Facebook's influence on college student's political participation based on the cognitive and communication mediation model

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A B S T R A C T

Political participation is an essential element in establishing a stable democracy. With the advancement of technology, scholars argue that Facebook use influences political participation. In the Philippines, Facebook is one of the most popular social media platforms, and it is used daily for various reasons, such as to know and engage in political issues. However, most studies in the Philippines involving Facebook or social media dwelled on the traditional forms of participation in politics. Hence, this paper aimed to fill the gap by examining the influence of Facebook on the political participation of college students in the selected universities in the Philippines through Chen and Chan's Cognitive and Communication Mediation Model in 2017. The study employed a non-experimental quantitative approach using an exploratory research design with path analysis. The finding shows that motivations for Facebook use, such as guidance, surveillance, and social utility, are significantly linked to online and offline political participation as mediated by news use, expression, political knowledge, and internal political efficacy. In conclusion, the path model indicates that respondents' Facebook use directly and indirectly influences online and offline political participation.

RESUMO

A participação política é um elemento essencial no estabelecimento de uma democracia estável. Com o avanço da tecnologia, estudiosos argumentam que o uso do Facebook influencia a participação política. Nas Filipinas, o Facebook é uma das plataformas de mídia social mais populares e é usado diariamente por várias razões, como para conhecer e se envolver em questões políticas. No entanto, a maioria dos estudos nas Filipinas envolvendo o Facebook ou mídias sociais se concentrou nas formas tradicionais de participação política. Portanto, este trabalho teve como objetivo preencher essa lacuna examinando a influência do Facebook na participação política de estudantes universitários nas universidades selecionadas nas Filipinas através do Modelo de Mediação Cognitiva e de Comunicação de Chen e Chan em 2017. O estudo empregou uma abordagem quantitativa não experimental utilizando um desenho de pesquisa exploratória com análise de caminho. O resultado mostra que as motivações para o uso do Facebook, como orientação, vigilância e utilidade social, estão significativamente ligadas à participação política online e offline, mediadas pelo uso de notícias, expressão, conhecimento político e eficácia política interna. Em conclusão, o modelo de caminho indica que o uso do Facebook pelos respondentes influencia diretamente e indiretamente a participação política online e offline.

Introduction

Every year Facebook company creates something to make Facebook more beneficial for everyone online. From being exclusively for Harvard University students, it reached 2.38 billion active monthly users worldwide in 2019. It is primarily a tool to communicate not just with family but with anyone around the world. Facebook has developed as a source of information that allows people to read and share online. Indeed, it has grown more prominent, and its scope has become more comprehensive from a simple to a sophisticated avenue for various aspects. Notably, the events in the US 2008 Election and Arab Spring in 2011 motivated many scholars to study social media and political participation relationships.

Political participation encompasses involvement in actions aimed at influencing government actions, either by directly impacting the creation or implementation of public policies or indirectly by affecting the selection of individuals responsible for formulating those policies (Brady et at., 2015; Hooghe et al., 2014). Scholars assert that political participation in the 1940s to 1950s mostly came from the casting of votes and campaign activities, while in the early 1960s, it included campaigning by politicians and parties and contact between citizens and government officials (Van Deth, 2014; Theocharis & Van Deth, 2018, Weiss, 2020). These forms became known as 'conventional' or formal modes of participation, which continued to expand because of social developments (Van Deth, 2014).

On the other hand, in the early 1970s activities such as protest, rejections, signing a petition, boycott, participation in marches, and demonstrations were referred to as the 'unconventional' or informal modes of participation since these were not what the social norms dictated (Van Deth, 2014; Pitti, 2018; Pontes, Henn & Griffiths, 2018). From there, more social movements and civic engagement transpired in the early 1990s. Thus, scholars suggest that citizens' active political participation is an enabling factor that develops and strengthens democracy as a rule (Schulz, 2005; Huntington, 2014; Kruikemeier, 2014; Jacinto, 2018;).

The nature and the development of political participation are becoming more interesting to investigate, mainly because of technology. As highlighted by a scholar, "in the evolving landscape of digital politics, e-participation presents novel opportunities, including the creation of webcasts and podcasts, engaging with surveys, involvement in web portals, chat rooms, polls, and decision-making games, as well as e-petitioning and e-voting" (Hartleb, 2017, p.305). These new forms of participation are known as 'online participation,' adapted from the 'offline' definitions, which also include online political information, contacting politicians via e-mail, or petitioning online (Pontes et al., 2018).

The online forms of political activism became the new trend and focus of research as social media became popular globally. In the US, Barack Obama's social media popularity and using technology to convey his call for "hope and change' has contributed to his triumph in the 2008 elections (Michaelsen ,2015). In the 2016 US Election, Kim and Ellison (2022) analysis

identifies that social media's visibility features, which allow online users to view others engaging in political acts, lead to similar offline activities. It highlights the potential of social media as a platform for fostering political engagement through observational learning. However, in the study of Matthes (2022), while social media is understood to help deepen political engagement, as it is with youth — the majority of whom spend their time on social media to be entertained — it could undermine such participation, the study found. This discrepancy results in a constant gap in voter turnout between younger and older generations, even given increased social media use.

