



Political Branding: The use of campaign color as symbolism of platforms among the Philippine presidential candidates in the 2022 elections

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ABSTRACT

In a very complex nature of politics, color serves as a low-level heuristic for voters, especially the use of campaign color as a symbolism of platforms. This study sought to determine the level of agreement on the universal meaning of the different colors chosen by the Presidential candidates during the 2022 national elections; the level of agreement if the political colors of the presidential candidates and its representation to their political platforms; and if these chosen political colors correspond to the platforms of the presidential candidates among the students of the School of Teachers and Liberal Arts of the University of Baguio. A mixed method with a self-constructed questionnaire using the Likert Scale to determine the level of agreement among the 143 respondents and an interview with 8 informants among the students was used in this study. The study revealed that the color Red is the most misinterpreted color because of its historical and psychological connotations which led to its negative symbolism. While both Pink and Blue, showed a positive result because of their psychological, cultural, and political aspect. Furthermore, all colors aligned with their platforms except the color Red by Marcos with his platform about Unity. Additionally, the presidential candidates' platforms were based on their personal and political factors. Overall, the research suggests that there's still no established meaning of political colors in our country and that voters still take issue with what the colors truly represent.

RESUMO

Em uma natureza política muito complexa, a cor serve como uma heurística de baixo nível para os eleitores, especialmente o uso da cor da campanha como simbolismo das plataformas. Este estudo buscou determinar o nível de concordância sobre o significado universal das diferentes cores escolhidas pelos candidatos à Presidência das Filipinas durante as eleições nacionais de 2022; o nível de concordância se as cores políticas dos candidatos à presidência e sua representação de suas plataformas políticas; e se essas cores políticas escolhidas correspondem às plataformas dos candidatos à presidência entre os estudantes da Escola de Professores e Artes Liberais da Universidade de Baguio. Um método misto com um questionário autoconstruído usando a Escala Likert para determinar o nível de concordância entre os 143 respondentes e uma entrevista com 8 informantes entre os alunos foi usado neste estudo. O estudo revelou que a cor Vermelha é a mais interpretada erroneamente por causa de suas conotações históricas e psicológicas que levaram ao seu simbolismo negativo. Enquanto tanto o Rosa quanto o Azul mostraram um resultado positivo por causa de seu aspecto psicológico, cultural e político. Além disso, todas as cores se alinharam com suas plataformas, exceto a cor Vermelha de Marcos com sua plataforma sobre Unidade. Além disso, as plataformas dos candidatos à presidência foram baseadas em seus fatores pessoais e políticos. No geral, a pesquisa sugere que ainda não há um significado estabelecido das cores políticas em nosso país e que os eleitores ainda têm problemas com o que as cores realmente representam.

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Introduction

Contemporary discourse in politics has centered on peoples' political ideology and positions in the political spectrum. Most of the time, when people want to associate themselves with a corresponding political phenomenon or social action, they use symbolism for easier identification. The use of political symbols can be a psychological and political process that can lead to political arousal. By definition, political symbols being used refers specifically to their physical manifestations. These can include flags, monuments, colors, memorials, and also commemorative acts and political performances during which political symbols are re-evaluated/redesigned, politicized, or put into action to rally identities. Political symbols help civilization to shape their perception and view in the world of politics, these can lead to different meanings that others may not accept, rather these symbols can be a way to have antagonistic political factions which demonstrate as an element for power struggles (Gill & Faerrandez, 2018).

This paper focused on the widely recognized political symbol in the world; colors. Political parties and social events have traditionally used colors as a symbol and as a form of expression that invokes feelings of unity and a shared sense of belonging to a certain group. Additionally, Psychologist Kanchier (2018) states that colors evoke individual responses emotionally, physically, and behaviorally. She added that colors send either a positive or negative message.

Given these patterns, we expect individual voters to attribute to colors strong context-dependent and culturally learned meanings, using them as a low-level heuristic for ideology (Marini, 2017). A perfect representation of this is the political setting of the United States of America. The article of Del Rosario (2021) shows that there are two political party systems in the United States of America which are the Republicans and Democrats, these two are identified by the colors Red and Blue, respectively. The party responsibility notion holds that each party should formulate its policy proposals on the basis of ideology, thereby offering a clear and distinct choice of alternative policies to the voters (Monroe, 1983). Democrats' core philosophy centers on liberal and left-leaning policies while republicans are on the conservative and right-leaning side.

In Thailand, their political sphere is bitterly divided into two camps; the red-shirts and the yellow-shirts. Red became the color and bearer of the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD). The majority of the members are rural workers from outside Bangkok, students, left-wing activists, and some businesspeople who consider attempts by the urban and military elites to control Thai politics as a danger to democracy. The yellow-shirt on the other hand is the King's color. It represents the People's Alliance for Democracy. They regard themselves as the upholder of the values of the Monarchy (BBC, 2013).

