VMC ANALYTIKS

OPEN ACCESS

From Belief to Action: Political Efficacy as Predictor of Social Media Political Participation Among Students

Kathlyn Princess V. Cadeliña, ORCID No. 0009-0003-4610-6089

Master of Arts in Political Science, Political Science Department, University of the Cordilleras, Baguio City, Philippines

Abstract

The impressive rise of social media has made political participation through digitally networked avenues more prevalent. In exploring universities and youth political engagement, it can be concluded that the youth have started to create a voice and began participating in politics in ways they know. Using explanatory sequential mixed method, this study investigated the level of political efficacy (PE) and the extent of social media political participation (SMPP) of student voters. It also determined the relationship between PE and SMPP. This is to examine how their PE plays a role in better understanding their participatory habits and conclude an explanation in the youth's political engagement through the platform. The study has determined that there is a moderate positive relationship between the overall level of PE and overall extent of SMPP among student voters. Based on the findings, it is recommended to promote strategies that enhance student's PE and SMPP in order to cultivate well-informed individuals who are equipped to express their political views in a healthy and constructive manner.

Keywords: belief, action, political efficacy, social media, social media political participation, student voters

INTRODUCTION

Through various research, young people are seen to have insufficient engagement in politics. One reason for the low level of political participation is the definition of what political and political behavior is. The youth may not define their actions as political even though they are really political, and they may not be aware of doing something political due to their own conception of politics or the political (Weiss, 2020). Quintelier (2007) states in his study that "the low political participation rate among youth is a by-product of their narrow conception of politics and their impression that politicians do not truly care about their needs" (p.169). This then concludes that the disengagement of the youth to political participation is not because of their lack of interest but because of the result of the organization of politics.

Youth have increasing levels of veering away from mainstream political participation. In recent contemporary research, there is an ongoing trend in the immense change in the meaning of political participation, especially among young people since their engagement in political activities greatly differs from what society was used to. The older generation, most often than not, narrowly views politics as institutional, however, young people see signs of politics in all aspects of their everyday civil lives incorporated in the smallest choices they do every single day (Amnå & Eckman, 2013; Quintelier & Vissers, 2008). The re-conceptualization of youth political participation over the years led to a better understanding that the everyday "transient and self-expressive" ways of participating in politics of young people can be considered as acts that can be relevant to politics (Harris, Wyn, and Younes, 2010, p.13) thus recognizing the significance of youth online interaction whether it be individual or collective in nature (Allaste & Cairns, 2017; Tiindenberg & Allaste, 2016). The introduction of digital platforms paved the way for the increase in the participation of the youth since it became a means to connect these young people with political issues and to help support activism (Castells, 2012; Östman, 2013). However, this was also critiqued to be replaced by traditional and fundamental forms of activism (Morozov, 2012; Ekström, Olsson, and Shehata, 2014). Bennett and Segerberg (2012) contended that digital communication technologies are not only considered to be new set of tools for politics but also present a new explanation for the formation of political identity.

Amnå and Ekman (2014) introduced the theory of "standby citizens" which served as the foundation for this research. According to this theory, "standby citizens" are young people who are considered as subdued, alert, keep themselves informed and willing to participate in politics if needed through educating themselves in the various political issues in the different contexts of everyday life. These citizens, though giving the impression of being passive, are an important quality for democracy since they have a certain combination of levels of interest, trust, and inclination in political participation. In the age of the internet, Bakardjieva (2009) presented the theory of "sub-activism" which was integrated in this research. This refers to the progression of politics in a subjective level embedded and experienced in the everyday flow of an individual's life that are composed of small-scale and individual decisions and actions based on frame of references that are either political or ethical or even a combination of the two.

This research seeks to shed light on the dearth of studies on the effects of political efficacy on the changing modes of political participation through social media, specifically on young people. The importance of this research is to better understand the patterns of indirect participation of the young Filipino electorate as a consequence of their perception in their ability to influence the government. In addition, not much study has been conducted in measuring the relationship between political efficacy and social media political participation of student voters enrolled in higher education institutions.