In Europe, Nulty et al. (2016) revealed that people become more active on Twitter and Facebook because they desire to be involved in political matters, especially during the EU Parliamentary General Election in the 2014 campaign period. Also, Petrović & Bešić (2019) found that people who consider their countries' elections undemocratic are likelier to turn to social media to find political information. This greater dependence on social media is associated with increased political engagement and a more pessimistic assessment of the democratic process.

In Southern Denmark, Ohme (2019) examines how digital media influences perceptions of citizenship and political engagement. The study finds that more profound engagement with digital media relates to a more individualized notion of citizenship, emphasizing personal expression and self-actualization, boosting online and offline political participation. Fan & Zhang (2022) reveal that infrequent users of social media, as well as those skeptical of such platforms, have lower satisfaction with democracy. Government transparency can reduce the effects of skepticism but is not as effective in alleviating infrequent use. Such findings are a reminder of the need for inclusive digital policies to promote democratic engagement.

In Nigeria, Abdu et al. (2017) concluded that there was no notable correlation between Facebook usage and engagement with politicians or online participation among the youth. It implies that the candidates' political affiliations and interests matter in the youth's choice to interact with these candidates since the youth possess idealism for their country and countrymen. However, the study confirms a connection between Facebook use, quality of information, political interest, and online political participation among youth (Abdu et al., 2017). Ajaegbu and Ajaegbu (2024) examine the role of social media in the political processes of Sub-Saharan Africa in the last ten years. Their research indicates that social media channels are essential for citizens to voice their ideas, galvanize dissent, and counteract unsatisfactory government behavior, fueling a "New Democratization" throughout the region. While social media supports higher political engagement, the authors argue it suffers from government distrust and overregulation. These results highlight the transformative effect of social media on political engagement and governance in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Asia, Hong & Lin (2017) reveal that the Singaporean youth are more confident in using online news media sources because of the ease of access, lower cost, and perceived safety of online social media platforms. They further claim that there is a vast opportunity offered by social media use as it can be the new online channel whereby the youth can learn more about politicians and the issues related to public concerns. Also, studies in Indonesia illustrate how social media shapes political participation for Indonesian youth. Saud et al. (2020) and Saud & Margono (2021) highlight how platforms like Facebook and Twitter catalyze political awareness, empowering young people to speak out and participate in democratic processes like protests.

Hamid et al. (2022) further substantiates that while information quality forms trust, political marketing activities directly influence turnout. These findings reaffirm social media's central role in Indonesia's political engagement and democratization. In Pakistan, Ahmad et al. (2019) note that Facebook increases political awareness and offline participation among rural Pakistani students. Arshad & Khurram (2020) present evidence that government transparency and responsiveness on social media increases online political engagement. These studies highlight the dual potential for social media to empower individuals and strengthen trust between citizens and governments for meaningful democratic engagement.

However, the availability and accessibility of social media in parts of the world are limited or restrained, especially in autocratic states like China, where political activism is highly discouraged with barriers such as communication surveillance and stringent censorship by the authorities. Nonetheless, these conditions motivated Chen & Chan in 2017 to study the democratizing or counter-democratizing function of social media in China. Chen & Chan (2017) examined the motivations of social media use by analyzing its influence on political participation by integrating the Uses and Gratifications theory and the cognitive/communication mediation model. They claim that China's political environment is a significant factor in the extent of social media use and political participation, both online and offline, among Chinese college students.

In a recent study, Fatema et al. (2022) explored the impact of social networking sites (SNS) on political participation in China. Their study shows that SNS enables both shared and private forms of political action: traditional ones, vaguer and conventional — right contacting journalists, engaging in petitions and public outcry, and private tricks like lobbying one's friends in the circles of the government. Moreover, they find that affiliation with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) strongly predicts participation in contacting-lobbying and CCP-initiated political activities. Hence, they argue that SNS represent alternative venues of political involvement in unfree societies.

In contrast to China, the Philippines exhibits widespread active usage of social media platforms like Facebook. According to ESTRATX report in 2018, there were 67 million internet and social media users out of a total population of 105.7 million, with the highest percentage

of the 23 million users falling within the age range of 18 to 24 years. While this presents an opportunity for researchers to delve into its influence on both offline and online participation among Filipinos, some existing literature in the Philippines primarily focuses on traditional forms of political engagement (e.g., Salvador et al., 2017; and David et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, recent studies demonstrate how social media is highly nuanced in influencing Filipino youth's political and civic engagement and articulates major mediators and barriers to this process. Active political discussions are vital to translating this social media use into actual participation; getting active on platforms is not enough to influence actions (Bunquin, 2020). Narido et al. (2022) and Ibardeloza et al. (2022) show some of the duality of social media, where it brings political and societal awareness. At the same time, they can also decrease engagement through negative experiences or misinformation, highlighting the need for digital literacy. Moreover, Velasco et al. (2024) and Obenza & Rabaca (2024) examine the specific modalities and mediators of engagement.

Specifically, Velasco et al. (2024) highlights TikTok's and Instagram's unique impact on the quality of political participation. Obenza & Rabaca (2024) reveal that political efficacy is a key behavioral link between awareness and engagement. Collectively, these studies highlight the potential for transformation among Filipino youth through social media while identifying active dialogue, a strategic focus on specific platforms, and the cultivation of political efficacy as crucial vehicles for leveraging this impact.

Also, these studies in the Philippines have drawn from Gratifications Theory and Political Efficacy Models, which have never utilized the Cognitive and Communication Mediation Model. These frameworks fail to account for how cognitive engagement and communication behaviors mediate the impacts of social media use. Utilizing the such theoretical framework, this study fills a gap, providing an integrated understanding of youth political participation mechanisms in the new media environment.