In the recent Presidential elections in the Philippines, candidates have adopted a certain color to gain traction and make their political agendas more visible. Ferdinand “Bong Bong” Marcos Jr. adopted red in the course of his campaign trail, Leni Robredo used pink in her movement, Isko Moreno and Manny Pacquiao associated themselves with the color blue, while Panfilo Lacson represented the combination of Blue and Red (Welle, 2022).

The researchers have noted that there has been a little empirical research about the relationship of the chosen color to the platforms of the presidential candidates. Despite growing attention to non-verbal cues, political science only gives sparse attention to an even more basic and fundamental component of parties’ and candidates’ visual communication strategies: colors.

Therefore, this paper focused on determining different colors chosen by the Presidential candidates and their corresponding universal meanings. The paper also answered whether or not the chosen color of the candidate actually corresponds to their platforms as perceived by the student voters in the School of Teacher Education and Liberal Arts of the University of Baguio.

Literature Review

Colors are considered subjective, wherein perception and interpretation of colors that people see are the ones being applied. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that colors are loaded with different meanings too. Likewise, people might see themselves reflecting and thinking about both positive and negative associations of colors for the parties they are against or like. The political opinions or viewpoints they have, do influence or affect their perceptions on this matter. As per the political parties, most of them reflect their policies or platforms to their chosen colors Wadsworth (2014).

In such a manner, due to political parties sharing the same beliefs, certain colors have been used to represent universal values around the world. Additionally, color also plays a major role in building public trust and promoting a sense of togetherness and belonging among voters, as it appeals to the common sentiments of the masses. These colors enhance the influence of politicians through appearance-related desires and well-selected images that represent strong political positions (Dimaano, 2022). Moreover, in the study of Marini (2017), he also argued that Color is a central feature of the political arena as Parties use color to create a unique brand image and group affiliation. Additionally, other researchers have observed how colors are used as a source of direction and expression in social movements of the collective identity used both in the movement itself and in the frame reflected in the media.

Color indicates a variety of things, including political parties, a visual depiction of political attitude, philosophy, or viewpoint, and an effective technique for the people to recall a certain party or movement. It has been utilized as a symbol of protest in numerous

movements, striving for political phenomena known as a "color revolution," which largely occurred between the 1980s and the 2010s but is still practiced today (Castro, 2021).

The wearing of political colors is a significant statement of identity and/or values. Such public displays help engender an emotional unity and can be an important resource in building social movements and other campaigns (Welle, 2022).

In the previous Philippine presidential campaign, candidates heavily relied on a particular color as their political branding. These colors are used with the purpose of unifying their supporters and mobilizing them to gain more voters. Each candidate's popularity has been more visible with the use of the colors they have chosen (Palatino, 2022).

The top five Presidentiables - Bongbong Marcos, Leni Robredo, Manny Pacquiao, Isko Moreno Domagoso, and Panfilo Lacson (GMA News Online, Eleksyon 2022), were also seen to have used colors to represent and promote their platforms. Based on the article written by Welle (2022), as per the candidates' chosen color: Leni Robredo represents Pink; BongBong Marcos with the color Red, Isko Moreno Domagoso and Manny Pacquiao represent color Blue, while Panfilo Lacson represents the combination of Blue and Red.

Universally, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (2020), the colors are used to represent and define the ideas of the following:

Red. No Poverty which goal is to end poverty with different targets such as helping vulnerable communities, increasing resources and services, supporting communities that are mostly affected by the natural calamities; Quality Education in which the inclusivity and quality of education support the belief that education is one of the most powerful tools to achieve sustainable development. These include the goal in which all boys and girls must complete primary and secondary school, access to affordable vocational training, access to quality higher education, and eliminate comparisons among genders and wealth of the students: then, Gender Equality where women are given more opportunity when it comes to job and positions, sexual and reproductive health and access to technology and internet. Lastly, Red also defines Decent Work and Economic Growth which is to promote sustained economic growth, improve the levels of productivity and technology innovations, and encourage to open more opportunities for entrepreneurs to create jobs to lessen or eradicate forced labor, slavery, and human trafficking.

Pink. Pink which defines Reduced Inequalities where the goal is to strengthen the oversight and regulation of financial markets and institutions, promoting development aid and foreign direct investment in areas with the highest need. Another important factor in closing the gap between groups is to make it safer for people to move around and migrate.

