

Youth in Politics: A Scoping Review on the Political Behavior and Preferences of Young Filipino Voters (2000-2023)

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ABSTRACT

This scoping review mapped out the political behavior and preferences of young Filipino voters, a crucial demographic in the Philippines' electoral landscape. Synthesizing findings from (26) twenty-six studies published over the last two decades, the review identified vital factors influencing young voters' electoral choices, including social media engagement, peer influence, political ideology, socioeconomic factors, candidate characteristics, and educational background. The reviewed studies employ various methodological approaches, such as qualitative interviews and quantitative analyses. However, only (7) seven theoretical frameworks were identified across all (26) twenty-six studies. Despite a growing scholarly interest in youth participation in democratic processes, significant gaps remain in the literature. These include the need for empirical studies on the motivations behind voting choices, investigations into how preferences translate into sustained political engagement, an examination of what and how political ideologies manifest in behaviors, and longitudinal research on how these preferences evolve with socio-political changes. Moreover, the review will contribute to existing knowledge by mapping current research and offering recommendations for future studies aimed at enhancing political engagement strategies tailored to young Filipinos.

Keywords: Young Filipino Voters, Political Behavior, Electoral Preferences, Youth Engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Elections are a crucial component of democratic practices, serving as the primary means through which citizens exercise their rights and responsibilities in shaping governance. In the Philippines, this electoral process is enshrined in the 1987 Constitution, which emphasizes the importance of popular participation following years of authoritarian rule. The Constitution ensures that every citizen has the right to vote and be represented, emphasizing that elections embody the collective voice of the electorate and reflect the diverse perspectives within society. Democratic participation is not only a right but also a vital mechanism for accountability and social change, allowing voters to choose their leaders directly and reinforcing the principle that government authority derives from the consent of the governed (Dahl, 1989). As such, understanding the complexities of voter behavior and preferences is essential for fostering a robust democracy that truly represents the will of its people, particularly in a nation where political engagement is influenced by a multitude of factors.

Political behavior is a critical concept in understanding how individuals engage with political systems, particularly in the context of voting and electoral participation. According to Karp and Banducci (2007), it encompasses the actions, attitudes, and decisions that individuals make regarding political processes, including how they form opinions and participate in democratic activities. In this sense, political behavior is not merely about casting a vote; it also involves the motivations behind those votes and the broader implications for governance and policymaking (Karp & Banducci, 2007).

Political preferences, on the other hand, refer to the inclinations or choices individuals express regarding political candidates, parties, or policies. These preferences are shaped by various factors, including personal beliefs, societal influences, and contextual circumstances (Mason, 2018). For instance, political ideology plays a significant role in guiding electoral choices, as individuals align their preferences with candidates who reflect their values and principles.

In the Philippines, the political participation of youth is particularly noteworthy given their substantial representation in the electorate—approximately one-third of voters in both the 2019 and 2022 Philippine elections (Batara et al., 2022). This demographic's engagement is not merely a statistical detail; it signifies a powerful force capable of influencing the future of democracy in the country. According to Jorge (2022), the interest in engaging youth for political participation is significant, not only because of the potential of a "youth vote" but also because of the role that youth play in democracy and nation-building. Throughout Philippine history, generations of Filipino youth have been instrumental in critical movements that have changed social and political landscapes (Jorge, 2022). While there are mechanisms like the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) that aim to empower youth politically, there remains a gap in comprehensive literature examining their voting behavior and preferences. To date, no scoping review has been published on the voting behavior and preferences of young voters in the Philippines. Hence, this study will attempt to examine the factors affecting young voters' electoral choices and explore the implications of these factors on the political landscape.

This research focuses **on the voting behaviors and preferences of young Filipino voters in the context of recent elections**. It will attempt to examine what factors affect their electoral choices and how these factors play a significant role in shaping the electoral decisions of young Filipinos. Additionally, it will attempt to explore the implications of these factors on the voting decisions of Filipino youth, as they also affect and shape the political landscape in the Philippines.

