

Political Advertising Exposure on Social Media and Political Behavior among University Students: Evidence from the University of La Salette

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between exposure to political advertisements on social media and the political behavior of college students at the University of La Salette, Inc., Santiago City, Isabela. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used, with a one-shot survey administered through Google Forms to 363 students selected through proportionate stratified random sampling across the university's ten colleges. The questionnaire, adopted from Stach (2015), measured political behavior in terms of political self-efficacy, situational political involvement, perception of political advertisements on social media, and political influence, together with social media utilization and exposure to political advertisements. Results showed strongly favorable political self-

efficacy ($M = 8.71$) and situational political involvement ($M = 8.84$), an overall "Agree" perception of political advertisements ($M = 7.80$), and the lowest rating for political influence ($M = 6.29$, "Slightly Agree"). Students visited social media, interacted with it, and encountered political advertisements on it about one to two times a day on average, with TikTok the most frequently used platform and Twitter/X the least. Pearson correlation showed significant, low-to-moderate relationships between exposure to political advertisements and political self-efficacy, situational political involvement, and perception of political advertisements, but no significant relationship with political influence. These results indicate that political advertising on social media is associated, modestly and selectively, with students' political self-efficacy, involvement, and perceptions, while peer and family influence appears to operate through more interpersonal channels. The study recommends media and information literacy initiatives and platform-targeted voter education for the university community.

Keywords: *political advertisement, social media, political behavior, political self-efficacy, political participation, college students*

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an important platform for political communication, especially among young people. Political candidates, parties, and campaign organizations use it to reach voters, distribute campaign messages, and provide political information. In the Philippines, social media is closely tied to electoral campaigns and political discussion, and the voting behavior of young people may be shaped by what they see in political advertising. Arugay (2022) noted that social media played an important role in

the 2022 Philippine elections as candidates increasingly relied on digital platforms to reach voters, but its use also raised concerns about misinformation, disinformation, and the regulation of political content online.

Political advertisements are among the main forms of political communication shared through social media. They present candidates, parties, platforms, and campaign messages to users, particularly the youth. Cudal (2022) found that exposure to political content on social media was positively associated with changes in voters' preferences, although the study also suggested that social media mainly serves as a source of information and political expression rather than a direct means of persuasion. Political advertisements may therefore influence how voters perceive and decide, but their effects vary among individuals.

The influence of social media is particularly relevant to young Filipinos. Cadayday et al. (2024) found that Generation Z Filipinos widely use social media to access political information, discuss political issues, and take part in political activities. Social media exposure may also expose users to misleading or biased political content. Guess et al. (2023) found that changes to Facebook and Instagram feed algorithms altered users' exposure to political content but did not significantly change several measures of political behavior and polarization, which suggests that exposure does not automatically result in political persuasion.

Political communication is an interactive process involving the transmission of information among politicians, the news media, and the public, flowing from governing institutions to citizens, among political actors, and from public opinion to authorities. Politicians and political parties have increasingly used social media to reach the public on a global scale, and one of the major forms of political communication that has expanded through these platforms is political advertising. Political advertisements are messages designed to promote candidates, parties, platforms, or issues and to influence how audiences perceive political actors and political matters. Social media allows campaigns to distribute them to large and specific audiences through sponsored posts, videos, graphics, and other digital content, and its interactive nature lets users share and circulate these messages further.

Political behavior refers to the ways individuals think, feel, and act in relation to political affairs, including political awareness, interest, attitudes toward candidates and issues, political discussion, and participation, including voting. Political advertisements may influence these aspects by providing information, presenting particular viewpoints, and attempting to persuade audiences. An advertisement may raise awareness of a candidate, shape how a person views an issue, or encourage discussion and participation. However, its effects depend on how individuals interpret and respond to the message, including claims that are circulated without fact-checking.

The issue is particularly relevant in the Philippines, where social media is an important part of political communication and public discourse. Filipino users encounter political information through posts, videos, discussions, and campaign materials, particularly during election periods, while candidates and organizations can communicate directly with audiences and users can share political content with their networks. This has expanded the ways in which Filipinos receive and engage with political information beyond traditional media, and it makes it important to understand how digital political communication relates to the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of younger audiences. College students also use social media to advocate for political causes and mobilize others, which points to the growing role of these platforms in youth political participation, even as concerns about their ethical implications for democratic processes persist.