Blue. It represents Life Below Water which sustains the management of marine and coastal ecosystem protection from pollution and raises awareness regarding ocean acidification. Also, through the use of international law, enhancing conservation and maintaining the use of ocean-based resources will help to reduce the problems in the oceans;

Clean Water and Sanitation with the goal of investing in enough infrastructures for sanitation facilities, encouraging people to have proper hygiene and protecting and preserving water-related ecosystems; Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions which aims to reduce all forms of violence, to work with governmental institutions and communities to discuss the end of conflicts and insecurity. Then, promoting the rule of law and human rights to reduce the use of illegal arms and strengthen the involvement of developing countries in the institutions of global governance. Lastly, Partnership for the Goals where the objectives seek to improve North-South and South-South cooperation by assisting national efforts to meet all of the goals. Achieving a global, fair, and open trading system that benefits everyone requires promoting international trade and aiding emerging nations in growing their exports.

In this paper, political platforms are defined as something that outlines a party's principles, goals, and positions in domestic and foreign affairs. According to Vote Pilipinas, an official voter information campaign partner of Commission on Elections, if they will win the position as the President the following are their top priorities:

Bongbong Marcos: He repeatedly stressed the word “Unity” for his platform with the plan of prioritizing the health of the people and the COVID-19 pandemic, Patag (2022).

Leni Robredo: She stresses her platform in supporting small businesses and boosting/strengthening the Philippine industries, restoring trust in government, removing discrimination in the workplace, and supporting the unemployed as well as the individuals who lost their jobs.

Manny Pacquiao: His main platforms are the curbing of corruption and poverty, improving the internet signal, and focusing on health and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Isko “Moreno” Domagoso: Focused on the issue of COVID-19 response and vaccine hesitancy, tourism, and supporting the public schools in far-flung areas.

Panfilo Lacson: He prioritized fighting corruption, economic recovery: supporting industries, and solutions for the COVID-19 pandemic (Vote Pilipinas & Business World, 2022).

Theoretical framework

Political colors have been habituated in the Philippines during campaign elections. In this study, it defines political colors as the colors used to represent a political ideology, movement, or party, either officially or unofficially. It is significant to rely on existing theories regarding political colors to clearly define and expound the analysis of the data. The following are the theories to be used in the study:

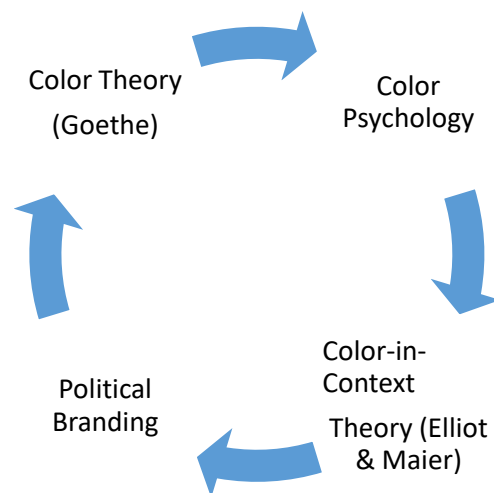
As described by Castellon (2016), in her article entitled “Political Branding in Chaotic Times of Election Campaigning”, political branding is how a person or political group is perceived by the general public. It has distinct functional components, like the individual

politician and policy, just like branding a product. The overall perception, impression, association, or image of a politician or political organization by the public is shaped by political branding. These help the reputation of the politician and support change or stay the same, give them a sense of identity, build trust with voters, and set them apart from the competition.

The study conducted by Fine, et al. (1998), the researchers has presented that color is an institutional resource which represents institutions. This is seconded by Cerulo (1995) who noted in her analysis that national symbols, color and design are not randomly tied to national flags, but are correlated with ideology and location in the world system. Institutions and organizations then use color in an attempt to build and produce meanings for the groups with which they are affiliated as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1.

The relationship between color theory, color psychology, political branding, and the color-in-context theory



This diagram shows the interrelation between Color Theory and Color Psychology, with Goethe's work being a significant foundation. It also demonstrates how Political Branding utilizes these theories to influence voter perception and behavior. Additionally, it depicts the Color-in-Context Theory proposed by Elliot and Maier, which emphasizes the influence of social learning and experiences on color perception and response.

Color Theory. The Color Theory is published by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: he attributed the appearance of color psychology which takes as its subject the relationship of color to the mind, and the influence of color on human mental activity. In his 'color theory', he argues that color has a direct impact on the human psyche, attributing certain psychological states to the influence of a certain color. This study is also supported by the statistical findings of Cuervo-Cazurra, Doh, Giuliani, Montiel, I., & Park, (2022) which demonstrates that like-minded parties adopt similar colors in a large majority of cases.