Thus, the research conducted by Chen and Chan in 2017 prompted the present study to seek permission to replicate their framework. Upon obtaining consent, this paper would mark the first replication study, which primarily aims to analyze the influence of Facebook on the political participation of college students in selected universities in the Philippines, based on the Cognitive and Communication Mediation Model.

This paper specifically aims to answer the following questions: What is the extent of motivations for Facebook used, news consumption, expression, political knowledge, efficacy, online and offline political participation among the students? How do the motivations of the students' Facebook use affect their social media news consumption? How do the students' social media news consumptions affect their social media expression? How do the students' social media news consumption and social media expression influence their political knowledge? How do the students' social media news consumption and social media expression

influence their internal political efficacy? How do the students' political knowledge and political efficacy influence their offline and online political participation?

This research is crucial as contemporary circumstances necessitate exploration into both traditional and digital avenues of political involvement, particularly among the youth who are active users of Facebook. Most significantly, its findings could shed light on whether Facebook significantly influences political participation within a modern liberal democracy like the Philippines.

Most of the literature reviewed concentrates on conventional forms of political participation, such as election campaigns and voting decisions. Furthermore, a significant portion of the literature needs an analytical framework that systematically identifies the factors influencing offline and online political engagement among young people through social media. Consequently, this paper seeks to fill this gap by examining the relationship between Facebook usage and political participation among college students, employing the analytical framework proposed by Chen and Chen (2017).

The Introduction must contextualize the proposal of the manuscript, justification and objectives.

Design and Method

This study employed a quantitative methodology with a non-experimental research design, utilizing exploratory data analysis. Specifically, it utilized path analysis method used to explore causal relationships among variables through regression analyses within a theoretical model (Stage et al., 2015).

Figure 1.

Cognitive and Communication Mediation Model (Chen & Chan, 2017)
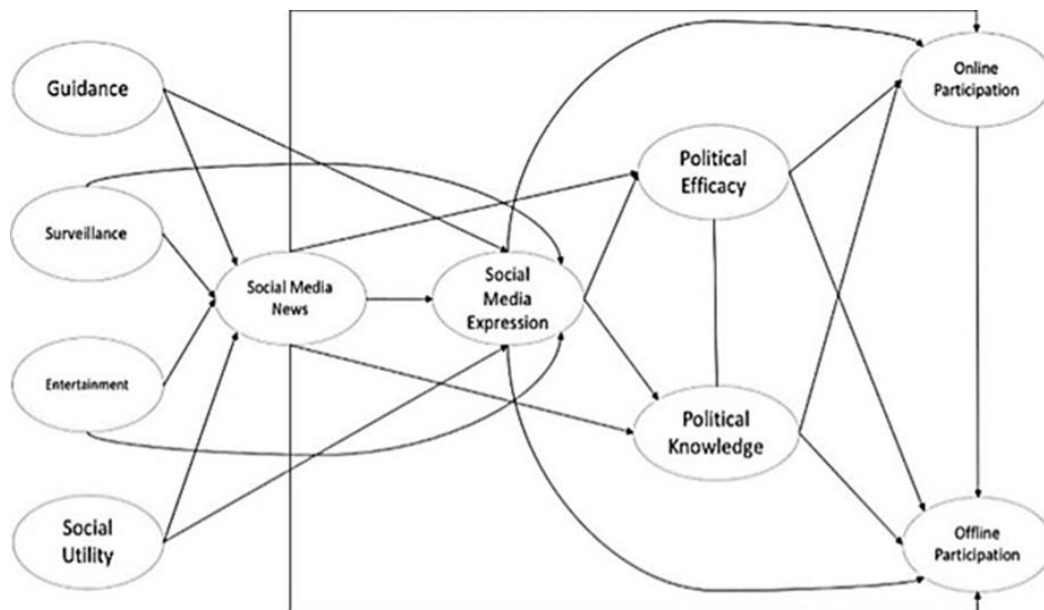
O – motivations, S – Social media news, R- Social media expression, O- efficacy & knowledge, R- online & offline political participation

The framework of this paper replicates Chen & Chan (2017) Cognitive and Communication Mediation Model integrates the Uses and Gratification theory (U & G theory) and Cognitive/communication mediation models (O-S-R-O-R). The U & G theory argues that media users consume media content to satisfy their different goals, wants, or needs (Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Whiting & Williams, 2013; Musa et al., 2015). Conversely, the O-S-R-O-R framework (Orientation, Stimuli, Reasoning, Outcome, Response) was frequently employed to analyze the connection between citizens' communication and participation (e.g., Cho et al., 2009; Jung et al., 2011; Chan, 2016; Liu et al., 2020).

After careful examination of Chen and Chan (2017), the model framework showed excellent fit: $\chi2(21) = 28.48$, $p = .10$; CFI = .99; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .03. Thus, the present paper argues that using Chen & Chan (2017) model provides a robust theoretical framework to determine the answers to the specific questions of the present research in the Philippine context.

This study adopted the instrument from Chen and Chan (2017), who also used the items under each variable from the literature (i.e., Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Shah et al,2005; and Niemi et al., 1991). Hence, the motivation variables come in the form of a Likert Scale with a 5 – point scale, ranging from "strongly agree," which is the highest scale equivalent to 5, "agree" which is equal to 4, "neither agree nor disagree" which is equivalent to 3, "disagree" which is equivalent to 2, and "strongly disagree" which is the lowest scale equal to 1.