The study is guided by the concepts of political efficacy and situational political involvement. Political efficacy, rooted in the work of Campbell et al. (1954) and developed by Craig et al. (1990), is the belief that a person understands politics and can make a difference; internal efficacy reflects confidence in one's own ability to participate, while external efficacy reflects the belief that government listens and responds to citizens. Situational political involvement, discussed by Austin and Pinkleton (1999) and Kushin and Yamamoto (2010), refers to a person's interest in political issues within a specific situation such

as an election. Students who see politics as relevant and believe they can participate effectively may be more likely to seek political information, notice advertisements, join discussions, and engage in election-related activities. Exposure to advertisements does not automatically raise efficacy or involvement, however, since responses also depend on students' political knowledge, experiences, and perceptions of the information presented.

Previous studies have examined social media campaigning, voting preferences, and political engagement among Filipino voters and Generation Z. However, limited research has focused on students of the University of La Salette, Inc. or has examined dimensions of political behavior beyond voting preference. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between exposure to political advertisements on social media and the political behavior of University of La Salette students, and provides institution-specific evidence on how political self-efficacy, involvement, perceptions, and perceived peer and family influence are associated with the political advertisements that students encounter online.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. Age
 - 1.2. Department
 - 1.3. Year level
2. What is the level of political behavior among university students in terms of:
 - 2.1. Political self-efficacy
 - 2.2. Situational political involvement
 - 2.3. Perception of political advertisements on social media
 - 2.4. Political influence
3. What is the level of political advertising exposure on social media among university students in terms of:
 - 3.1. Social media utilization
 - 3.2. Exposure to political advertisements on social media
4. Is there a significant relationship between students' exposure to political advertisements on social media and their political behavior?

Literature Review

Political Advertising and Political Efficacy

Political advertising is a central communication tool through which parties and candidates reach voters, and it absorbs much of campaign spending during elections (Villegas et al., 2021). Online, advertisements allow people to act quickly on a campaign's request, since many link to landing pages where users can register to volunteer, subscribe to a mailing list, or donate (Fowler et al., 2021). Venus et al. (2025) found that political advertising on social media strengthens both internal and external political efficacy among Generation Z, suggesting that advertisements may shape how students perceive and take part in political activities. Zucca (2025) likewise examined how differently intense information shifts political opinions, a reminder that the amount and intensity of exposure matter.

The reach of social media advertising is also shaped by the media environment. Balintongog and Narido (2025) noted that in rural Philippine communities, reliance on radio and television may limit the depth and interactivity of political discourse, which can in turn limit how far political awareness develops. Allam et al. (2021) showed that media literacy competency contributes to the integrity of young people's political participation, supporting the integration of digital media literacy into education so that students can critically evaluate the political content they encounter.

Social Media as a Political Communication Channel

Digital communication occurs online and virtually and keeps evolving with new internet-based devices and applications (Hidayat et al., 2023), giving students new and more interactive ways to reach political information. Dharta et al. (2025) described social media as central to informing, engaging, and mobilizing the public, especially the younger generation, and noted that it enables more personalized, real-time, and data-oriented campaigns, while also increasing the risk of disinformation and polarization. They further observed that digital media now surpass traditional media in the speed with which political information is spread and received. Mutanda (2024) similarly highlighted the capacity of social media to engage citizens in governance issues and to improve communication, coordination, and engagement. Bossetta and Schmøkel (2023) compared the emotions and audience engagement generated by candidates' Facebook and Instagram images in the 2020 United States election, underscoring the relevance of platform-specific analysis in political campaigning.

Political Awareness and Voting Behavior among University Students

Youth is a critical period in which political attitudes and behaviors are formed (Krawatzek, 2022). Zainurin et al. (2024), in a systematic review, found that peers reflect shared values and ideologies, contribute to the formation of political identities, and can exert direct and indirect pressure on young people, so that social interaction with peers encourages students to consider political views and beliefs. Suniadewi and Abadi (2025) added that a user's personal interests gradually shape how algorithms classify them, which in turn affects the political content and advertisements they encounter. Political awareness has been discussed under several terms, including political sophistication, information, knowledge, and expertise (Anggraeni et al., 2025), and in democratic systems it extends beyond basic knowledge to critical thinking, evaluation of political information, and informed participation (Roy, 2026).