In light of these issues, this research will attempt to address the following research question: **What exists in the current literature about the Political Behavior and Preferences of Young Filipino voters?**

By using the methodology of scoping review from the original article of **Renate Marie Butli Hårstad, The politics of animal welfare: A scoping review of farm animal welfare governance**, this article will map and attempt to analyze what has been researched in the last 20 years in political and social science about the Political Behavior and Preferences of Young Filipino voters. First, Scoping reviews are a type of literature review that aims to map the existing literature on a particular topic and identify key concepts, theories, sources of evidence, and gaps in the research (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). This method is beneficial when the research question is broad and when the aim is to identify the nature and extent of research evidence (Levac et al., 2010). By conducting a scoping review, the researchers will be able to systematically search for and synthesize the available literature on the factors influencing the voting preferences of young Filipino voters, allowing the researchers to address the research question comprehensively. This review will use the scoping review method's strengths of synthesizing existing

knowledge to provide answers to three sub-questions derived from the overall question of what exists in the current research literature on the topic of Political Behavior and Preferences of Young Filipino voters:

1. What characterizes the current literature about the political behavior of Filipino voters in terms of theoretical frameworks and methodology?
2. What are the primary factors that influence the voting preferences of young Filipino voters in recent elections?
3. What are the implications of the identified factors influencing the political behavior and preferences of young Filipino voters for electoral strategies and political engagement initiatives?

After conducting a thorough review of 78 publications related to the political behavior and preferences of young Filipino voters, 26 articles were selected for full-text analysis, forming the empirical foundation for addressing the research questions posed in this study. While literature reviews focused on youth political engagement are not novel, previous studies have primarily centered on broader electoral behaviors without explicitly addressing the unique context of young voters in the Philippines (Batara et al., 2021; Mason, 2018). This research thus contributes new insights by examining the political behavior and preferences of Filipino youth through a scoping review methodology, highlighting critical factors that shape their electoral choices and the implications for future governance.

The structure of this review is organized as follows: First, it outlines the methodological steps taken in the scoping review process, including critical decisions and limitations encountered during literature analysis. This is followed by a detailed report and synthesis of the findings, with each section directly responding to its corresponding research question. Finally, the main conclusions are summarized, discussing their significance within the broader context of political science and youth engagement in democratic processes.

METHODS

The methodology for this scoping review synthesizes the five-stage framework of Arksey and O'Malley (2005). The five stages comprise: (1) identifying the initial research questions, (2) identifying relevant studies, (3) study selection, (4) charting the data, and (5) collating, summarizing, and reporting the results. Steps 1 and 5 are outlined in the introduction and results sections, respectively, while detailed outlines for steps 2, 3, and 4.

Search Strategy

First, the search strategy involved examining existing studies related to the political behavior of young Filipino voters. In the next step, searches were conducted focusing on relevant keywords such as "young Filipino voters," "political behavior," and "voting preferences" across databases including JSTOR, Web of Science, ProQuest, Philippine E-Journals, and Google Scholar. The searches aimed for literature published from 2000 onwards to ensure relevance to recent electoral trends and behaviors.

Identifying relevant studies

The initial search gathered 78 publications. Figure A1 (see Appendix A). A systematic screening process was employed to refine the selection based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Studies were included if they focused on Filipino voting, electoral behavior, and voting preference among young Filipino voters and were published in English. Non-empirical studies or those not explicitly addressing young voters were excluded. This rigorous screening process ensured that only relevant literature was considered for further analysis.

The selection process was iterative and involved multiple rounds of screening. In the first round, not Philippine-based literature, duplicates, and non-English publications were removed. The first round excluded 27 publications. The second round involved reading titles and abstracts to exclude irrelevant studies. As a result, 18 publications were excluded in round two, with 33 remaining publications in the selection. Finally, full-text readings were conducted to confirm the relevance and empirical rigor before the final selection. Seven publications were excluded, and 26 were included for full-text reading and analysis. Key data points were extracted from the selected studies for analysis.

Study Selection and Delimitation

Step 3 of this scoping review involved a non-linear process of selecting and delimiting the relevant literature. Upon reviewing the initial search results, it became evident that many of the identified publications included various types of materials, such as reports, policy papers, and non-empirical studies. This raised two significant issues that needed to be addressed.

First, a number of these documents needed to meet the inclusion criteria of providing empirical data or detailed descriptions of methodologies used in their analyses. Instead, many were opinion pieces or theoretical discussions that needed more empirical rigor for this review. Second, some sources focused on broader themes of youth engagement in politics without explicitly addressing the electoral behavior and preferences of young Filipino voters. This distinction is essential for this paper, as it aims to describe the specific dynamics affecting this demographic's political choices.

To ensure that the review remained focused on empirical studies relevant to young Filipino voters, strict adherence to the inclusion criteria was maintained throughout the screening process. This approach allowed for a comprehensive examination of literature that directly addressed the research questions while also acknowledging the potential value of interdisciplinary studies from other fields that could provide insights into youth political behavior.

During the screening process, particular attention was paid to identifying studies that included empirical evidence related to voting preferences or political engagement among young Filipinos. Although some publications originated from non-social science disciplines, they were not excluded solely based on their disciplinary background. Instead, they were evaluated based on their relevance and contribution to understanding the factors influencing young voters' electoral choices.

