

3. Relationship between extent exposure to political meme culture and level of socio-political awareness of the participants

The last objective of the study is to identify the relationship between the two variables. Table 6 presents the significant relationship between extent exposure to political meme culture and level of socio-political awareness of the participants. Specifically, it is properly needed to test if there is a significant connection between the extent exposure to political meme culture to the areas of political information, societal events, and political interest.

In Table 6, the relationship between these two paired variables is represented through Pearson R. It was used to measure the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two variables. The table explores how exposure to political meme culture connects to various factors, showcasing both positive and negative patterns. When looking at the significance of these numbers, they do not quite hit the mark. With p-values of 0.675, these results fall short of being statistically significant. In simpler terms, they do not provide enough evidence to confidently reject the null hypothesis.

Table 6. Relationship between extent exposure to political meme culture as a political discourse and level of socio-political awareness of the participants

VARIABLE TESTED		CORRELATION COEFFICIENT	P-VALUE	DECISION	REMARKS
Extend of Political Meme Culture	Level of Socio-Political Awareness	0.12	0.675	Failed to Reject the Null Hypothesis	Non-significant

Despite the abundance of studies suggesting that there is a positive correlation between using social media platforms as well as being exposed to various social media contents such as political memes to the socio-political awareness, this study found the other way around. The table implies that extent exposure to political memes as a political discourse have no significant relationship to the socio-political awareness among the youth in the City of Imus, Cavite, specifically, in the locales of Buhay na Tubig, Carsadang Bago II, and Pasong Buaya II where the study was conducted. It means exposure to political meme culture does not necessarily mean to affect socio-political awareness.

This implies that the youth may see and engage with political memes primarily for entertainment rather than as a source of socio-political awareness. Since political memes are designed for rapid consumption and relies on humor or satire, they may not offer the depth needed for developing an in-depth socio-political awareness. Furthermore, the youths may acquire their insights incidentally as part of their routine media consumption. Due to the prevalent passive consumption of political contents, it is possible that the youth form opinions without deliberate or reflective engagement. Their socio-political awareness might be more heavily influenced by other sources such as traditional news outlets, social media platforms with more detailed analytics, or direct community interactions. Lastly,

rather than being a primary driver of socio-political awareness, political memes might function as supplementary or peripheral content that reinforces existing knowledge rather than generating new insights.

Conclusions

This study examines the role of political meme culture in shaping the socio-political awareness of youth. While political memes have become a popular and accessible form of political communication on social media, the researchers found that young people often engage with them primarily for entertainment rather than for political learning. Their interaction with political memes is generally passive, resulting in only a superficial understanding of political issues and increasing their vulnerability to misinformation and propaganda.

The study also observed that younger participants (ages 15–18) tend to consume content from vloggers and celebrities instead of political sources, making them less likely to engage with complex socio-political discussions. Although most participants were familiar with memes, many could not identify what constitutes a political meme, suggesting that their socio-political awareness is influenced more by other credible sources than by meme culture. Overall, while political memes can encourage interest in political discourse through humor and satire, they rarely provide sufficient context for critical understanding, often reinforcing one-sided perspectives and shallow engagement with political issues.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are hereby recommended for considerations.

1. Conduct media literacy workshops to help youth critically evaluate social media content, recognize bias, verify information, and identify credible sources.
2. Organize seminars on political memes and political satire to increase awareness of these forms of online political communication through simple explanations and real-life examples.
3. Establish community forums where youth can openly discuss social and political issues, fostering critical thinking, civic participation, and respectful dialogue.
4. Expand future research to include different age groups to obtain broader perspectives and produce findings that are more useful for policymakers, educators, and community leaders.
5. Develop simpler and more concise research instruments by reducing the number of questions and using clear language to improve participant understanding, engagement, and the reliability of research findings.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The researchers made sure that, during the conduct of the study, the following ethical concerns were observed to ensure safe, ethical, transparent, and carefully conducted research:

1. All sources were properly cited, and the study was conducted free from plagiarism.
2. Participants were provided with a consent form explaining the purpose of the study and the data collection process.
3. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.
4. Participants were informed that they could skip or discontinue answering questions they found uncomfortable or inapplicable.
5. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were securely stored, with access limited only to the researchers and their adviser.
6. The data gathered and the results of the study were used solely for academic purposes.
7. Participants had the right to ask questions about the study and request a copy of the research findings by providing their contact information.

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aldrin.baes@cvsu.edu.ph