In the world of politics, colors have been a significant tool to identify the political party of a candidate and his followers. This can be seen in the article entitled *How Color Theory Can Propel Your Political Campaign to the Podium (2020)*, the use of colors is to persuade people to vote for them; candidates seeking positions expose their platforms or goals through colors for them to be more connected and to identify their political brands. Moreover, colors have an effect and create different reactions and interpretations based on the instincts or associations of people. These can also alter the meanings of an object based on how people view colors (Aslam, 2006).

Color-in-context Theory. Elliot and Maier (2012) have proposed color-in-context theory, which draws on social learning, as well as biology. Some responses to color stimuli are presumed to be solely due to the repeated pairing of color and particular concepts, messages, and experiences.

The different theories presented in this chapter were used in this study to analyze the Colors Chosen by Presidential Candidates and their Platforms perceived by the students of the School of Teachers and Liberal Arts of the University of Baguio.

Significance of the Study

During election campaigns, different candidates are using colors as an identification of their party or platforms. Colors are one of the powerful tools to connect and communicate with the voters by making their chosen colors a meaning (Vote Pilipinas, 2022). Thus, the significance of this study is to analyze the Use of Campaign Color as symbolism of Platforms among the Presidential Candidates in the 2022 National Elections.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to analyze the Use of Campaign Color as symbolism of Platforms among the Presidential Candidates in the 2022 National Elections. Specifically, the study has the following objectives:

1. To determine the level of agreement among the respondents on the universal meaning of the different colors chosen by the Presidential candidates during the 2022 national elections.
2. To determine the level of agreement among the respondents on the political colors of the presidential candidates and its representation to their political platforms.
3. To determine if these chosen political colors correspond to the platforms of the presidential candidates.

Materials and Methods

This chapter showed the methods and procedures that the researchers utilized in the course of the study including the study design, population of the study, data gathering tools, data gathering procedures, treatment of data, and ethical considerations.

Study Design

This study used a mixture of a qualitative and quantitative type of research or mixed method and is descriptive in design. With the quantitative type of research, the researchers analyzed Objective 1: the level of agreement among the respondents on the universal meaning of the different colors chosen by the Philippine Presidential candidates during the 2022 national elections, and Objective 2: the level of agreement among the respondents on the political colors of the Philippine presidential candidates and its representation to their political platforms. While in the qualitative type of research, the researchers analyzed Objective 3: if these chosen political colors correspond to the platforms of the Philippine presidential candidates.

Population and Locale of the Study

In this study, the respondents and informants were the students who are registered voters in the School of Teachers Education and Liberal Arts of the University of Baguio. The researchers used Stratified Random Sampling to limit the respondents for the Descriptive Survey Questionnaire. With the population of 1147 School of Teachers and Liberal Arts' students, the researchers used the classic Stratified Random Sampling Formula.

The Descriptive Survey Questionnaire had a total of 143 respondents (refer to Table 1). While the Key Informants Interview, using Random Sampling, were selected from the eight (8) programs of the School of Teachers Education and Liberal Arts, one (1) informant per program.

Table 1.
Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Program

Program	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor of Arts in Communication	1	11.9
Bachelor of Arts in English Language	7	4.9
Bachelor of Arts in Music	7	4.9
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science	22	15.4
Bachelor of Elementary Education	15	10.5
Bachelor of Physical Education	9	6.3
Bachelor of Science in Psychology	51	35.7
Bachelor of Secondary Education	15	10.5
Total	143	100.0

Data Gathering Tools

This study made use of Documentation Analysis, an Interview guide, and a self-constructed Descriptive Survey Questionnaire checked and validated by the tool validator of the University of Baguio. Documentation Analysis was utilized to analyze existing literature and documents to determine the universal meaning of the different colors chosen by the 2022

Presidential candidates such as Red which means No Poverty, Gender Equality, Quality Education; Pink which means reduced inequalities; Blue which represents Life Below Water, Clean Water and Sanitation, Peace, Justice and Stronger Institutions (UNSDG, 2020). Moreover, the Descriptive Questionnaire made by the researchers using the 4-point Likert Scale was utilized to determine the level of agreement among the respondents on the universal meaning of the different colors chosen by the Philippine Presidential candidates during the 2022 national elections and the level of agreement among the respondents if the political colors of the presidential candidates represent their political platforms. Also, Interview guides were utilized to determine if these chosen political colors correspond to the platforms of the presidential candidates.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researchers processed the Request for Assistance form needed in order for them to be allowed to conduct data gathering in STELA. A letter was also forwarded to the Dean of STELA in order to secure permission to conduct the research data gathering. Upon the approval of the Request for Assistance by the RDC, the researchers secured the initial data needed to identify the possible participants for the study. Mainly the data used in this study were gathered from documents, interviews using communication applications such as Google Meet and Zoom, and survey questionnaires which were sent through email in the form of Google Forms to the respondents considering that the restrictions due to the Covid-19 health protocols prevent the researchers from conducting face-to-face gathering of data. In order not to be intrusive to their privacy, the researchers had a short introduction of their intentions and asked if the researchers can take a few minutes of the respondents' and informants' time. In addition, the objectives of the research were in a survey questionnaire. The said objectives were presented before the given questions. This served as an introduction to the research study for the respondents and informants to know what the research study is all about and for them to be able to understand the purpose and goal of the study before answering the survey questionnaire and before responding during the interviews.