Finally, this careful selection process facilitated the inclusion of key studies that enriched the review's findings and ensured a robust analysis of the political behavior and preferences of young Filipino voters in recent elections.

Charting the Data

The 26 articles selected for this scoping review were thoroughly analyzed through a systematic charting process, utilizing an Excel spreadsheet to organize data across various categories pertinent to the research questions. The categories employed in this analysis included Title, Author(s), Year of Publication, Methodology Used, and Key Findings.

A simplified version of this charting form is presented in Table B1 in Appendix B. The results derived from this charting exercise will be summarized and discussed in the subsequent section, which will address the three sub-questions concerning the theoretical and methodological frameworks employed in the literature, the key actors identified within these studies, and the broader contexts that shape young voters' political preferences. Additionally, this section will explore the insights the existing literature provides regarding the drivers of electoral behavior among young Filipinos.

Year of Publication, Geographical Representation, and Methodologies

A simple comparison shows that of the 26 published articles included in this review, two were published between 2000 and 2005, another two between 2006 and 2010, and twelve articles between 2011 and 2015; ten relevant articles were published between 2016 and 2024. The number of studies focusing on political participation in the Philippines has notably expanded in recent years, particularly after 2015, when research methodologies became more diverse and sophisticated.

Most studies utilize qualitative and quantitative approaches, reflecting a shift towards more rigorous data collection methods. For instance, the Transcendental Phenomenological Study employed in Eunice Leslie V. Balbin's 2023 research highlights the significant impact of peer influence on students' political perspectives. This study underscores the importance of social interactions in shaping political engagement among youth.

In contrast, earlier studies from 2015, such as Clarissa C. David's work on celebrity politics, employed multistage probability sampling and questionnaires to explore how educational attainment affects voting preferences for celebrity candidates. This methodological evolution illustrates a growing recognition of the need for comprehensive frameworks to analyze political behavior.

The geographical representation of these studies is exclusively focused on the Philippines, providing a concentrated examination of local dynamics influencing political participation among youth. However, it is noteworthy that while most academic journals are based in the Philippines, some research draws on comparative cases from other countries to enrich the analysis.

This review emphasizes a clear trend: interest in political participation as a research topic has grown significantly in recent years. The findings indicate that while there is a robust body of literature emerging in political science, it needs to catch up to other disciplines, such as sociology and geography. The methodologies employed across these studies vary widely, ranging from qualitative interviews to structural equation modeling (SEM), demonstrating an increasing sophistication in research design.

Overall, this analysis reveals that there is an expanding need for further exploration into youth political engagement within the Philippine context. Future research could benefit from addressing existing gaps, particularly regarding students' conceptualizations of political participation and their implications for democratic processes in the country.

FINDINGS: WHAT EXISTS IN THE CURRENT LITERATURE ABOUT THE POLITICAL BEHAVIOR AND PREFERENCES OF YOUNG FILIPINO VOTERS?

The following section includes this review's findings on the three sub-questions about data, method, and theoretical framework in the current literature about the Political Behavior and Preferences of Young Filipino voters. A simplified presentation of the results of this analysis can also be seen in Table B1 in Appendix B.

Sub-question 1: What characterizes studies about the political behavior of Filipino voters in terms of a methodological and theoretical framework?

The existing literature on the political behavior of Filipino voters, particularly among the youth, presents a rich and varied landscape characterized by diverse methodologies and theoretical frameworks. This discussion synthesizes findings from multiple studies to provide a comprehensive overview of how researchers approach the political behavior of young Filipino voters.

A. Methodological Approaches

A significant portion of the literature employs qualitative methodologies, which aim to explore the subjective experiences and perceptions of young voters. For instance, Balbin et al. (2023) conducted a

transcendental phenomenological study focusing on student leaders at Rizal Technological University. This approach allowed researchers to delve deeply into how peer interactions shape political participation, revealing that discussions among friends significantly influence students' political orientations. The qualitative nature of this research reveals the importance of personal narratives and social contexts in understanding political engagement.

Interviews are another standard qualitative method utilized in various studies. For example, Bunquin (2020) employed interviews alongside survey methods to assess the effects of social media use on political participation among Filipino youth. This mixed-methods approach provided a nuanced understanding of how social media platforms facilitate political discourse and mobilization among young voters.

In contrast, several studies adopt quantitative methodologies to analyze voting behaviors statistically. Batara et al. (2021) utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to investigate factors affecting youth voting preferences in the Philippine senatorial elections. This quantitative approach allows for robust statistical analysis and helps identify significant predictors of voting behavior, such as party affiliation and candidate alignment with popular sentiments.