A 5-point scale was utilized to measure the frequency of Facebook news consumption and expression with the following equivalents: "Never" being the lowest in the scale with an equivalent of 1, "Rarely" equivalent to 2, "Sometimes" equivalent to 3, "Frequently" equivalent to 4, and "Very Frequently" as the highest in the scale, equivalent to 5. For political knowledge, the respondents answered six questions. Correct answers were coded as 1 while a wrong or blank item was coded as 0; the right answers were then summed up to form a scale. Also, a 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the respondent's level of agreement, ranging from 5 representing "Strongly Agree" to 1 "Strongly Disagree" for internal political efficacy. Lastly, it used a 5-point Likert scale to measure the offline political participation and online political participation of the respondents: "Never" being the lowest with an equivalent of 1, "Rarely" equivalent to 2, "Sometimes" equivalent to 3, "Frequently" equivalent to 4 and "Very Frequently" as the highest in the scale, equivalent to 5.

The research employed Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of the items within the survey questionnaire. This measure indicates the reliability of a scale's internal consistency, fit-for-purpose, and trustworthiness (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011; Robertson & Evans, 2020). Most survey questions per variable Cronbach's alpha were ³ 0.70, while social utility (0.55) and political knowledge (0.50) had values below 0.60. According to Robertson & Evans (2020), possible reasons for lower Cronbach's alpha value involve multidimensional constructs, short scales, and construct variability. In such cases, social utility motivations

indicate fewer items in the scale with diverse constructs. At the same time, the measure of political knowledge had multidimensional constructs since it targeted their understanding, information, and awareness of the government. Hence, a caution in the interpretation of findings was properly observed.

Data Collection

Investigating the college students' participation as may be influenced by Facebook use can contribute to political dynamics and further intensify the electoral campaign or contest. Hence, the researcher secured first permission from selected universities by submitting a request letter attached with a Certificate of Ethics Review, Informed Consent Form, and questionnaire for their perusal. With the positive feedback from each research environment, the researcher employed a face-to-face recruiting method to reduce the risk of bias and capture the target respondents of this research. The researcher introduced herself, explained the purpose of her survey, and asked if they would be willing to participate. In addition, the researcher stated that if the respondents felt cautious or insecure about responding to the survey, they could decline to participate. The researcher also guaranteed that they understood the survey's objectives, benefits, and risks and assured them that their personal information would remain confidential before they answered the questionnaire and read and signed the informed consent form.

The survey was delimited among students taking up Political Science and Public Administration from the three universities mainly because they belong to the most active social media users (18 years old-24 years old), and their attitudes, perspectives, and beliefs can provide the needed information to the research objective. Due to the Data Privacy Act, two universities out of three refused to provide the list needed for probability sampling. Thus, the study employed a convenient sampling method based on who was willing to participate and who was present during the data gathering. Of the 419 enrolled students, the study secured 372 respondents, representing 88.78% of the target population. With a high response rate, the sample is a good reflection of the traits of the population, reducing sampling error, and ensuring the data is highly representative (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). Due to the homogeneity of the population related to the variables studied, this method is practical and trustworthy, resulting in an approximation of the accuracy of probability sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Walliman, 2021).

Data Analysis

This paper analyzes the data using a statistical technique called path analysis. This technique was developed in the 1920s to help social scientists examine the hypothesized relationship between multiple variables involved in their studies (Stage et al., 2015). Path analysis is a method employed to explore causal patterns among variables and conduct regression analyses to examine influences on the dependent variables within the study's

theoretical model (Stage et al., 2015; Keith, 2019). The main objective of path analysis is to provide an estimated magnitude and implication of hypothesized causal connections among sets of variables, visually represented using path diagrams (Stage et al., 2015). Since the study sought to analyze the influence of Facebook on the political participation of college students, it is considered the most fitting technique since it depicts the influence of one variable on another (Spaeth, 1975; Mueller & Hancock, 2018). Furthermore, the direct effect arises when an independent variable affects the dependent variable, while the indirect effect happens when an independent variable affects a dependent variable through a mediating variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Figueredo et al.,2013; Memon et al., 2019). Thus, choosing Path analysis was crucial in determining how motivations, Facebook news consumption, expression, political knowledge, and efficacy influence college students' online and offline political participation.

Results and Discussion

The results below show the descriptive data analysis with Cronbach's alpha, each variable's internal consistency and scale reliability, and the interpretation based on the overall mean score of each variable.

Table 1.

Extent of Motivations of Facebook Use

Variables	M	SD	alpha	Interpretation
Guidance	3.46	0.38	0.80	Agree
Surveillance	3.45	0.18	0.82	Agree
Entertainment	3.68	0.29	0.79	Agree
Social Utility	4.05	0.59	0.55	Agree

Table 1 above presents the extent of motivations for Facebook use in terms of the respondents' guidance, surveillance, entertainment, and social utility. The respondents agreed that guidance motivation stimulates them to use Facebook to know and learn about public opinion, political issues, and public officials on Facebook (M=3.46, SD=.38, α=.80). The respondents also 'agree' that surveillance motivation (M=3.45, SD=18, α=.82) is a factor in using Facebook to stay informed about the current social and political issues which are consistent with the work of David et al. (2019). Also, the respondents agree that they used Facebook for entertainment (M=3.68, SD=.29, α=.79), which involves passing time, amusement, relaxation, and leisure (Chen & Chan, 2017; Kaye & Johnson, 2002). Hence, it suggests that the respondents' Facebook use brings excitement, pleasure, and fun.