LITERATURES

According to Wright (1981), as cited by Schulz (2005), citizens with high levels of efficacy are most often viewed as a desirable factor in democracy's stability. He further discussed that the citizens should feel that they influence the actions of their government, most specifically in modern democratic societies. During childhood and adolescence, particularly in the process of political socialization, having political efficacy is viewed as a decisive factor for the participation

and activeness of a citizen in a democracy, eminently in the future (Schulz, 2005). Traditionally, political efficacy is measured in two dimensions, namely internal and external. As the predominant view within political science today, this study adopted the concept from Miller, Miller, and Schneider (1980) stating that internal efficacy "indicates individuals' self-perception that they are capable of understanding politics and competent enough to participate in political acts such as voting" (p. 253) while external efficacy "measures expressed beliefs about political institutions rather than perceptions about one's own abilities. The lack of external efficacy indicates the belief that the public cannot influence political outcomes because government leaders and institutions are unresponsive" (p. 253). However, Haenschen, Collier, and Tedesco (2022) included political information efficacy, which was developed by Kaid, McKinney, and Tedesco (2007) and acquired from the construct of internal efficacy, in their assessment of political efficacy which showed the perception and confidence of individuals in their political knowledge. This study focused on the constructs of politics that refers to the activities that are influencing policies and campaigning for a candidate and government which refers to the national governing authorities and institutions.

Moreover, this research partially adopted the "Social Media Political Participation Scale" by Waeterloos, Walrave, and Ponnet established in 2021 that fits the platform affordances of Facebook. This scale is composed of themes which are latent, expressive, follower, and counter forms of engagement. Only latent, expressive, and follower forms of engagement were adopted in this research. Latent engagement acknowledges the forms of participation that are latent and cognitive as political behaviors thus referring to the varying behaviors that are reflected to be cognitive engagement through seeking and consuming information. They can be classified as "pre-political actions" that implies involvement in issues that are social and political but often not directly aimed to influence other people and not necessarily be active in the creation and

reproduction of content. Next is the expressive engagement which refers to the several visible and expressive behaviors that are purposely for the audience in digital platforms, specifically focused on content creation, which is composed of four subthemes namely public, group, private, and platform driven. This theme encompasses the acts of commenting, sharing, and liking. Follower engagement presents forms of engagement similar to expressive but requires action from the user which is not necessarily seen as instigation nor creation of content. In this research, follower engagement was retained while counter engagement was removed due to the controversial characteristics in this type of behavior considered to be "anti-social." Furthermore, this study utilized the "Social Media Political Participation" concept which captures the engagement of the youth in politics through social media by using "alternative voicing routes" and exploring the various ways young people utilize social media to inform, express, and influence other people, both citizens and government, on political and social issues (Waterloos, Walrave, & Ponnet, 2021). The scale is a valid and reliable instrument that describes the way people today utilize social media to be able to make themselves informed and be able to express and possibly influence and exert pressure on the actors and institutions of the government.

Amin (2010), as cited by Allaste and Saari (2020), argued that the participation of young individuals using social media was not merely spontaneous "clickism" and a question of private or individual actions rather it was a confirmation that the youth were conscious of the social and public elements of the media in which they interact and participate. Allaste and Saari (2020) also contended that even if the political participation via social media looked like estrangement in the surface, when looked more into, signs of taking sides and choosing positions by the utilization of the different online means in the various ways of interacting in Facebook can be detected. These interactions can lead to changes in the political arena, whether they are small or large on a scale.

Most studies across literature focused on the correlation between political efficacy and only on the utilization of social media as a method for political participation. It is widely known in past studies that internal efficacy and offline participation tend to have a positive relationship, and that internal efficacy has a stronger association with offline engagement than external efficacy (Chamberlain, 2012). However, in the results of the study of Oser et al. (2022), which is a multilevel meta-analysis on the relationship of political efficacy and online and offline participation, it showed that political efficacy is positively associated with both online and offline political participation. It also emphasized that there is evidence of the strong association of political efficacy and online political participation and that it has been stable over the years and even across the differing contexts of various countries around the world. In the study of Chaniago (2021), it appears that increased social media use and increased political efficacy help shape the decisions among new voters in school students and higher education students in Malaysia.

METHODS

The explanatory sequential design was specifically used for this study. This involved two phases that started with the quantitative methodology. This was used to collect the numerical data which were subjected to statistical analysis. Then followed by the qualitative methodology which allowed the participants to explain further the reason behind the results of their level of efficacy and the extent of their participation. In this process the qualitative data expounded the results found out in the first phase which involved the outcomes that were markedly different from the others (Toyon, 2021). Two survey questionnaires and validated semi-structured interviews were utilized in collecting data. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the forty-five (45) university student participants from Isabela State University with age ranging from 18 – 30 years old and who publicly posted on Facebook during the campaign period of the last national elections. The researcher started by undertaking content validity and reliability of

the instruments. They were analyzed on the extent to which the content of the implementation of each concept was expressed in each item. The first set of items in the questionnaire is the Political Efficacy Scale which was partially adopted from the study of Haenschen et al. (2022). This answered the first subproblem of the study. Three constructs were used namely Internal Political Efficacy, Political Information Efficacy, and External Political Efficacy. The second set of items in the questionnaire answered the second subproblem. This study partially adopted the "Social Media Political Participation Scale" from the study of Waeterloos et al. (2021). It captured the political participation of the participants through social media, specifically Facebook. The students were required to answer all the items of the said questionnaires.