Political Participation

Social media has become a key strategy for campaigns seeking to engage Generation Z, with influencer and advertising content shown to affect young people's political participation (Venus et al., 2025). Political efficacy is the belief in one's ability to understand and influence the political process (Craig et al., 1990), and Hassan et al. (2021) examined its internal and external aspects in relation to young people's social media use and voting decisions. Prats and Meunier (2021) reported that external political efficacy, the belief that one has a voice in government actions, positively affected traditional forms of participation such as party participation but negatively affected digital forms outside the system, and that low responsiveness from political institutions could shift participation from conventional to digital forms. Conventional participation, such as voting, campaigning, and joining political parties, thus operates alongside online participation, and social media use has been linked to both, including the voting decisions of first-time voter college students (Intyaswati et al., 2021; Venus et al., 2025).

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component determined the level of exposure of University of La Salette, Inc. college students to political advertisements on social media and their level of political behavior, while the correlational component examined the relationship between the two. The design is appropriate because the study seeks to examine the association between variables without manipulating them or establishing a direct causal relationship.

Study Site and Participants

The study was conducted at the University of La Salette, Inc. (USLS), Santiago City, Isabela. The university was chosen because its diverse student population across ten colleges provides an appropriate setting for examining political advertising exposure and political behavior among college students. Participants were currently enrolled USLS college students who were active social media users and had been exposed to political advertisements on social media platforms. Eligible participants were identified by age, year level, and department, which served as the demographic variables of the study.

Populations, Sample Size, and Sampling Methods

The population consisted of 6,368 enrolled college students of USLS across its ten colleges. The minimum sample size was computed using the Raosoft sample size calculator at a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error, yielding a required sample of 363 students. To ensure representation across colleges, proportionate stratified random sampling was used. Respondents were then randomly selected from each stratum according to its allocation.

Table 1. *Population and Sample Allocation by College*

College	Population	Sample Size
College of Accountancy	361	21
College of Arts and Sciences	314	18
College of Business Education	845	48
College of Criminal Justice Education	160	9
College of Engineering and Architecture	1,342	77
College of Information Technology	240	14
College of Medicine and Allied Program	1,024	58
College of Nursing, Public Health, and Midwifery	1,714	97
College of Teacher Education	244	14
College of Law	124	7
Total	6,368	363

Research Instrument

The research instrument was a structured survey questionnaire adopted and contextualized from Stach (2015), *Political Advertising on Social Media: The Impact on Young People's Political Behavior and Attitudes*. The original instrument examined young people's political behavior, attitudes, perceptions of political advertisements, and use of social networking sites. Selected statements and terms were modified so that they would be understandable and applicable to USLS students and aligned with the objectives of the study, while retaining the concepts and indicators of the original. The questionnaire was validated before administration.

The questionnaire had three parts. Part 1 gathered the demographic profile of the respondents (age, year level, and department). Part 2 measured political behavior through 20 statements under four indicators: political self-efficacy (4 items), situational political involvement (4 items), perception of political advertisements on social media (8 items), and political influence (4 items), rated on a 9-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 9 = Strongly Agree). Part 3 measured social media utilization, in terms of how often respondents visit and interact with Facebook, Twitter/X, TikTok, Instagram, Google, and YouTube, and exposure to political advertisements on the same platforms during the three months leading up to an election. These were rated on a 7-point frequency scale (1 = Do not use to 7 = More than 10 times a day).

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were gathered through a Google Forms survey. After the questionnaire was validated, the researchers created the survey link and prepared a letter of request to the Dean of each college seeking consent to conduct the survey. Once permission was granted, the link was sent to students and forwarded to their group chats together with a message stating the purpose and objectives of the study. Respondents were assured that the data would be used solely for research purposes and kept confidential.