Lastly, the respondents 'agree' that social utility motivates them to use Facebook to communicate, talk, and share their opinions with their friends online (M=4.05, SD=.59, α=.55). Like Marcelo (2017), the finding indicates that respondents share their ideas on

political matters on Facebook. The results mean that the respondents find Facebook valuable for conveying their insights on politics or anything significant. Hence, speaking their minds and influencing others' opinions on Facebook is familiar and comfortable for the respondents.

Table 2.

Extent of Facebook Use for News Consumption and Expression

Variables	M	SD	alpha	Interpretation
Facebook news consumption	3.26	0.13	0.78	Sometimes
Facebook use for expression	2.48	0.20	0.83	Rarely

As the most popular social media platform in the Philippines, Facebook has become a new medium of news information. Table 2 above reveals that respondents sometimes use Facebook for news consumption from central or local government accounts (M=3.90, SD=0.11). Although the literature says that Facebook is an excellent platform for news information and sharing (Hong & Lin, 2017; David et al., 2019; Petrović & Bešić, 2019), respondents may have a different and most preferred source of information. In the study by Fan & Zhang (2022), infrequent social media users also exhibit skepticism towards these platforms, which can help explain the low news consumption on Facebook.

Facebook can be a powerful tool for underprivileged groups such as the youth, where they can freely express their opinions, dissent, and views on government issues and policy-making (Bunquin, 2020; Ibardeloza et al.,2022; Hamid et al.,2022). The result above shows that respondents rarely use Facebook for political expression (M=2.48, SD=0.20). It implies that even though Facebook offers an avenue to engage in political matters and share opinions on politics, it is still a matter of personal choice, level of confidence, and interest.

Table 3.

Extent of Political Efficacy & Political Knowledge

Variables	M	SD	alpha	Interpretation
Internal political efficacy	3.90	0.11	0.81	Agree
Political knowledge	0.88	0.12	0.50	Knowledgeable

Internal political efficacy stands out as one of the paramount core predictors of democratic participation. As depicted in Table 3, the respondents affirm that they possess sufficient capability to comprehend and engage in politics (M=3.90, SD=0.11). It affirms the study of Obenza & Rabaca (2024), which showed that Filipino youth have a high level of political efficacy. This indicates their confidence in comprehending and actively engaging in policymaking and related processes.

An essential aspect of active political participation involves possessing knowledge and comprehension of political matters. Table 3 further demonstrates that the respondents exhibit a considerable level of knowledge regarding government officials, elections, and branches of government (M=0.88, SD=0.12). Understanding government officials and institutions suggests an awareness of the system and procedures within the Philippine bureaucracy.

Table 4.

Extent of Offline Political Participation and Online Political Participation

Variables	M	SD	alpha	Interpretation
Offline political participation	2.57	0.38	0.70	Rarely
Online political participation	2.59	0.43	0.82	Rarely

Scholars assert that political participation constitutes a vital component of a thriving democracy (Chan, 2016; Narido et al.,2022). As illustrated in Table 4, respondents exhibit limited involvement and interest in participating in civic and public activities, such as attending community assemblies, joining civil society organizations, engaging in campaign activities, attending rallies, and other forms of offline participation (M=2.57, SD=0.38). Previous research suggests that decreased offline participation stems from the substantial physical effort, financial resources, and time commitment required from citizens (Ohme, 2019).

Additionally, Table 4 reveals that the respondents exhibit infrequent participation in online political activities (M=2.59, SD=0.43). Fan & Zhang (2022) revealed that democratic dissatisfaction is related to skepticism in online participation. This suggests that despite the potential for platforms like Facebook to facilitate political engagement, respondents seldom utilize them to mobilize social or political campaigns because they are skeptical about the government and platforms. Thus, although online participation typically entails lower costs and demands less effort, respondents rarely engage in such activities via Facebook.

Path Model of the influence of Facebook use on Political PArticipation

Figure 2 below shows the full model to depict the influence of Facebook use on political participation. It reveals the direct and indirect relationships between the variables examined.

Figure 2.