In conducting the interview, the researcher and the participants picked a preferred location for the interview to take place. Participants were informed that their participation within the study was voluntary in which they might decline or stop the interview at any time. If the participant was not available, the researcher asked the participants for another time and in case of an emergency or if the participant was not available, the researcher asked for another time to meet. Moreover, participants were given a copy of the interview questions after carefully reading, signing, and keeping a copy of the consent form. In addition, participants were informed that their interview will be recorded using the researcher's mobile phone, and that the recording will be put in a guarded device to ensure confidentiality. Upon completion of the study, the data were deleted from the electronic device.

RESULTS

This section presents a discussion of the gathered data on two distinct phases: a preliminary quantitative phase presenting statistically significant outcomes and a qualitative phase elaborating the reasons for the occurrence of these results.

Table 1 reveals that the student voters in the university have high levels of political efficacy. The respondents have the highest level of efficacy in subscale information efficacy (3.75). The next subscale, internal efficacy, is just a point lower (3.74). Only a moderate level of external efficacy (3.10) was shown by the respondents.

Table 1
Level of Political Efficacy

Dimension	Mean	Level
Internal Efficacy	3.74	High
Information Efficacy	3.75	High
External Efficacy	3.10	Moderate
Overall	3.53	High

In the two dimensions, the respondents have high levels of internal efficacy and information efficacy while in the third subscale, external efficacy, the respondents only exhibited a moderate level of efficacy. Nonetheless, the overall political efficacy of the respondents still stayed at a high level with an overall mean of 3.53.

In the results of the interviews, respondents with high levels of internal efficacy stated that they think they are qualified to participate in politics because their views and decisions cannot be influenced merely by other people and that they have the capability to find out more about relevant political information. It is apparent that competence starts with confidence in oneself together with the importance of trusting one's own capabilities and being able to decide on your own and standing firm with it. Respondent-39 explicitly stated that *"I'm confident that I'm qualified as a voter because I'm at the age where I'm no longer easily influenced by others. For example, just because a candidate is favored by my parents or friends, it doesn't mean that I'll vote for them too. It's like I need to scrutinize the candidates; I need to study their causes, their advocacies, because in the end, who will benefit from that? It will still be me."*

With regard to the high levels of information efficacy, the respondents' confidence in their

competence to participate in politics was because they acquired knowledge about politics through attending their past schools and their current university. Several of the respondents have stated that they think they are qualified to participate in politics because topics and various issues about politics were learned from their respective schools. Respondent-6 stated that *"I believe I am educated enough when it comes to technical jargons in politics since I have been a journalist since grade school."* In addition, Respondent-32 emphasized the great influence of political information accessed through social media as it was utilized to critique the candidates during the campaign period, especially that not all the information in the platform was true. He also stated that his generations' exposure to social media and technology had been a huge advantage in identifying what information to believe. He divulged that *"For me, the proper use of social media is important in acquiring information because it helps us criticize the candidates, especially during campaign period where substantial information about them was widespread but some of those weren't true. Since our generation is very exposed to social media/technology, it became an advantage for us to truly know what information we must believe and not.*

In relation to the moderate level in external efficacy, a number of respondents stated that when it comes to listening, it can be seen that the government sometimes listens and sometimes they do not. Respondent-43 shared that *"And when it comes to listening to the people, sometimes yes, sometimes no. Because there are government programs to address poverty and hunger, they do provide aid, but it's not enough, so sometimes they are not really listening."* It is admitted that the government has a wide array of roles that need to be performed. It is up to them how to come up with strategies that will make sure that all the citizens' needs are met.

On the other hand, respondents exhibited a moderate level of frequency in terms of participating in politics using social media with an overall mean of 3.40. Same level also emerged in two subscales, namely Expressive Engagement (3.23) and Follower Engagement (2.93). However, in the remaining subscale, Latent Engagement, high level of frequency was shown by the respondents with a mean of 4.12.