Surveys are frequently employed in quantitative research to gather data from larger populations. Ascura et al. (2023) conducted a descriptive correlational study using surveys to examine the influence of social media political advertisements on first-time voters. Their findings suggest that exposure to political content on social media significantly impacts voters' choices, indicating how digital platforms have become integral to electoral decision-making.

Some researchers opt for mixed methods approaches, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to provide a more comprehensive view of political behavior. For instance, Basinillo et al. (2024) utilized a quantitative-descriptive approach while also incorporating qualitative insights from interviews to explore the decline of youth political participation in the Philippines. This dual approach allows for triangulation of data, enhancing the validity and depth of findings related to youth engagement in politics.

B. Theoretical Frameworks

Constructivism

Constructivist Approaches - Several literatures gathered adopt constructivist approaches, which emphasize the socially constructed nature of political realities. In political behavior and preferences, Cabo (2018) discusses how young Filipinos perceive their role within the democratic process, illustrating their critical views on politicians while maintaining faith in democracy itself. This perspective explains the importance of understanding how youths construct their political identities and beliefs through their experiences and interactions with the political system.

Institutionalism

Institutional Theory - Some studies employ Institutional Theory to explore how institutional structures influence voting behavior and political participation. Batara et al. (2021) emphasize that party affiliation plays a crucial role in shaping voting preferences, indicating that institutional factors significantly affect individual voter decisions within the Philippine electoral context.

Behavioralism

Social Penetration Theory: One prominent theoretical framework found in literature is the Social Penetration Theory, which posits that interpersonal relationships develop through gradual self-disclosure and communication. Balbin et al. (2023) apply this theory to illustrate how friendships influence students' political views, suggesting that closer relationships foster more meaningful discussions about politics, thereby enhancing political socialization among peers.

Social Network Theory: Social Network Theory is also prevalent in studies examining the role of digital communication in shaping political behavior. The study of Bunquin (2020) utilizes this framework to analyze how social media networks facilitate political engagement among youth, suggesting that increased connectivity leads to higher levels of participation in political discussions and activities.

Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory - The integration of Rational Choice Theory gives further insights into voting behavior among young Filipinos. According to Madeloso et al. (2023), this theory expounds that individuals make decisions based on a cost-benefit analysis aimed at maximizing utility. Young voters may evaluate candidates based on perceived benefits derived from policies, suggesting that their electoral choices are influenced not only by social factors but also by rational assessments of candidates' platforms.

Goal Systems Theory

Goal Systems Theory - Another framework is Goal Systems Theory, particularly in Ascura et al.'s (2023) study on social media's influence on voting preferences. This theory emphasizes that voters are motivated by specific goals when engaging with political content, such as aligning with candidates whose platforms resonate with their values and aspirations. The findings indicate that candidates who effectively use social media to communicate their platforms can significantly attract young voters.

Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Interdisciplinary Perspectives - Few of the literature reflects an interdisciplinary tradition, drawing insights from various fields such as sociology, communication studies, and political science. This diversity enriches the analysis of youth political behavior by integrating different perspectives and methodologies. For example, Campanero et al. (2021) explore how social media influences voter preferences through an interdisciplinary lens, examining both psychological factors and socio-political contexts.

Overall, the current literature on the political behavior of young Filipino voters is characterized by a diverse array of methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks. While qualitative methods dominate, providing rich insights into personal experiences and social dynamics, quantitative studies also offer valuable statistical analyses that enhance understanding of broader trends in voting behavior. However, there are only limited theoretical frameworks that were uncovered, such as Social Penetration Theory, Goal Systems Theory, Rational Choice Theory, Social Network Theory, Institutional Theory, and constructivist approaches that have collectively contributed to a nuanced understanding of how young Filipinos engage with politics.

Sub-question 2: What are the primary factors that influence the voting preferences of young Filipino voters in recent elections?

Based on the data gathered from this scoping review, the voting preferences of young Filipino voters are shaped by a variety of interrelated factors, reflecting their unique social, cultural, and political contexts. This discussion will synthesize insights from recent studies to identify and elaborate on these primary influences, which include social media engagement, peer interactions, educational background, political ideology and party affiliation, socioeconomic status, candidate characteristics, and a growing sense of political awareness and activism.