Treatment of Data

After the researchers gathered and sorted the data, the researchers transcribed the recorded information from the Descriptive Questionnaire and Key Informant Interview. To answer objectives one (1) and two (2), the researchers used weighted means to determine the level of agreement among the respondents on the universal meaning of the different colors chosen by the Philippine Presidential candidates during the 2022 national elections and the level of agreement among the respondents if the political colors of the presidential candidates represent their political platforms. The researchers categorized the identifying information coming from the survey questionnaires and the researchers made use the 4- point Likert Scale

wherein the respondents will be able to choose the options that support their opinions on the colors and platforms of the Presidential Candidate 1 (Marcos), Presidential Candidate 2 (Robredo), Presidential Candidate 3 (Lacson), Presidential Candidate 4 (Pacquiao), and Presidential Candidate 5 (Moreno). For objective number 3, the researchers used Thematic analysis where researchers took note of the responses of the informants with the aid of an audio recorder which the informants allowed to use. The responses of the informants were coded word by word. The researchers coded the responses of the participants that were related to the research questions of the study. On the other hand, the Documentation Analysis was used where it assessed documentary evidence and responded to specific questions wherein with this method, the researchers were able to determine the universal meanings of colors chosen by the Presidential candidates. These methods helped the researchers to synthesize and analyze the answers of the respondents. It also helped validate the research findings and point out and interrogate inconsistencies.

Ethical Considerations

Research ethics is described as a set of guidelines for the ethical conduct of research that teaches and monitors researchers to accomplish a high ethical standard.

Concerning this, the researchers made sure to be conscious and considerate of the possible impact of this study on the student voters of the School of Teachers and Liberal Arts department of the University of Baguio who will be part of this research. For the researchers to assure that the respondents are being prioritized and protected, before the conduction of the study, the consent of the participants were asked first by the researchers, to ensure that the respondents are doing it willingly and without a doubt. The respondents were also asked whether they want to remain unknown/anonymous by filling up a document along with the survey questionnaire through the use of a communication application like Google Forms. This is one of the researchers' ways to protect the respondents from any possible harm and to respect their choices as well. If the respondents choose to be anonymous or labeled as confidential, their names and other basic information will no longer be asked, mentioned, written, or published in the research. All the necessary information regarding the study will be known to them, what the research is all about, the aim of the research study, and the possible impacts that the respondents may encounter by their participation. The respondents are free to withdraw their participation in the research study at any time, without negatively affecting their future involvement in services or programs with other researchers or any research bodies involved. The participants were chosen according to the criteria set by the researchers, in order to get the necessary data for the study. This includes the registered voters in the School of Teacher Education and Liberal Arts of the University of Baguio.

For the dissemination of the findings of the study, it will be accessible to the people as the researchers will be providing a copy to the University's Library which the said participants

can also access. It will also be accessible online, wherein people who are interested in this kind of study will be able to have access anytime. The use of an online platform was very helpful in reaching a wider scope of readers and learners.

Results and Discussions

Level of Agreement Among the Respondents on the Universal Meaning of the Different Colors Chosen by the 2022 Presidential Candidates

Table 1 shows the level of agreement among the respondents on the universal meaning of the different colors chosen by the Presidential candidates during the 2022 national elections. The obtained overall mean is 2.70, interpreted as Agree. The general findings show that the different colors chosen by the Presidential candidates during the 2022 national elections correspond to their universal meaning prescribed by the UN SDG. The responses in colors pink and blue suggest that through colors, political candidates were able to establish commonalities and a sense of a shared goal with the global nation.

Table 2.

Level of agreement among the respondents on the universal Meaning of the different colors chosen by the Presidential candidates during the 2022 national elections.

Indicators	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Description
1. The color red represents no poverty	143	2.40	0.97	Disagree
2. The color red represents quality education	143	2.37	0.98	Disagree
3. The color red represents gender equality	143	2.20	0.95	Disagree
4. The color red represents decent work	143	2.32	0.96	Disagree
5. The color red represents economic growth	143	2.38	1.01	Disagree
6. The color pink represents reduced inequalities	143	2.73	0.91	Agree
7. The color blue represents life below water	143	3.13	0.85	Agree
8. The color blue represents clean water and sanitation	143	3.30	0.81	Strongly agree
9. The color blue represents peace, justice, and strong institutions	143	3.13	0.82	Agree

10. The color blue represents partnership with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals	143	3.04	0.84	Agree
Overall Mean	143	2.70		Agree

Note: Prepared by the authors (2023).