Table 2
Extent of Overall Social Media Political Participation

Dimension	Mean	Frequency
Latent Engagement	4.12	High
Follower Engagement	2.93	Moderate
Expressive Engagement	3.23	Moderate
Overall	3.40	Moderate

The high extent of latent engagement obtained in the results was explained by the respondents as an advantage of their utilization of social media for political participation. Respondent-26 conforms with this as he made sure to keep updated with political issues as there are many sides and comments circulating on the platform. He stated that *"Keep updated on the issues. Personally, because when there are issues on social media, there are so many sides, so many comments, so personally, what I do is— I get my sources from official news outlets."* With their eagerness and curiosity with information about the political arena of the country during the campaign period, they used its benefit to acquire more knowledge about the various candidates even to the point that they check it all as they deem it as important in choosing the best one. Moreover, not only information about the candidates is what they seek for, respondents also looked into the various primary issues in the country, as well as differing perspectives about it.

There are only a few of the respondents who have been vocal about the groups and organizations they have joined and interacted with on Facebook during the campaign period as reflected in the moderate extent of follower engagement shown in the outcome. Even though that they are only few in number, they acknowledged the fact that they used this for the benefit of others. Respondent-2 shared that *"Because personally, my volunteer work and being active in groups on social media also play*

a big role. Social media is a big factor in encouraging and educating others."

Moreover, in relation to the extent of expressive engagement, most respondents stated that they used social media, together with in-person interaction, to be able to express and be vocal with their political views. Respondent-28 even said that *"For me, it's just about balance. The way I'm vocal in person, that's also how vocal I am on social media because I want to balance the information I share. If I come across someone I can convince, I will do it, and it's the same on social media—if I'm chatting with someone, I'll try to convince them the same way I would in person. On social media, there are times when I just post, but there are also times when I really engage and reply, so that we both become more knowledgeable about that topic."* It is apparent that self-expression is one of the reasons why social media is utilized by the youth. This was also done by the student voters in their participation in politics as it was a way to make their views, beliefs, and opinions known to others aside from face-to-face interactions. However, negativity and toxicity were also present in the utilization of social media during the campaign period, which became one of the reasons why the result was only moderate. This was experienced by Respondent-32 which made him decide to lessen his involvement in politics through the platform so as not to contribute to this. He said that *"...not too much on social media because during the campaign period, social media was very toxic for me. People had different perspectives, and it reached a point where they were fighting with each other online. I really didn't get involved in that. If I ever used social media back then, it was just to share platforms or the good things that candidates did, because I didn't want to contribute to the toxicity."*

Table 3
Relationship of the Level of Political Efficacy and Extent of Social Media Participation

Variable	r	Sig	Findings	Interpretation
Overall Political Efficacy				
Overall Social Media Participation	.46	.00	Significant	Moderate

Results of the Pearson correlation analysis reveal that there is a moderate positive relationship between overall political efficacy and overall social media participation, $r = .46$, $p < .05$. In general, the perception of an individual that they have sufficient control over the political processes and their overall social media political participation has a significant relationship. It demonstrates that as the level of political efficacy increases, the extent of social media political participation also increases.

The scope of social media is undeniably wide range in the contemporary world. The respondents were acquainted with this thus utilizing it, together with their capabilities and knowledge in politics, for the benefit of others. *"When it comes to platforms, the most influential one is definitely the internet. So, I rely on the internet to raise my voice, to help people or to make sure my opinions are heard"*, said Respondent-33. This is why he maximized this to voice out his views and opinions to be able to be heard and be of help to other people.

Other respondents looked into other perspectives. Respondent-9 affirmed the importance of having knowledge first in politics through research before doing engagements like commenting, sharing, and liking in Facebook. However, this is because when in arguments and discussions on the platform about it, usually she did not know the people behind the accounts she engaged with and sometimes it might hurt other people if the arguments are not rational. She explicitly stated that *"You should know something about politics first, do your research on politics before commenting, sharing, or liking things on Facebook. Because, like I said, we don't really know the people on social media, right, ma'am? So, later on, you might say something inappropriate, even attack someone, and you wouldn't know how that attack could affect that person."*

DISCUSSION

Level of Political Efficacy. The students of the present society have high levels of overall political efficacy. In particular, there are high

levels of internal efficacy and information efficacy and a moderate level of external efficacy. The high levels of internal efficacy were proven to be caused by trust in own capabilities and education while high levels of information efficacy were demonstrated to be generated from the utility of social media as a source of political knowledge. The moderate level of external efficacy was brought about by the perception of the student voters that still acknowledge ample responsiveness of the government.