Social Media

First, social media has emerged as a dominant force influencing the political behavior of young voters in the Philippines. With platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram serving as primary sources of information, social media shapes how young Filipinos perceive candidates and political issues. Ascura et

al. (2023) and Kuncoro et al. (2020) highlight that first-time voters are particularly susceptible to political advertisements on both media and social media, which have become essential tools for candidates to communicate their platforms and engage with potential voters. It finds that exposure to political information through television and radio increases political engagement, with youth sharing information, reminding others to vote, and seeking more details. The study also indicates that young voters are drawn to candidates who effectively utilize these platforms to present their messages and interact with constituents (Ascura et al., 2023; Kuncoro et al., 2020). The study of Arbani et al. (2022) also found that social networking platforms significantly increased youth involvement in political discussions and activities. Young people who engaged with political content on social media were more likely to participate in political events and stay informed on political issues.

In addition, the study of Flores et al. (2022) highlights the significant role of social media in influencing political preferences and transforming their political choices, consistent with studies by political scientists such as Barberá (2014) and Bond et al. (2012). The data shows that social media is considered relevant in shaping political participation, with a grand mean score of 2.92 in the table made from the study, indicating its influence. The findings align with the idea that social media significantly impacts political behavior, especially participation and engagement with political content. Furthermore, this is supported by the study of Boulianne and Theocharis (2020) as cited by Flores et al. (2022), which claims that there is strong evidence to suggest that social media usage has something to do with youth social and political engagement.

Moreover, Bunquin (2020) also emphasizes that social media not only facilitates access to political content but also fosters discussions among peers. The high level of social media use among youth can significantly enhance their political participation by providing them with immediate access to information and opportunities for engagement. This integration of social media into the daily lives of young voters underscores its role in shaping their political opinions and preferences. Lastly, the study of Narido et al. (2022) reveals that social media, like the TikTok platform, influences young adults' political participation by providing easy access to political information and media narratives, with its immersive content encouraging engagement during election periods. High TikTok usage and positive interactions with political candidates increase the likelihood of young adults participating in elections, enhance voter engagement, and support electoral campaigns.

Peers

Second, the influence of peers is another critical factor affecting the voting preferences of young Filipinos. Research by Balbin et al. (2023) demonstrates that conversations among friends significantly impact students' political orientations. According to the social penetration theory, closer relationships encourage deeper discussions about politics, leading to more vital political socialization among peers. When young voters engage in frequent political discussions with their friends, they are more likely to develop well-defined political opinions and become active participants in elections. In the study of Arabani et al. (2022), peer networks on social media played a crucial role in influencing youth voting attitudes, with young individuals often adopting collective voting behaviors based on the political opinions of their friends and online communities.

Additionally, Cabo (2018) points out that youth networks play a vital role in fostering political engagement. Young voters often rely on their social circles for guidance regarding political matters, making peer opinions crucial in shaping their electoral decisions. This peer influence is particularly pronounced in the context of youth activism, where collective action can amplify individual voices and

encourage broader participation. Moreover, the study of Orzal et al (2023), reveals that family influence is strong, with younger voters often mirroring the preferences of their parents. Campaign priorities like anti-crime, anti-corruption, and economic growth are crucial for electoral success.

Lastly, Turan et al. (2017) found that family significantly influences an individual's political attitudes and behaviors, shaping party identification and political participation through emotional ties and shared political interests, ultimately affecting the individual's future political choices and engagement in political activities. The study indicates that family significantly affects an individual's voting preferences and emphasizes that the political attitudes adopted within the family are often maintained and passed down through generations.

Educational Background

Third, the educational background of young voters significantly influences their voting preferences. Studies indicate that higher levels of education correlate with more informed voting choices. David et al. (2015) found that individuals with more years of education are less likely to vote for celebrity candidates, suggesting that educated voters prioritize qualifications and competencies over popularity when making electoral decisions. The study reveals that education has a robust effect on preference (or lack thereof) for celebrity candidates. In the study of Murcia et al. (2016), Millennials prioritize the educational attainment of the candidate when selecting a presidential candidate. The study reveals that a higher level of education is linked to greater political participation and interest.

Furthermore, Batara et al. (2021) assert that party affiliation remains a pivotal factor in voting decisions among educated youth who tend to align with candidates representing pro-administration or opposition parties based on their understanding of political issues and party platforms. Education not only enhances critical thinking skills but also fosters a greater awareness of civic responsibilities among young voters (Batara et al., 2021).

Political Ideology

Fourth, political ideology, specifically political party affiliation, is a significant determinant of voting preferences among young Filipino voters. Batara et al. (2021) emphasize that youth voters often base their choices on candidates' affiliations with established political parties. The findings reveal that candidates aligned with popular parties or those gaining significant public support are favored by young voters, indicating a tendency to gravitate towards familiar party structures rather than independent candidates.