However, it must be noted that Indicators 1 to 5 which represents the universal meaning of Red have been rated with a mean ranging from 2.20-2.40, interpreted as disagree. This suggests that the color Red did not align with the meaning established by the goal-specific color visual of the UN SDG. This indicates that the respondents have varying impressions and associations of the color Red used as a symbolism for political platforms among the presidential candidates.

Given such psychological, cultural, and historical connotations of the color red, it was no surprise that it is the most misinterpreted color. This was substantiated by the study of Kuneicki et al. (2015), which states that the color red is known to influence psychological functioning, having both negative and positive connotations. It can provoke the strongest of emotions and represent the most intimate connection such as love and passion, and also the most extreme separation between people which is power and anger. This color produces the most opposing emotional associations than any other color there is. The hue is so warm that it can stir up the feelings of comfort to feelings of hostility.

In political context, the symbolism of the red pertains to a clear revolutionary pedigree (Klein, 2018). The surrounding attachment to this color was not only made up but rather is connected to the universal historical bearing of the color. Red was used by many socialist parties during the nineteenth century to represent their revolutionary patrimony and their movement to stand for the common underclass of the repressed. It became the color of the left-wing group and their cumulative historical legacies of revolutions.

On the grounds of the concept above, it may explain why the respondents of the study have differing perceived connotations of the color. Some countries such as the Philippines have their own interpretations of these colors (Center for Civic Design, 2016). The disagreement of the informants' meaning of the color Red is substantiated by an article from Dimaano (2022), entitled "Painting PH: The Colors of the Philippine Politics" which says that having two completely contradicting reds in the current landscape of Philippine politics can bring confusion to the public. In which as it is said, red is known for representing the conservative party like the Marcoses who are often affiliated with the Nacionalista Party. Another interpretation of red as a revolutionary color advocating Pro-Filipino but often misinterpreted as a sign of terrorism due to the different opinions that the media makes. Lacson on the other hand, who ran as an independent candidate and also used the color Red in his campaign, is a former police officer and known for his strict policies that appeals to rightist ideology.

With that, the color red in politics is automatically seen from a negative perspective which affects and weakens the objectives of the candidates who use this color. It also creates a divided perception among the Filipino people. That kind of conception of the color red marked the nation which up to this day is still acknowledged by the public and seen the same way.

It is also noteworthy that in the questionnaire, the color blue is the only indicator that obtained a verbal description as “strongly agree”. This gives light to understanding more about the universal meaning of color used in political campaigns. According to the research conducted by Kanchier (2018), it turns out that most of the things that are associated with blue are positive. Culturally, there are countless reasons to explain why the color blue has a positive connotation. When it comes to Eastern cultures, the color is related to immortality and good health. On the other hand, Western cultures relate the color to trust and security which adds plenty of reasons as to why the color is considered as tranquilizing and peaceful. In the blog entitled “The Meaning of the Color Blue”, in terms of its political aspect, the color blue associates itself to police officers as it is the usual color of their uniform. Additionally, in the same blog, the color is considered to be attached to conservatism, unity, stability, depth, expertise, and intelligence.

The result of this study also gives credence to Cuervo-Cazurra, Doh, Giuliani, Montiel, & Park, (2022), their study on the UNSDG’s Pros and Cons for Managers of Multinationals. Their study states that multinationals/governments can freely use the SDG framework, logos, and colors in their communications without any external validation which leads to misuse of the SDGs colors as a mere signal of good intentions with no need to take them seriously. Voluntary codes issued by international organizations seem to be ineffective tools to drive the substantive changes needed to advance sustainable development agendas across the globe.

This is further confirmed by the results of the researchers’ Key Informant Interview, which states that the political colors used by the Presidential candidates have their own personal attached meanings. For example, Marcos’ campaign color, which is red, was adapted from his father, Ferdinand Marcos Sr. Rodredo’s campaign color, which is pink, represents women as she is the only opposite gender running for the Presidential race. Respondents also observed that Pacquiao’s campaign color, which is blue, originated from his boxing career. Meanwhile, Moreno’s campaign color, which is blue and white, represents the continuity of his legacy as city Mayor. And lastly, Lacson’s campaign colors, which are blue and red, embodies the ideals of law enforcement with him being a retired police officer.

Level of Agreement Among the Respondents if the Political Colors of the Presidential Candidates Represent their Political Platforms.