The high levels of overall political efficacy and its dimensions of the student voters confirm the study of Kovacheva (2005) who stated that the political awareness of a person begins during their youth. This implies that even if a person is still in their younger years, confidence in their competence to effectively comprehend and participate in politics begins to develop already. Respondent-39's statement also supports the claim of Cheng and Jacobs (2019) who affirmed that students see themselves as persons who have the capacity to repair their community by fostering social actions to address its current social problems. With the high level of internal efficacy exhibited by the respondents, it can be concluded that even as university students, through their confidence in their own capabilities and volition, they can be able to influence in aiding the current societal problems of the country. The statement from Respondent-6 also supports the claim of Bandura (1997) who argued that the experiences in activities of individuals who are still students have a partial effect on the development of their control beliefs in politics. Similarly, it affirms the research of Morell (2003) who divulged that there is a positive association between internal efficacy and education. Moreover, it confirms the results of the study of Hagelin (2019) which disclosed that education increases the level of internal efficacy among university students. This then implies that education and experiences in student activities do have an effect to the increase of internal efficacy among individuals in higher education.

Moreover, Respondent-32's statement affirms the research of Wofsfeld et al. (2016) which

concluded that social media contributed to a richer political information repertoire thus having the possibility of deeper and more meaningful political participation. This further implies that the usage of the social media platform increases the political knowledge of an individual, most especially, at the present state of the society with its technological developments. Thus, in line with education, social media can be utilized as an additional tool to increase the political awareness and knowledge of the students. It also conformed with the study of Stanley (2017) which asserted that across various studies of the level of political efficacy among the youth, they had been known to have lower sense of political efficacy compared to the older generations. This implies that in the present day, the younger generation was able to improve their sense of political efficacy which, as presented in the results of the study, already increased as they felt that they were more informed in politics than the majority of the people in the country seeing as the ages of the respondents fell under the youth category. This suggests that it is important to keep this increase through constant political education and keeping updated with the issues in the political situation of the country to keep them more informed.

This corroborates with the claims of Zhang et. al (2009) who stated that social media is a tool that can aid voters to learn more about various political candidates thus in turn also increases their level of political participation. In addition, it supports the argument of Hassan et al. (2021) which stated that the increased use of social media and increased level of political efficacy aid in shaping the decision-making process among new voters in school students and higher education students. Thus, suggesting that the use of social media is an integral part of acquiring information about political issues and political candidates that further increases the information efficacy of the student voters.

On the other hand, Respondent-43's statement reflects the report of the Global State of Democracy Indices from 2013-2022 of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance on the decline in the

democratic performance of the country. On the other hand, it somehow conforms with the argument of the Philippine Social Science Council (2003) that the Filipino youth are cynical of the government, political institutions, and political processes in the Philippines. However, the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative parts of this research that shows that the Filipino youth somehow still acknowledges that the government is doing some of its role of being responsive to the necessities of its electorate. Therefore, it implies that there has been a slight positive change in the perception of the youth towards the responsiveness of the government to the demands of the citizens.

Based on the findings, since both the levels of internal efficacy and information efficacy were already high, the encouragement of ways to increase external efficacy is recommended. With the sizeable percentage for public vote, concerted efforts should be made to guide the students on how to navigate their individual ideas and feelings regarding politics and government. Moreover, get the youth more involved with voicing out their opinions like joining advocacy groups through utilizing the advantages of social media for the purpose of making them feel, seen, and listened to. This may show them that their voices can have more significant impacts on the society. In addition, inclusion of topics and discussions about political education, issues, and the government is vital and is recommended for educators teaching in all the colleges for the students to acquire more knowledge and awareness to increase their various forms of political efficacy.

Extent of Social Media Political Participation. The respondents exhibited a moderate overall level of extent of social media political participation. In terms of its subscales, the student voters have high extent of latent engagement as compared to the moderate levels of follower engagement and expressive engagement. High extent of latent engagement lead by the eagerness of the respondents to acquire more knowledge and awareness about politics. On the other hand, moderate levels of follower engagement and expressive

engagement resulted tradition such as involvement in groups, being vocal in political expression to convince others, avoiding negativity, strained family ties, and inclination to traditional forms of participation.

The results aver the study of Quintelier (2007) which holds that young adults have a tendency to participate more in non-institutionalized forms of political participation. Additionally, the findings are parallel to the outcomes of the studies of Boulianne (2020) and Theocharis (2015) in which they confirmed that there is an increase in the utilization of the social media platform as a means of political participation among the youth resulting to an increase in levels of online political engagement. Hence, an evident increase is established in the political participation using social media platform among the youth.

However, in the specific results per subscale, the results contradict the findings of the study of Dayrit et. al (2022) on a cross-sectional study involving the use of social media political participation in relation to gender, digital profile, and social media competence among Filipino college students wherein the results showed that the respondents have low levels of counter, follower, and expressive engagement while a moderate level for latent engagement. The result of this study shows improvements on the levels of engagement of Filipino college students showing a high level of latent engagement and moderate levels of follower and expressive engagements. Nonetheless, it is still important to take note that among the subscales, both of the study have similar results of higher latent engagement than the rest of the other types of engagement. Furthermore, the National Youth Commission's (2010) claim that the Filipino youth, even though they are involved in elections, prefer to be followers and recipients of information rather than initiators or leaders on political issues is verified by the findings of this study. It can be seen in the results that there is a higher extent of latent engagement as compared to the other two forms of engagement which are follower and expressive engagements.