Data Analysis

Data were organized, encoded, tabulated, and analyzed using statistical tools aligned with each research question. Frequency and percentage distributions were used to summarize the demographic profile of the respondents. Weighted means were used to describe responses on political self-efficacy, situational political involvement, perception of political advertisements on social media, and political influence (9-point scale), and on social media utilization and exposure to political advertisements (7-point scale). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) was used to determine the significance and strength of the relationship between exposure to political advertisements on social media and political behavior at the 0.05 level of significance. All data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Scale for Political Behavior

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation
9	8.12–9.00	Strongly Agree
8	7.23–8.11	Agree
7	6.34–7.22	Somewhat Agree
6	5.45–6.33	Slightly Agree
5	4.56–5.44	Neutral
4	3.67–4.55	Slightly Disagree
3	2.78–3.66	Somewhat Disagree
2	1.89–2.77	Disagree
1	1.00–1.88	Strongly Disagree

Scale for Social Media Utilization and Exposure

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation
7	6.15–7.00	More than 10 times a day
6	5.30–6.14	3–5 times a day
5	4.44–5.29	1–2 times a day
4	3.58–4.43	2–3 times a week
3	2.72–3.57	Once a week or less
2	1.87–2.71	Never
1	1.00–1.86	Do not use

Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical standards for research involving human participants. Informed consent was secured from all respondents through a consent statement explaining the purpose of the study, the nature of participation, and respondents' rights, including the right to decline or withdraw at any time without penalty. Only respondents who indicated agreement proceeded to the questionnaire. Anonymity

was maintained by not collecting names, student numbers, or other identifying information, and results were reported only in aggregate form, with small categories grouped where necessary to prevent indirect identification. In compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173), data were stored in a password-protected Google account accessible only to the researchers and their adviser, used solely for academic purposes, not shared with any third party, and will be securely disposed of once the study has been completed, defended, and approved.

The researchers also acknowledge the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist in non-substantive aspects of the research process, such as improving grammar and sentence structure, organizing and formatting sections of the manuscript, and generating preliminary computations or templates (for example, statistical scale ranges), all of which were reviewed and validated by the researchers and their adviser.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

Table 2. *Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

Profile	<i>f</i>	%
Age		
18 and below	126	34.7
19–20	137	37.7
21–22	85	23.4
23–24	13	3.6
25 and above	2	0.6
Department		
College of Accountancy	21	5.8
College of Arts and Sciences	18	5.0
College of Business Education	48	13.2
College of Criminal Justice Education	9	2.5
College of Engineering and Architecture	77	21.2
College of Information Technology	14	3.9
College of Medicine and Allied Program	58	16.0
College of Nursing, Public Health, and Midwifery	97	26.7
College of Teacher Education	14	3.9
College of Law	7	1.9
Year Level		
1st Year	125	34.4
2nd Year	73	20.1
3rd Year	90	24.8
4th Year	69	19.0
5th Year	6	1.7
Total	363	100.0

Table 2 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. Most were 19–20 years old (137, 37.7%), followed by those aged 18 and below (126, 34.7%) and 21–22 (85, 23.4%), so that nearly 96% were 22 years old or younger. The College of Nursing, Public Health, and Midwifery had the highest representation (97, 26.7%), followed by the College of Engineering and Architecture (77, 21.2%) and the College of Medicine and Allied Program (58, 16.0%), which together account for about 64% of the sample and reflect the proportional allocation by college population. By year level, first-year students formed the largest group (125, 34.4%), followed by third-year (90, 24.8%) and second-year students (73, 20.1%). The sample is therefore made up mainly of young, early-to-mid-program students from the largest colleges.

Political Behavior on Political Advertisements on Social Media

Table 3. *Weighted Mean Distribution of Respondents' Political Self-Efficacy*

No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation
1	Voting gives people an effective way to influence what the government does.	8.53	Strongly Agree
2	I can make a difference if I participate in the election process.	8.79	Strongly Agree
3	My vote makes a difference.	8.75	Strongly Agree
4	I have a real say in what the government does.	8.77	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean		8.71	Strongly Agree

Table 3 shows an overall weighted mean of 8.71 for political self-efficacy, verbally interpreted as “Strongly Agree.” All four items were rated Strongly Agree (8.53–8.79). Respondents most strongly believed that they can make a difference by participating in the election process ($M = 8.79$) and least strongly, though still at the Strongly Agree level, that voting is an effective way to influence what the government does ($M = 8.53$). Respondents therefore hold a strong belief that their vote and participation matter.

Table 4. *Weighted Mean Distribution of Respondents' Situational Political Involvement*

No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation
1	I pay attention to election information.	8.80	Strongly Agree
2	I like to stay informed about the elections.	8.82	Strongly Agree
3	I am interested in election information.	8.86	Strongly Agree
4	I actively seek out information concerning elections.	8.86	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean		8.84	Strongly Agree

Situational political involvement obtained an overall weighted mean of 8.84, interpreted as “Strongly Agree” (Table 4). Item means were tightly clustered between 8.80 and 8.86, with interest in election information and actively seeking it out rated highest ($M = 8.86$). Respondents report that they pay attention to, and actively look for, election-related information.