Table 2 shows the level of agreement among the respondents on the political colors of the presidential candidates and its representation to their political platforms. The overall mean

is 2.70, interpreted as agree. Based on the findings, the colors chosen by the 2022 Presidential candidates during their campaign trail have corresponded to the political platforms that they wish to market. Specifically, the colors pink and blue, displayed a high level of agreement perceived by the respondents to have represented the political platform of the politicians.

Table 2.

Level of agreement among the respondents if the political colors of the presidential candidates represent their political platforms.

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Description
1. The RED political colored used by presidential candidate BongBong Marcos represents unity	2.85	1.11	agree
2. The RED political colored used by presidential BongBong Marcos represents health amid the COVID19 pandemic	2.27	0.96	disagree
3. The RED political colored used by presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson represents fighting corruption	2.38	0.90	disagree
4. The RED political colored used by presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson represents economic recovery	2.31	0.76	disagree
5. The RED political colored used by presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson represents support to industries	2.31	0.83	disagree
6. The RED political colored used by presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson represents solutions to pandemic	2.18	0.76	disagree
7. The PINK political color used by presidential candidate Leni Robredo represents support to small businesses	3.13	0.77	agree
8. The PINK political color used by presidential candidate Leni Robredo represents the boosting / strengthening of Philippine industries	3.11	0.79	agree
9. The PINK political color used by presidential candidate Leni Robredo represents the restoration of trust in the government	3.16	0.80	agree
10. The PINK political color used by presidential candidate Leni Robredo represents the removal of discrimination in the workplace	3.16	0.81	agree
11. The PINK political color used by presidential candidate Leni Robredo represents support to the unemployed or people who lost their jobs	3.06	0.82	agree

12. The BLUE political color used by Manny Pacquiao represents the platform to stop or fight corruption	2.80	0.80	agree
13. The BLUE political color used by Manny Pacquiao represents the platform to stop poverty	2.76	0.77	agree
14. The BLUE political color used by Manny Pacquiao represents the improvement of internet signal	2.52	0.84	agree
15. The BLUE political color used by Manny Pacquiao represents health amid the COVID19 pandemic	2.57	0.76	agree
16. The BLUE political color used by Isko Moreno represents tourism	2.73	0.77	agree
17. The BLUE political color used by Isko Moreno represents support to public schools	2.68	0.76	agree
18. The BLUE political color used by Isko Moreno represents economic recovery	2.68	0.78	agree
19. The BLUE political color used by Isko Moreno represents support to industries	2.59	0.79	agree
Overall Mean	2.70		agree

On the other hand, Indicators 2 to 6, which garnered a mean ranging from 2.18-2.27, interpreted as disagree, implies that respondents have a moderate level of disagreement towards the representation of the political colors used by presidential candidates if it represents their platform. This result proves that the campaign colors, blue and pink, have enjoyed relative success in using their color in attributing their political platforms and brands. On the contrary, red only succeeded in BBM's brand activation on unity yet failed to associate the color with other platforms he wished to advocate.

Researchers have identified each of the candidate's socio-economic plans that they have committed to do when they win a seat. Marcos' unity campaign appeals to nationalism, saying that having a shared sense of national identity and a political community is useful in nation-building. However, the color red which BBM used to represent his political platform (unity) did not match the universal meaning of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which are poverty, gender equality, and quality education. Blue on the other hand, which was used by Lacson (Pro-Filipinos, fighting for corruption) corroborates the universal meaning of the color blue which falls under peace, justice, and strong institutions. However, the other universal meanings of blue did not corroborate such as clean water and sanitation, life below water, and global partnerships; Pacquiao, whose political platform is called 22- point agenda where he mentioned anti-corruption also matches the universal meaning of blue under peace, justice and strong institutions which he used as his political color. In addition, the color blue which Moreno used in his campaign matched the universal meaning of blue which is water

but it did not match the exact definition of that color like clean water and sanitation and the protection of marine lives, instead, he used water as a symbolic form of the flow of services. Robredo who used pink corroborated the universal meaning of that color (reduced inequalities) with her platform “Hanap Buhay para sa lahat”. However, poverty which is one of her political platforms did not corroborate the universal meaning of it.

The Chosen Political Colors as symbolism of the Platforms of the Presidential Candidates.

In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the colors chosen by the presidential candidates have multiple meanings and representations. Red: no poverty, quality education, gender equality, and decent work and economic growth; Pink: reduced inequalities; Blue: life below water, clean water and sanitation, peace justice, and strong institutions, partnership with the UNSDG.