The statement of Respondent-10 corroborates with the study of Bennett and Segerberg (2012) arguing that acts that partakes in public action and contributes to a certain objective was the outcome of idea-sharing and acts done within the online platform were not expressions of collective identity that was pre-existing but were acts of individual expression and acknowledging self-validation. Thus, it implies that the acts done by the respondents in follower engagement, no matter the level, were still relevant in the increase and decrease of their political efficacy which can contribute to the stability and rise of future forms of follower engagement. Thus, it is important to encourage and recognize the students in beginning or continuing actions such as these to improve their extent of follower engagement. Nonetheless, it suggests that there is also no significant difference in the extent of these types of engagement when the students are grouped according to age after validating their Facebook posts.

Since social media is not solely for expression of views and opinions, other people use the platform just to obtain political knowledge and awareness. Respondent-26's statement somehow opposes the result of the study of Highton and Woldfinger (2001) which revealed that the youth does not perceive political participation as a priority compared to pressing personal concerns. The dedication to find out more and the current knowledge and awareness about the issues and topics in the political arena of the country as reflected in the responses of the student voters says otherwise. Moreover, it counters the argument of Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) stating that there is no significant correlation between the use of social media for obtaining political information about current issues and political efficacy and political involvement. It is evident in the responses of the student voters that their utilization of social media helps them to research, to educate themselves, and be aware of the political issues happening around them. It implies that the use of social media is effective in obtaining political information thus in turn resulting to a form of political engagement which is in this case, latent engagement.

Respondent-28's words support the results of the study of Cabo (2018) showing that the young individual in the country believes that political participation can be a means of empowerment to act and help in making an impact on social and political change through observing the behavior of the candidates, being conscientious voters, and educating other people like their families and friends. This is parallel to the responses from the student voters that pertains to voicing out opinions and breaking their silence to educate and spread awareness to the people around them. This implies that with this reason, increase in expressive engagement in social media is evident. This also supports the claim of Theocharis and Quintelier (2016) who disclosed that acts such as posting, commenting, and joining groups in social media have a "democratic value" because of its potential in making people get involved in types of engagement that can be parallel to traditional definitions of political participation. In the responses of the student voters, it can be inferred that joining groups in social media does have democratic value as it made the respondents engage more in politics through both offline and online participation.

On the other hand, Respondent-32's statement is a reflection of the findings of the study of Allaste and Saari (2020) showing that the participation of the youth ranges from approaches envisaged as very optimistic to highly critical as it can be seen in the responses of the student voters that they do not involve themselves in social media political participation without looking at possible circumstances that they may be facing. This may explain the moderate extent of expressive engagement in the empirical results since it is not always that the respondents engage in social media due to the inclination to steer away from torment from the disadvantageous side of the platform.

Due to accessibility of social media as an easier way for the youth to express their political stand, the current study agrees with the inference of the research of Rainsford in United Kingdom which indicated that the youth's

problem is not a matter of engagement or non-engagement but a matter of engaging in what platform. The current study suggests that since social media is the most accessible, most known, and easiest way for the youth to express their political views and opinions, it is only right to make sure that they utilize it properly. This can be improved through including in the topics and discussions in class the importance of fact checking and truthful political communication.

The result of the study shows that the youth, especially students, are moderately active in social media political participation wherein, in particular, they only have occasional active participation in terms of follower and expressive engagement. Due to the easy access to information and engagement in social media, one of the important skills that the students need to develop is the capability to decipher between real and fake news which can be learned individually or in the classroom. Educating the students the relevance of analyzing the information and thinking critically on what they acquire in these new forms of media could create well-informed students who knows how to use their voice in healthy expression of political stands and discussions.

Relationship of the Level of Political Efficacy and Extent of Social Media Participation. A moderate positive relationship means that the association between two variables is not extremely strong but is noticeable. In general, the level of perception of an individual that they have sufficient control over the political processes and their extent of overall social media political participation had a significant moderate relationship. It demonstrated that as the level of political efficacy increased, the extent of social media political participation also increased.