Path Model on the influence of Facebook use on political participation
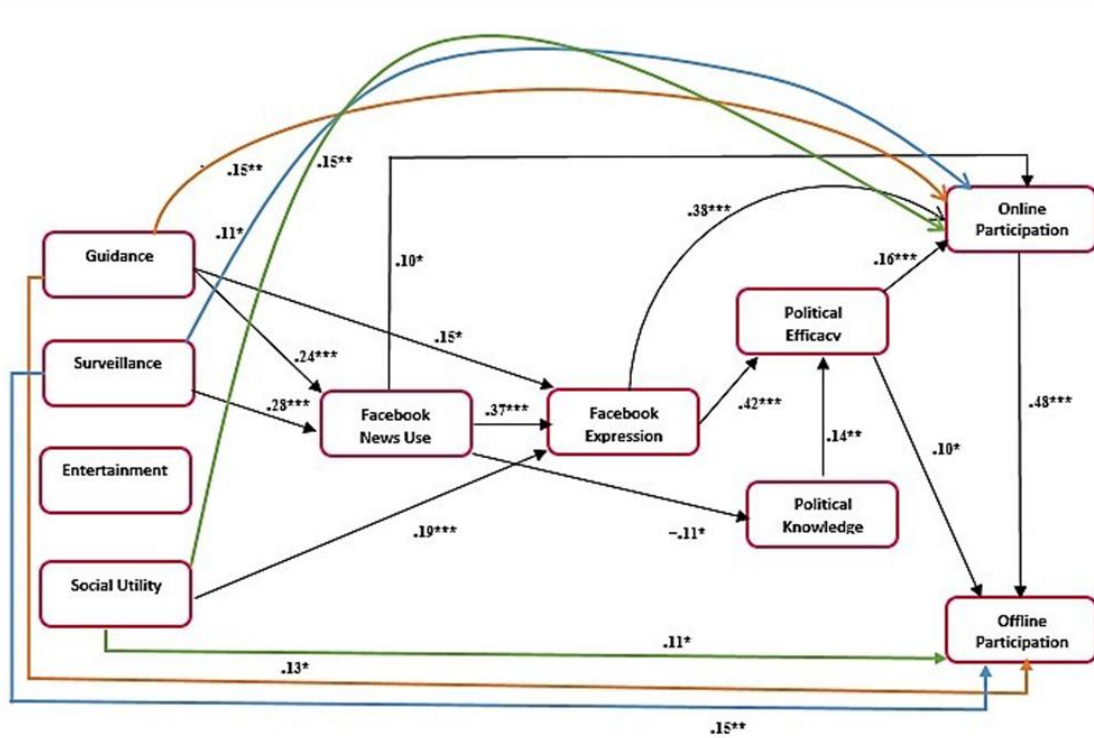
Legend: p < .001 – very highly significant *** p < .01 – highly significant **
p < .05 – significant *

Indirect relationships between variables

In terms of guidance **(.24)** and surveillance **(.28)** motivations both have a very highly significant relationship to Facebook news use. This finding affirms the idea that the initial orientation (first O) or motivations affect the stimuli (S) or Facebook news use. It implies that the interest in learning more about the government, knowing others' opinions on a political issue, and understanding political affairs motivate the respondents to access or consume news information from Facebook. Hence, similar to previous studies (e.g. Chen & Chan, 2017; Petrović & Bešić, 2019; Arshad & Khurram, 2020), the desire to be politically aware and the information-seeking of an individual can yield a positive effect on Facebook news consumption.

Further, the result shows that entertainment motivation does not predict political participation since it has no significant effect on the variables such as Facebook news consumption expression, political knowledge, and efficacy, indicating that Facebook entertainment motivations do not have a connection with the online and offline political participation among college students, a finding similar to Chen and Chan (2017).

Moreover, the social utility motivations of the respondents had no relation to Facebook news consumption. The finding is different from Chen and Chan (2017), which revealed that Chinese college students use social media to engage in political discussion

and access critical and mostly censored information under an autocratic rule in China. Fatema et al. (2022) also revealed that social media in China is an alternative avenue for political involvement because traditional media are mostly restricted and controlled. It implies that the more they want to talk about public issues, the more they are motivated to access information on social media. In the Philippines, however, the result suggests that the availability and accessibility of news information in several mediums do not force the respondents to communicate and exchange ideas with others on Facebook, especially among Filipino college students.

On the stimuli (S) and reasoning (R) variables, Facebook news consumption has a very high positive relation to Facebook use for political expression **(.37)**. It confirms previous studies (e.g., Chen and Chan,2017; Hong et al.,2017; Abdu et al.,2017; and Pap et al. ,2018), revealing that news consumption predicts political expression on social media platforms. David et al. (2019) argued that social media is a convenient and inexpensive tool that allows Filipinos to obtain current news and share their personal views, implying that the respondents' exposure and consumption of pertinent issues on Facebook can engender political expression. Hence, the persistence of reactions, opinions, and criticisms in matters involving government policymaking on Facebook are consequences of Facebook users' information-seeking motivations.

The finding also reveals that Facebook news use directly links to online political participation **(.10).** This finding confirms that consuming political news information on Facebook can positively influence online political participation. Ibardeloza et al. (2022) showed how social media exposure relates to greater sensitivity and engagement in social issues. However, exposure to misinformation is widespread, making digital literacy education essential for informed and responsible participation.

Moreover, the result reveals that Facebook use for political expression shows a very highly significant relationship to online political participation **(.38).** Thus, frequent use of Facebook to voice public concerns or dissent can yield more meaningful opportunities for participating in the online political collective campaign. According to Narido et al. (2022), Filipino youth use social media to express their opinions on topics they are passionate about. This suggests that the more interested they are in an issue, the more likely they will engage with it online which also supports previous studies in Indonesia and Sub-Sahara (e.g. Arshad & Khurram, 2020; Saud & Margono, 2021; Ajaegbu & Ajaegbu, 2024).

Further, Facebook news consumption has a direct but negative influence on political knowledge **(-.11).** The negative relationship between Facebook news consumption and political knowledge opposes Jung et al. (2011), who found a positive correlation between news media use and political knowledge. Nonetheless, the inverse effect denotes that the respondents' acquired information about government policies or national issues may have a negative impact on how they view and understand politics. Similar to the findings of Chen and Chan (2017), the results indicate that heightened political awareness can lead individuals to

adopt a more skeptical stance towards information encountered on social media platforms. Consequently, factors such as information richness and credibility should be taken into account when utilizing Facebook as a source for news consumption to mitigate the spread of misinformation regarding politics, particularly among Filipino youth (Petrović & Bešić, 2019; Arshad & Khurram, 2020; Fan & Zhang, 2022).