The study of Fishbein and Coombs (1975), as cited by Batara et al. (2021), supports the idea that an individual's voting decision is influenced by a candidate's affiliation with a political party. Youth voters favor candidates affiliated with political parties that support a popular pro-administration stance in the current Philippine electoral environment. This idea reflects a broader pattern in Philippine politics where party loyalty influences voter behavior, particularly among younger demographics who may rely on party identification as a heuristic for making electoral decisions. In an environment where political parties play crucial roles in shaping policy agendas and public discourse, young voters often find themselves aligning with parties that resonate with their values and aspirations.

Socioeconomic Status

Fifth, the socioeconomic status of young voters also plays a role in shaping their voting preferences. Basinillo et al. (2024) found that socioeconomic factors rank highly among those influencing youth voting decisions. Young voters from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may prioritize candidates who address issues relevant to their economic situations, such as job creation and access to education. In the study of Kulachi et al. (2023), higher-income individuals tend to be more politically engaged and more likely to

vote compared to those with lower incomes. For example, a study by Verba et al. (1995), as cited by Kulachi et al. (2023), found a positive relationship between income and voter turnout.

Additionally, research by Bartels (2008), as cited by Kulachi et al. (2023), suggests that income inequality can also influence voting decisions. The study found that individuals in societies with higher levels of income inequality are more likely to support reformist or "makamasa" candidates, as also mentioned in the study of Dolimpas (2018), where voters favor political candidates sympathetic to the ordinary people. This could be because income inequality can lead to perceptions of unfairness and a desire for policies that address economic disparities. Moreover, studies have shown that the impact of income on voting decisions can vary depending on other factors such as education level, occupation, and regional differences. For example, individuals with higher levels of education may prioritize different policy issues compared to those with lower levels of education, regardless of their income. Additionally, economic stability can affect voter turnout; those facing financial difficulties may feel disenfranchised or less motivated to participate in elections, impacting overall engagement levels within this demographic. The intersection between socioeconomic status and political participation reveals the need for candidates to address the specific concerns of marginalized communities to garner support from young voters.

Characteristics

Sixth, the characteristics of candidates themselves significantly influence young voters' preferences. Research indicates that attributes such as charisma, communication style, and perceived competence can sway voting decisions. Capa et al. (2024) explore how voice pitch affects perceptions of leadership qualities among candidates, revealing that low-pitched voices are often associated with traits such as dominance and trustworthiness—qualities that resonate positively with young voters. Respondents generally preferred to vote for candidates with a low-pitched voice, associating low-pitched male voices with leadership qualities like dominance, intelligence, competence, strength, and trustworthiness.

Moreover, Campanero et al. (2021) note that young voters critically assess candidates based on their online presence and public persona, often scrutinizing how politicians present themselves on social media platforms. This scrutiny reflects a broader trend where personal branding becomes crucial in influencing voter perceptions. In addition, Dolipas's (2018) study identifies key personal characteristics that influence political preferences among respondents. The most important trait is "malinis na pagkatao" (probity), indicating that candidates' integrity is highly valued. According to the study, this is shaped by media exposure to corruption scandals involving politicians, influencing the students' perspectives. The preference for integrity aligns with findings from CNN Philippines' interviews, where youth expressed a desire for candidates who are not corrupt, fair, and just.

In the same study by Dolipas (2018), Other young voters' valued characteristics include being helpful to the needy and approachable, reflecting the Filipino tendency to seek assistance from politicians in times of crisis. These preferences align with the "makamasa" (pro-poor) view, where voters favor candidates sympathetic to the ordinary people. In the same way, the study of Madeloso (2023), the voting behavior of the youth is influenced by the personal and leadership characteristics of national candidates, including their educational background, honesty, and trustworthiness, as well as electoral factors like political machinery, popularity, and endorsements.

On the other hand, the study of Orzal et al. (2023) identifies key factors influencing candidate selection in the Philippine Presidential Election. Voter preferences are nearly equal between genders, with males at 38.88% and females at 37.96%. Lawyers (50.92%) are the most favored profession, followed by government officials (40.72%), economists (37.96%), and agriculturists (33.33%). Experience as an

elected official (65.74%) and a liberal personality (52.77%) are highly valued traits, while education is the top priority (90.74%), with a preference for candidates holding a doctorate (50%). In the same way, Pano (2017) reveals that competence, trustworthiness, and goodwill are vital characteristics that the public seeks in candidates, and these traits significantly impact voting choices.