However, after conducting interviews, the findings showed that the informants have different interpretations of the color chosen by the presidential candidates. The three (3) informants who knew the platforms of the Presidential candidates who used red positively agreed that the color perfectly interprets the platforms of Marcos- unity and Lacson - fighting corruption; the other two (2) interpreted the color as a symbol of “courage”; while the other two (2) stated that the color pertains to the Philippine flag; another one (1) interpreted it as a symbol of revolution. On the other hand, the pink which was used by Robredo was interpreted by two (2) informants as a symbol of hope; other two (2) as women empowerment; and another one (1) as a symbol of protest and activism. As for Pacquiao, Moreno, and Lacson who used blue, two (2) informants interpreted the color to be a symbol of peace; other two (2) claimed that it was a symbolism of the Philippine flag; one (1) as a symbol of “pagbabago”; one (1) as a symbol of connection; another one (1) pertained that it was used to represent the people (the poor); the other one (1) agreed that it represents water; another one (1) stated that it symbolizes confidence; as for the other one (1), it represents loyalty and authority. (refer to Appendix G)

The Chosen Political Colors of the Presidential Candidates and its Meaning.

Majority of the responses from the informants believe that the chosen political colors of the presidential candidates has nothing to do with their platforms instead, the chosen political colors of the presidential candidates are based on the different personal and political factors, which includes the following:

Political Legacy: Our findings suggest that politicians have a strong interest in cultivating an enduring legacy. Individuals, as well as politicians, believe that the final test of a leader is that he leaves behind in others the conviction and will to carry on. This is mirrored in the responses from our interviewees, in which they have expressed an understanding why Marcos ran for presidency; to continue his father’s legacy, and Moreno; to carry on his legacy as Mayor of Manila.

Own-defined political Agenda: Color is subjective but it is also loaded with different meanings. Political individuals have observed how colors are used in social and political movements and used it for their personal political ambitions. While the UN SDG presents a set of colors with specific targets and indicators that can be used by various governmental institutions and personalities, this was not relayed with the personal contexts the candidates attached to their campaign colors.

Political Branding: Each political candidate has their own brand identity. It is through their branding which determines how they communicate and strategize their political campaign. Marcos' campaign color, red, has succeeded to demonstrate unity. Roberdo's campaign color, which is pink, made a mark in expressing hope. And Blue, from presidential candidates Pacquiao and Moreno, has established peace and ideals of law enforcement.

The Subjectivity on the Interpretation of Political Colors

After the interview, it was revealed that the informants have their own interpretations of the political colors of the presidential candidates. Three of the informants disagreed with the meaning of colors that the presidential candidates used in the campaign; two agreed that the chosen colors corresponded to their platforms; the other two stated that the meaning of political colors is subjective; one answered that not all the presidential candidates achieved the correspondence between their colors and their platforms; and one respondent shows no interest in meddling in politics.

The answers of the informants were based on their perception of the question on what are the best represented platforms by the Presidential candidates chosen political colors, whereas, Marcos' campaign color, which is red, is best represented through his platforms on unity. Pink on the other hand, as Robredo's political color, is best represented through her platforms on social services, transparency, and accountability. Pacquiao's campaign color, which is blue, is best represented through his platforms for the underprivileged; Moreno's campaign color, which is blue and white, is best represented through his platform/tagline "*Mabilis ang daloy ng Aksyon*" and on social services; Lacson's campaign color, which is blue and red, is best represented through his platforms on nationalism and anti-corruption. Lastly, other informants answered that they don't know the presidential candidates' platforms.

This result can be further analyzed with the study of Killip (2021), which states that creating a point of differentiation is one of the challenging parts of all political brand marketers or managers. People are attracted to brands that project messages they like, so it is important for the political brand managers to understand that if their brand carries a message, it carries equity. And colors are an excellent way to convey a product or express the unique personality of the brand.

Conclusions

In a very complex nature of politics, color serves as a low-level heuristic for voters, especially the use of campaign color as a symbolism of platforms. In the recent Philippine Presidential elections, color has been very helpful in representing and associating with your candidates' political stance and choices. This is an attempt at shedding light on the role of colors in political branding and statistically establishing the level of agreement on the universal meaning of campaign colors.

The study showed that the color Red used by Marcos and Lacson was the most misinterpreted color because of its historical and psychological connotations which led to its negative symbolism. In contrast, both colors Pink, used by Robredo, and Blue, used by Pacquiao; Moreno; and Lacson, with their psychological, cultural, and political aspect, indicated a positive result to the respondents. Furthermore, all the colors that were used by the Presidential Candidates aligned with their respective platforms except the color red used by Marcos which was only aligned with its platform about Unity. As to whether the colors corresponded with the candidates' platforms, the study revealed that the informants had their different interpretations of the colors. In this study, instead of the political meaning of the color, the presidential candidates' platforms were based on their personal and political factors. Overall, the research suggests that there's still no established meaning of political colors in our country and that voters still take issue with what the colors truly represent. That the supposed symbolism for platforms actually stands only for personal brands rather than political.

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