Interestingly, the findings also suggest that there is no relationship between the respondents' use of Facebook for political expression and their level of political knowledge. Contrary to Chen and Chan's (2017) observation, the finding suggests that sentiments, views, and opinions about politics that the respondents post on Facebook are not necessarily related to their knowledge and understanding about the system of governance in the country. According to Hamid et al. (2022), information quality and social media reputation affect how they engage and perceive politics. Hence, exercising freedom of expression through Facebook may not automatically reflect or improve political consciousness among the respondents.

Moreover, Figure 2 reveals that Facebook news consumption has an indirect positive effect on political efficacy through Facebook use for expression **(.42).** The finding affirms Chen and Chan (2017), which discovers that 'seeking news information and expressing opinions can engender internal political efficacy.' Additionally, the result suggests that the respondents' exposure to relevant news information and confidence to voice their ideas on Facebook positively affects their perceived capacity to understand and influence political processes.

Likewise, the findings align with Chan's (2016) emphasis on the significance of news media as a key precursor to political efficacy, as it aids in the acquisition of knowledge and comprehension of pertinent political and social issues. Obenza & Rabaca (2024) found that despite adolescent youths' high levels of political interest, their political efficacy and social media engagement are moderate. It implies that the confidence to enact change in politics is positively associated with the depth of news media consumption and the expression of informed opinions on platforms like Facebook.

Regarding the outcome (O) variables, Figure 3 depicts a positive correlation **(0.14)** between political knowledge and political efficacy, which subsequently exhibits a significant association with both online **(0.16)** and offline **(0.10)** political participation. This implies that the political knowledge of the respondents indirectly influences their online and offline political participation through their internal political efficacy. This result is quite different from Chen & Chan (2017), which revealed that Chinese college students' political cognitions affect online and offline political participation. This nuance arises from the fact that Chinese citizens' understanding of their political system already serves as a motivating factor for political participation. Conversely, among Filipino college students, political consciousness influences their perceived ability to comprehend and influence political processes, thereby impacting their online and offline participation in politics. Therefore, it suggests that political knowledge alone does not directly impact political engagement. This assertion supports Jung et al. (2011),

who argued that political involvement is an outcome of internal political efficacy, which is predicted by the level of political knowledge.

The findings also reveal a highly significant relationship between the response (R) variables, with online political participation demonstrating a strong association with offline political involvement **(0.48).** It confirms the previous works of Chen & Chan (2017) and Jung et al (2011), which reveal that greater online participation predicts active participation in offline activities. It suggests that involvement in collective political activities on Facebook is correlated with offline political activities. It also supports the analysis of Kim and Ellison (2022) which state that social media's visibility features enable users to see others participating in political acts, encouraging similar offline behavior, particularly among politically homogenous networks. It underscores social media's potential to enhance political engagement through observational learning. Hence, the more active respondents in online political movements tend to become more involved in offline political activities. Vigorous use of Facebook can influence political activism, both online and offline, through motivations, news consumption, political expression, and political cognition of Facebook users.

Direct relationships between variables

Upon further analysis, it becomes apparent that there exists a direct linkage between the independent variables (motivations) and the dependent variables (online and offline political participation). As depicted in Figure 3, motivations such as guidance, surveillance, and social utility serve as predictors of political participation. Specifically, guidance motivations show a positive correlation with both online **(0.15)** and offline political participation **(0.13).** It suggests that the respondents' desire to expand their understanding of the governmental system, politicians, and political affairs can serve as a driving force behind their involvement in politics, whether through offline or online means. Conversely, the motivation for surveillance demonstrates a noteworthy association with both online **(0.11)** and offline political participation **(0.15).** It indicates that when respondents are highly inclined to use Facebook to seek information related to their political interests, they show increased engagement in political activities, both online and offline. The results also support Ohme's study (2019), which revealed that increased digital engagement leads to a more individualistic view of citizenship focused on personal expression, which is linked to increased online and offline political participation levels.

The significant relationship between social utility motivation and both online **(0.15)** and offline political participation **(0.11)** indicates that respondents who are driven to utilize Facebook for communication purposes, to engage in discussions, and to express themselves directly, are more likely to participate in politics, both online and offline. The findings differ from Chen & Chan (2017), which revealed that surveillance directly and negatively influences offline political participation. Given the political landscape in China, it is observed that

increased engagement in political discourse on social media platforms correlates with a higher likelihood of decreased participation in offline activities.

Chen and Chan (2017) explained that the Chinese authorities' stringent censorship and suppression result in fear among Chinese youngsters. On the other hand, the results affirm the findings of Saud & Margono (2021) which highlight how social media platforms empower young Indonesians to express political views and participate in democratic processes, while Matthes (2022) acknowledges that social media can deepen political engagement.