The study of Mendoza et al. (2014) reveals that about 2% of students choose candidates based on their platform, citing broad goals like education and reform, which were also mentioned in the study of Murcia et al. (2016) that Millennials prioritize political experience when selecting a presidential candidate, considering it a primary factor in their decision-making process. Educational attainment follows as a higher level of education is linked to greater political participation and interest. The personality of the candidate ranks third, with studies highlighting that personality traits can significantly influence electoral outcomes. The candidate's platform or campaign priorities are considered fourth, with millennials focusing on the credibility of campaign promises when evaluating a candidate's platform. Lastly, while profession or occupation is the least important factor for millennials, it is still considered relevant. Candidates with non-political careers are viewed as potentially more incorruptible, as they have alternative sources of income beyond politics.

Political Awareness

Finally, political awareness and activism play vital roles in shaping young Filipinos' voting preferences. Cabo (2018) highlights that despite concerns about the integrity of politicians and the electoral process, many young voters remain committed to participating in elections as a means of effecting change within their communities. This sense of agency empowers them to engage not only through voting but also through activism and advocacy efforts aimed at promoting democratic values. In the study of Basinillo (2024), various factors, including political concerns, candidate competencies, and personal motivations, influence the individual's decision to participate in elections. The study by Bunquin (2020) also shows that age is a predictor of political participation, and low participation may be due to their stage of learning about politics.

In the study of Buscato et al. (2024), findings show that the youth are connected to political affairs in the country. They are interested in politics, hold clear views on democracy, and are critical of politicians' behavior. Despite concerns about the political system, such as violations of campaign rules, they continue to believe in democracy and the electoral process. Youth express a desire for political participation beyond voting and engaging in activities that support democracy and good governance. Moreover, Their involvement has empowered them to contribute to social and political change, raising awareness through observation, conscientious voting, and sharing knowledge within their communities. This engagement has deepened their sense of citizenship, volunteerism, and love for the country, proving that the youth can be a powerful force in maintaining a vibrant democracy. (Buscato et al, 2024; Cabo, 2018)

Collado et al. (2020) reveal that the youth were motivated to engage in political participation, particularly in the upcoming national elections, driven by their understanding of politics and belief in the importance of voting. They saw voting as a way to create change and believed that collective action could address the country's political challenges. According to Collado, while their reasons for registering to vote varied, such as fulfilling obligations to family or school, they unanimously recognized voting as a privilege. Despite acknowledging the difficulty of reforming the system, especially during the pandemic, they have remained committed to political awareness. Additionally, their willingness to participate in the community pantry phenomenon was unaffected by red-tagging issues, reflecting their desire to contribute to a better government.

The literature describes that young Filipinos possess a critical awareness of political issues, recognizing both systemic weaknesses and opportunities for improvement within the electoral landscape. This awareness drives many to seek out candidates who align with their values and aspirations for social justice and good governance.

Therefore, according to the existing data, the voting preferences of young Filipino voters are influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including social media engagement, peer influence, educational background, political party affiliation, socioeconomic status, candidate characteristics, and a strong sense of political awareness and activism.

Sub-question 3: What are the implications of the identified factors influencing the political behavior and preferences of young Filipino voters for electoral strategies and political engagement initiatives?

As synthesized in the second sub-question, the political landscape in the Philippines is increasingly shaped by the preferences and behaviors of young voters, who constitute a significant portion of the electorate. Using the data from understanding the factors that influence their voting choices, the government, for example, can utilize it by developing effective strategies to enhance youth electoral participation. The gathered data from previous studies describes several key influences, including social media engagement, peer interactions, educational background, political party affiliation, socioeconomic status, and a growing sense of political awareness and activism. Each of these factors has distinct implications for electoral strategies and initiatives aimed at increasing participation among young voters.

Leveraging Social Media Engagement

Social media has emerged as a dominant force in shaping the political behavior of young voters in the Philippines. According to Ascura et al. (2023), first-time voters are particularly susceptible to political advertisements on social media, which have become essential tools for candidates to communicate their platforms. This indicates that campaigns must prioritize establishing a strong online presence that resonates with youth. Political campaigns can create engaging content that highlights candidates' platforms while encouraging interactive discussions. Utilizing influencers or famous figures who resonate with youth can amplify messages and motivate voter registration and participation.

Furthermore, educational initiatives through social media can inform young voters about the electoral process, voting rights, and civic engagement. Moreover, webinars and interactive Q&A sessions can demystify the voting process and address common misconceptions. Additionally, policymakers can leverage social media to engage youth through online consultations and discussions, encouraging greater political participation, particularly in countries with high social media usage, like the Philippines.

