



Unveiling the Formation of Political Identities of the Filipino Youth in Tacurong City, The Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the Filipino youth's participation in politics regarding how their political identities were formed. The novelties in this study are (1) political identities of the Filipino youth, and (2) factors affecting the political identity formation of the Filipino youth. A qualitative case study approach was used to analyze the different statements of the Filipino youth towards the factors that made them be involved in politics, their political identities, and their political identity. Six Filipino youths residing in Tacurong City participants were purposively chosen and interviewed via Google Meet due to COVID-19 restrictions. As revealed by the data gathered, issues in the society, the availability of information to the public, their relationship circle, and their respective school's Influence was found to play an essential role in making the Filipino youth participate in politics. The same factors such as the issues in the society, availability of information to the public, relationship circle, and the influence of school were also responsible for the formation of their current political identity. It is concluded that the Filipino youth's political participation and identity were the results of the significant influence of the society. This study has a major impact in contributing to the knowledge on how the youth behave and why they have different perspectives and preferences of sides specifically in politics.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Youth had always been in the front of social movements, figuring as one of the most active political groups for social change as they are always practicing their political right (Elliott & Earl, 2018; Saud et al., 2020). Youths have a major role to play for the present and future societies, and in this regard, their independent adulthood transition is very crucial (Anyon et al., 2018).

Recent studies has reported on how the political perception of youth were heading to (Tamanna, 2018), the youth participation in local governance (Gökçe-Kızılkaya & Onursal-Beşgül, 2017), political identities as the missing link in the study of populism (Meléndez & Kaltwasser, 2019), the youth participation as voices and themes from democracy project (Sprague Martinez et al., 2018), and political ideologies and identity in newspaper discourse (Van Dijk, 2006). The purpose of this study to investigate the Filipino youth's participation in political identities.

2. METHOD

The study had employed the qualitative case study method Baskarada (2014), where phenomenon investigated was the formation of political identities of Filipino youths. Explanatory type of case study had been used and six Filipino youth were purposely chosen. The following criteria were used to identify the participants. He or she must (a) be a Filipino citizen, (b) aging from 15-24 years old - following the definition of youth of the United Nations General Assembly, (c) politically active in social media which can be determined as individuals who voice out their opinions regarding the government, (d) a resident of Tacurong City, and (e) has the confidence to share thoughts, ideas regarding how their political identities were formed. The study had been conducted online due to COVID-19 restrictions and was interviewed via Google Meet. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather the data. Thematic Analysis (TA) was used in data gathering.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study dealt with the Filipino youth's participation in politics regarding how their political identities were formed. It also covered the factors that made them participate in politics and the different political identities of the Filipino youth.

In Filipino youth's engagement in politics, their political engagement was linked to the following: issues in the society; availability of information to the public; relationship circle; and school influence (Banks & Roker, 1994; Kahne et al., 2013; Pelevin et al., 2018).

Important findings showed that the primary factor that made the Filipino youth's political engagement were the questionable actions of the Government especially during the pandemic, and the present social issues in the country (vallejo Jr & Ong, 2020). Then, the availability of information to the public, the news, and social media (Holt et al., 2013). Media helps the Filipino youth to keep themselves updated and act when seeing news that triggers them. Next, the family being always involved in politics (Jennings et al., 2009) and peer pressure made the Filipino youth open up and talk about politics (Cabrera et al., 2017). Lastly, the schools of the youth make the children participate in various school activities where the youth can use it as a platform to express their views.

As to factors shaping the political identity of the Filipino youth, four (4) factors were identified. They are also categorized as issues in society, availability of information to the public, school influence, and relationship circle.

Salient findings showed that the Filipino youth has been critical towards the issues present in the country, and these events trigger the youth, thus affecting their views towards politics (Farthing, 2010). Then, the availability of information to the public, specifically the media and books, are being used as a medium for the youth to have enlightenment and assessments toward their opinions. Next, the school, concretely the political activities happening in their chosen strand, helps them in balancing out their opinions. Lastly, their relationship within their family and friends. The beliefs of the youth's family and friends also reflect them and influence their views regarding politics.

The political identities of the Filipino youth have been categorized into partisans, non-partisans and politically neutral (Lorch, 2021). Salient findings show that there are Filipino youths who are siding a certain political affiliation. Specifically, they are called as DDS (Duterte Diehard Supporters), supporters of the current administration, and Dilawans which support the Liberal Party. There are also Filipino youths that are non-partisans - people who don't support a certain political party, but rather choose the side in which they think benefits the people more. Lastly are the politically neutral, otherwise known as apolitical, are those people that are considered inactive in terms of political involvement.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The reasons behind why the Filipino youth has been politically active is the result of significant influence of the society, mainly: the issues in the society, availability of information to the public, the Filipino youth's relationship circle, and the school influence.
2. The Filipino youth's political identity has been identified and categorized into three (3): partisans (DDS or the Diehard Duterte Supporters, Dilawans or the Liberal party supporters), non-partisans, and politically neutral. The development of these identified political identities of the Filipino youth has been influenced by the issues in society, availability of information to the public, school influence, and relationship circle.

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6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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