The examination of direct effects shows that guidance, surveillance, and social utility motivations predict political participation in both aspects. In contrast, the indirect effects go through the mediating factors from the shortest to the longest path. Comparing the direct impact, guidance and social utility motivations show a higher relation to online participation, while surveillance motivations reveal a higher direct relationship to offline participation. It implies that respondents' guidance and social utility motivations for Facebook use have a more substantial direct influence on online political participation. In contrast, their surveillance motivations for Facebook use show a more significant impact on offline political participation, further suggesting that young Filipinos' motivations to use Facebook to access salient news information and communicate or express themselves to others can positively result in joining political mobilization or other activities online.

The finding is like the study of Basilisco (2015), which revealed that Filipinos' Facebook use is strongly related to seeking convenience because of its technological capabilities, with features useful for communication, connecting with friends or anyone, and promoting oneself conveniently. Moreover, government officials' information and others' opinions are very much accessible via Facebook (Basilisco, 2015). Therefore, the accessibility and convenience of Facebook's feature tools elucidate the direct correlation between the respondents' motivations related to guidance and social utility and their engagement in online political participation. It also supports Arshad & Khurram (2020) who emphasized that active and open government communication on social media encourages citizens to engage in greater online political engagement.

On the other hand, surveillance motivations show a higher direct impact on offline political activities. This result confirms Basilisco's (2015) findings, which demonstrated a positive correlation between Filipinos' Facebook use and their motivations for seeking information that interests them. Further, David et al. (2019) revealed that higher political interest among Filipino youth, such as the interest to learn about politicians or government affairs, is strongly associated with their offline engagement in politics. It indicates that seeking information is motivated by political interest, resulting in active involvement in political and civic affairs offline.

Furthermore, the indirect effects of the motivations indicate that guidance, surveillance, and social utility are notably associated with online political participation,

mediated by factors such as news consumption, political expression, knowledge, and efficacy. It supports the findings of Velasco et al (2024) which revealed the role of digital spaces in shaping political awareness, activism, and discussions, particularly among younger generations in the Philippines.

The motivations to learn about public affairs, seek out political information, and make their voice heard have a higher possibility of being active in online political movements, as a subsequent impact of Facebook news consumption, political expression, knowledge, and internal efficacy. Participating in online campaigns for public interest is highly possible because of its accessibility and availability on social media platforms such as on Facebook (Jung et al., 2011; Abdu et al.,2017; Ibardeloza et al., 2022).

Basilisco et al. (2015) and Ahmad et al. (2019) further suggested that convenient aspects of Facebook use, including communication, information acquisition, and news consumption, can motivate social media users to engage more actively in online political participation. It argues that online political activities boost both awareness and activism offline, underscoring the importance of social media in political mobilization. Consequently, increased online political engagement is linked to the convenience factor inherent in Facebook usage, which satisfies the need for news information and expression, with mediation from levels of political knowledge and internal efficacy.

Conclusion

The replication of the Cognitive and Communication Mediation Model of Chen & Chan (2017) in the Philippine context enabled this paper to provide a comprehensive analysis of how Facebook influences political participation among its most active users in the country. Based on the findings, Facebook use can directly and indirectly influence online and offline political participation of college students in a modern liberal country such as the Philippines. Indeed, the significant relationships between the variables affirm the potential power of Facebook to engender political activism among Filipino youth. Since most motivations primarily affect news use or consumption, safeguarding and promoting reliable and quality news information on Facebook must be prioritized by the company as well as the political or social institutions that guide the youth and other social media users to make informed political decisions.

Future research could further examine news media content, political expression, and political knowledge by modifying the construct under each variable based on other literature in the Philippines' context. They could also compare generational differences in online and offline political involvement.

Motivations for using other social networks may also be identified and further examined for their impact on Filipinos' participation in political processes. A comparative study of how various social media platforms influence Filipinos' political

engagement, especially during elections, is also recommended. Lastly, future research may test a new theoretical model through a Structural Equation Model (SEM) by examining relationships between other factors (e.g., socioeconomic).

Limitations

The study has come with limitations. First, although this study utilizes path analysis, which provides insights into potential causal pathways, it may not yield direct evidence of causation. The cross-sectional design restricts the ability to eliminate reverse causation, whereby outcome may drive predictors, and unmeasured factors (e.g., socio-political contexts or peer influence) may underlie those relationships.

Future surveys should consider longitudinal or experimental designs to provide more solid causal inferences, and readers should use caution when interpreting these limitations. Second, this study replicates a previously established model that has demonstrated an excellent model fit for the path analysis. This approach allows for consistency in theoretical application, but it does not independently confirm the framework's fit within the specific context of this study.

Hence, the results should be interpreted cautiously, and future studies should confirm the model fit in different target populations to prove generalizability and applicability. Third, lower reliability (Cronbach's alpha < 0.60) was observed for the "social utility motivations" and "political knowledge" constructs, indicating potential measurement error and variability in capturing the intended concept. It may have attenuated the strength of relationships involving this variable in the path analysis, potentially underestimating its direct or indirect effects on other constructs, such as Facebook news consumption, expression, efficacy, and political participation both in online and offline forms.

The results provide valuable information, but they should be interpreted with caution. Future studies should seek to enhance the scale or apply different reliability measures to validate the construct. Lastly, this paper focuses mainly on the non-inclusion of the instrument of the traditional and the newer forms of political participation from previous research (e.g., Jung et al., 2011; Van Deth, 2014; Kruikemeier, 2014; Brady et al., 2015; Chan, 2016). Modifying and contextualizing more items under each variable could incur more significant results from the analysis.

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