Enhancing Peer Influence

The influence of peers is another critical factor affecting the voting preferences of young Filipinos. Balbin et al. (2023) demonstrate that conversations among friends significantly impact students' political orientations. This suggests that strategies encouraging peer-to-peer discussions about politics can foster a culture of civic engagement. Educational institutions can facilitate and organize political discussion groups or forums where students share their views on elections. Initiatives promoting youth-led advocacy can empower young voters to take charge of their political engagement. Organizing events such as debates or voter registration drives led by peers can create an environment where political discourse thrives.

Fostering Educational Initiatives

Educational background also plays a pivotal role in shaping voting preferences among young voters. Research indicates that higher levels of education correlate with more informed voting choices (David &

Atun, 2015). This correlation underscores the importance of promoting civic education within educational institutions. Curriculum enhancements that incorporate discussions on democracy, governance, and electoral processes can equip students with essential knowledge for making informed decisions. Schools and universities may implement programs aimed at increasing political literacy, focusing on critical thinking skills and media literacy to help students navigate political information effectively.

Promoting Political Party Engagement

Political party affiliation significantly influences voting preferences among young Filipino voters. Batara et al. (2021) emphasize that youth often base their choices on candidates' affiliations with established political parties. This presents an opportunity for political parties to actively engage with youth through tailored messaging that addresses their concerns and aspirations. Initiatives designed explicitly for young constituents where party leaders discuss policies relevant to youth issues such as education and employment can contribute to fostering deeper connections between parties and young voters.

Uplifting Socioeconomic status

Socioeconomic status is another critical factor influencing voting preferences. Basinillo et al. (2024) found that socioeconomic factors rank highly among those influencing youth voting decisions; thus, recognizing these disparities necessitates targeted strategies aimed at addressing the specific needs of marginalized youth populations. Candidates can prioritize policies that tackle socioeconomic disparities—such as job creation initiatives and accessible education programs—to resonate with younger voters from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Outreach programs targeting disadvantaged communities can also help raise awareness about the importance of voting and how electoral outcomes directly affect their lives.

Encouraging Political Awareness and Activism

Finally, fostering a sense of political awareness among young voters is essential for increasing electoral participation. Cabo (2018) notes that many youths express critical views about politicians while still believing in democracy; thus, initiatives aimed at raising awareness about current political issues can motivate youth to engage actively in elections. Encouraging activism through partnerships with local organizations focused on social justice or community development can empower young voters to act beyond just voting.

CONCLUSION

The scoping review on the political behavior and preferences of young Filipino voters reveals a complex interplay of factors that significantly influence electoral choices within this demographic. By synthesizing findings from 26 selected studies, this review highlights that the political engagement of youth is not only a reflection of individual preferences but also shaped by broader societal dynamics, peer influences, and the evolving political landscape in the Philippines.

The analysis indicates a notable increase in scholarly attention to this subject over the past two decades, with methodologies ranging from qualitative interviews to quantitative surveys demonstrating an expanding recognition of the importance of youth participation in democracy (Batara et al., 2021; Jorge, 2022). However, in all 26 selected studies, only (7) seven theoretical frameworks were revealed. The findings emphasize that young voters are increasingly motivated by issues such as social justice, economic opportunities, and governance transparency, which align with their values and aspirations (Mason, 2018). Moreover, the role of social media and peer networks emerges as a critical factor in shaping political opinions and mobilizing youth engagement, reflecting a shift in how political information is disseminated and consumed among younger generations.

Despite these insights, the review also identifies significant gaps in the literature, particularly regarding empirical studies that delve deeper into the motivations behind young voters' choices. First, while existing research provides valuable data on voting patterns, there is a pressing need for further investigation into how these preferences translate into sustained political engagement beyond electoral cycles. Second, while some studies acknowledge that political ideology shapes the preferences of young voters, there needs to be more exploration of how these ideologies manifest in specific political behaviors. Third, existing literature highlights peer influence as a factor affecting young voters' political choices, yet there is limited empirical evidence detailing how social networks specifically shape electoral preferences. Fourth, there needs to be more longitudinal research examining how young voters' political preferences evolve, particularly in response to changing socio-political contexts and events. This gap highlights an opportunity for future research to explore innovative approaches that can capture the evolving nature of political behavior among Filipino youth.

Therefore, this scoping review not only maps the current state of research on young Filipino voters but also emphasizes their potential as pivotal agents of change in shaping the democratic landscape of the Philippines. As Jose Rizal aptly stated, "The youth is the hope of our future," reminding us that empowering this demographic through informed political participation is essential for fostering a vibrant and responsive democracy. The insights garnered from this review may also serve as a foundation for policymakers and educators to develop targeted strategies that engage young voters effectively, ensuring their voices are heard in shaping the future of governance in their country.

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ENDNOTES

¹See Table B1 in Appendix B for the 38 publications resulting from the screening in Figure A1.

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