The quantitative results of the relationship between the overall level of political efficacy and overall extent of political participation showing a significant positive relationship contradicts the outcome of the study of Selignon (1980) and Theiss-Mores (1993) presenting a negative relationship between political efficacy and unconventional political participation. On the other hand, it corroborates with the results of the study of Oser et al. (2022) showing that there is a positive association between political efficacy and online political participation which have been stable over the years even across different context of various countries around the world. This implies that, in the present state of the contemporary world, in an individual, as the level of political efficacy increases, the extent unconventional ways of political participation also increase, in this case social media political participation. The more a person feels competent in his self in understanding and participating politics effectively, the more he engages himself in political participation in social media.

The statement of Respondent-33 is supported by the studies of Castell (2012) and Östman (2013) that asserted that an increase in the political participation of the youth was due to the introduction of digital platforms that served as a method for young people to have a connection with political issues and contribute to activism. Additionally, it somehow backs up the claim of Smith (2013) where he stated that the use of social media as a form of political participation is more preferred by the people compared to other forms of political participation. Moreover, it validates the results of the study of Sucgang (2006) which asserts that Filipinos believe that the use of media allows a faster and more convenient method of communication of sentiments to the government and other sectors of the society. This also suggests that due to the far-reaching influence of the social media platform, the overall political efficacy of the youth increases in turn increasing their social media political participation as well.

Overall, the findings of this study corroborate with Allaste and Cairns (2017) and Tiindenberg and Allaste (2010) which acknowledge the relevance of the individual or collective online interaction of the youth. It also confirms the statement of Sohl (2014) in her study in which she highlighted the importance of political efficacy as a driving force for political participation and Mead (2018) emphasizing the relevance of political efficacy as a predictor of

political participation. Similarly, the results also concur with Bernardi et al. (2022) who stressed that political efficacy is an essential requirement of democratic participation and Schulz (2005) who regarded political efficacy as a decisive factor in an individual's participation and activeness in a democracy. Furthermore, the results of the study of Cabo (2018) corroborates with the findings of this study which results showed that the Filipino youth have definite views with regards to politics, they share common political issues of national importance, and they are inclined in engaging in activities that are considered to be political.

The study has determined that there is a moderate positive relationship between the level of political efficacy and the extent of social media political participation among the student voters of Isabela. In order to strengthen the relationship between the two, students must learn that their voices are valued, respected, and understood whenever they contribute to political conversations to avoid them from feeling fear and retaliation when they speak their minds. Moreover, educators must not shy away from discussing politics and social issues in the classroom since it can develop democratic skills among students and prepare them for civic life. This can increase the levels of political efficacy and in turn increase their engagement with politics and government.

The overall results of this research also prove that the current generation of young voters can be considered as "standby citizens" from the theory of Amnå and Ekman (2013). In the findings of the relationship between the levels of the three subscales of political participation and the extent of the three subscales of social media political participation, it is evident that these young people are subdued, alert, keep themselves informed and willing to participate with regards to politics, if necessary, by means of educating themselves. Subdued as seen in the high level of latent engagement, alert as observed in the moderate extent of expressive engagement, keep themselves informed as demonstrated by the high level of information efficacy, and willing to participate as reflected by the high extent of overall social media political participation.

Additionally, it further supports the claim of Aman and Ekman (2013) that the activeness in participating in politics of the youth is due to the reasons which are sense of duty, relevance of at stake issues, being asked to join in, efficacy or the felling that they can be able to make a difference, effectiveness or the assumption that their actions will work, and meaningfulness or the feeling that that their acts will improve their life satisfaction and self-realization. These are reflected in the various themes extracted from the responses of the student voters. These reasons, when summed up, are incorporated in the three subscales of political efficacy as investigated in this current study. Thus, it implies that the higher the level of the sense of duty, the relevance of at stake issues, being asked to join in, the efficacy or the felling that they can be able to make a difference, the effectiveness or the assumption that their actions will work, and the meaningfulness or the feeling that that their acts will improve their life satisfaction and self-realization then these will result in increased extent of political participation from the youth which further supports the study of the researcher.

REFERENCES

Allaste, A.A., & Saari, K. (2020). Social Media and Participation in Different Socio-political Contexts: Cases of Estonia and Finland. YOUNG, 28(2), 138–156. https://doi.org/10.1177/1103308819828879

Amnå E. & Ekman J. (2014). Standby citizens: diverse faces of political passivity. European Political Science Review, 6, pp 261-281 doi:10.1017/S175577391300009X

Bakardjieva, M. (2009). Subactivism: Lifeworld and politics in the age of the internet. The Information Society, 25(2), 91–104.

Bernardi, L., Mattila, M., Papageorgiou, A., & Rapeli, L. (2022). Down but not yet out: Depression, political efficacy, and voting. Political Psychology, 44(2), 217–233. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12837

Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2012). The logic of connective action: The personalization of contentious politics. Information, Communication & Society, 15(5), 739–768.

Boulianne, S. (2020). Twenty years of digital media effects on civic and political participation. Communication Research, 47(7), 947–966. http://doi.org/10.1177/0093650218808186

Cabo, W. (2018). Youth and Political Participation in the Philippines: Voices and Themes from a Democracy Project. Journal of Politics and Governance, 8(1), 259–271. Retrieved from https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jopag/article/view/123298

Castells, M. (2012). Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the internet age. Oxford: Polity Press

Cheng, Y., & Jacobs, J. M. (2019). Urban custodians and hospitable citizens: citizenship and social actions at two liberal arts universities in Hong Kong and Shanghai. Space and Polity. doi: 10.1080/13562576.2019.1670053

Dayrit, J. C., Albao, B. T., & Cleofas, J. V. (2022). Savvy and woke: Gender, Digital Profile, social media competence, and political participation in gender issues among young Filipino netizens. Frontiers in Sociology, 7. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2022.966878

Ekström, M., Olsson, T., & Shehata, A. (2014). Spaces for public orientation? Longitudinal effects of internet use in adolescence. Information, Communication & Society, 17(2), 168–183.

Haenschen, K., Collier, J. R., & Tedesco, J. C. (2022). The Impact of News Trust and Scandal Knowledge on Political Efficacy. American Behavioral Scientist, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642211062867

Hassan, M. S., Ridzuan, A. R., A'zmi, A. A., Chaniago, R. H., & Allam, S. N. S. (2021). Social Media Use and Political Efficacy: Structural Effect of the Voting Decision of New Voters. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 11(6), 1827–1841. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v11-i6/10205

Kaid, L. L., McKinney, M. S., & Tedesco, J. C. (2007). Introduction: Political information efficacy and young voters. American Behavioral Scientist, 50(9), 1093–1111. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764207300040.

Kovacheva, S. (2005). Will Youth Rejuvenate the Patterns of Political Participation? In Revisiting Youth Political Participation. pp. 19-28. Retrieved from http://pjpeu.coe.int/documents/1017993/1380104/%20Revisiting_youth_politica.pdf/5476c081-1a5d-4139-96f7-2ada7bcc2766

Kushin, M. J., & Yamamoto, M. (2010). "Did Social Media Really Matter? College Students' Use of Online Media and Political Decision Making in the 2008 Election." Mass Communication and Society 13:5, 608–30

Mead, S. M. (2018), "Efficacy and political participation: how can I make a difference?". Graduate Research Theses & Dissertations. 2815.

https://huskiecommons.lib.niu.edu/allgr
aduatethesesdissertations/2815

Morozov, E. (2012). The net delusion: The dark side of internet freedom. New York, NY: Public Affairs.

Östman, J. (2013). When private talk becomes public political expression: Examining a practice- field hypothesis of youth political development. Political Communication, 30(3), 601–619.

Quintelier, E. (2007). Differences in political participation between young and old people. Contemp. Politics 13, 165–180. doi: 10.1080/13569770701562658

Rainsford, E. (2017). Exploring youth political activism in the United Kingdom: what makes young people politically active in different organisations? Br. J. Politics Int. Relations 19, 790–806. doi: 10.1177/1369148117728666

Sucgang, E. P. (2006). Typology and Correlates of Political Participation Among Filipinos. Philippine Journal of Psychology, 39(2), 31–65.

Theocharis, Y. (2015). The conceptualization of digitally networked participation. Social Media + Society, 1(2), 205630511561014. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115610140

Theocharis, Y., & Quintelier, E. (2016). Stimulating citizenship or expanding entertainment? The effect of Facebook on adolescent participation. New Media & Society, 18(5), 817–836.

Toyon, M. A. (2021). Explanatory sequential design of Mixed Methods Research: Phases and challenges. International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147- 4478), 10(5), 253–260. https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v10i5.1262

Weiss, J. (2020). What is youth political participation? literature review on youth political participation and political attitudes. Frontiers in Political Science, 2. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2020.00001

Waeterloos, C., Walrave, M., & Ponnet, K. (2021). Designing and validating the social media political participation scale: An instrument to measure political participation on social media. Technology in Society, 64, 101493. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2020.101 49

Wolfsfeld, G., Yarchi, M., & Samuel-Azran, T. (2016). Political information repertoire and political participation. New Media & Society, 18(9), 2096–2115.

Zhang, W., Johnson, T., Seltzer T., & Bichard, S. (2009). "The Revolution Will be Networked: The Influence of Social Networking Sites on Political Attitudes and Behavior." Social Science Computer Review 0:00, 1–13