Table 5. *Weighted Mean Distribution of Respondents' Perception of Political Advertisements on Social Media*

No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation
1	Political advertisements on social media are informative.	8.87	Strongly Agree
2	Political advertisements on social media helped me make a voting decision.	8.99	Strongly Agree
3	Political advertisements on social media are misleading.	7.12	Somewhat Agree
4	Political advertisements on social media are applicable to me.	7.08	Somewhat Agree
5	I ignore political advertisements on social media.	7.36	Agree
6	Political advertisements on social media made me more curious about a candidate or issue.	7.00	Somewhat Agree
7	Political advertisements on social media are an easy and convenient way to attain political knowledge.	7.02	Somewhat Agree
8	I do more research on a candidate or issue after seeing advertisements about it on social media.	8.96	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean		7.80	Agree

Respondents' perception of political advertisements on social media obtained an overall mean of 7.80, interpreted as "Agree" (Table 5). Three items reached the Strongly Agree level: that the advertisements are informative ($M = 8.87$), that they helped respondents make a voting decision ($M = 8.99$), and that respondents do more research on a candidate or issue after seeing an advertisement ($M = 8.96$). The remaining items were rated lower, at the Somewhat Agree level for misleadingness ($M = 7.12$), personal applicability ($M = 7.08$), curiosity ($M = 7.00$), and convenience as a source of political knowledge ($M = 7.02$), and at the Agree level for ignoring such advertisements ($M = 7.36$). This mixed pattern indicates that students find political advertisements useful for deciding and for prompting further research, while also acknowledging that they can be misleading and are not always personally relevant.

Table 6. *Weighted Mean Distribution of Respondents' Political Influence*

No.	Statement	Mean	Interpretation
1	I have felt pressured to vote by my peers.	5.65	Slightly Agree
2	My peers are very knowledgeable about politics.	7.42	Agree
3	My family is very knowledgeable about politics.	7.53	Agree
4	I have felt pressured by my family to vote.	4.58	Neutral
Overall Mean		6.29	Slightly Agree

Political influence obtained the lowest overall mean among the four dimensions ($M = 6.29$, "Slightly Agree") (Table 6). Respondents agreed that their peers ($M = 7.42$) and family ($M = 7.53$) are knowledgeable about politics, but reported only slight felt pressure from peers to vote ($M = 5.65$) and a neutral stance on pressure from family ($M = 4.58$). Peers and family are thus seen as sources of political knowledge more than as sources of pressure to vote.

Students' Social Media Usage

Table 7. *Weighted Mean Distribution of Respondents' Social Media Utilization (Frequency of Visit)*

Platform	Mean	Interpretation
Facebook	5.54	3–5 times a day
Twitter/X	3.48	Once a week or less
TikTok	5.65	3–5 times a day
Instagram	5.39	3–5 times a day
Google	4.94	1–2 times a day
YouTube	4.50	1–2 times a day
Overall Mean	4.92	1–2 times a day

TikTok had the highest frequency of visit ($M = 5.65$, “3–5 times a day”), followed closely by Facebook ($M = 5.54$) and Instagram ($M = 5.39$), while Twitter/X had the lowest ($M = 3.48$, “Once a week or less”) (Table 7). Overall, respondents visit social media platforms about one to two times a day ($M = 4.92$).

Table 8. *Weighted Mean Distribution of Respondents' Social Media Utilization (Frequency of Interaction)*

Platform	Mean	Interpretation
Facebook	5.24	1–2 times a day
Twitter/X	3.56	Once a week or less
TikTok	5.42	3–5 times a day
Instagram	5.11	1–2 times a day
Google	4.53	1–2 times a day
YouTube	4.17	2–3 times a week
Overall Mean	4.67	1–2 times a day

In terms of interaction, TikTok again obtained the highest mean ($M = 5.42$) and Twitter/X the lowest ($M = 3.56$) (Table 8). The overall mean of 4.67 (“1–2 times a day”) is slightly lower than the overall frequency of visit, suggesting that respondents browse social media more often than they actively interact with the content.

Table 9. *Weighted Mean Distribution of Respondents' Exposure to Political Advertisements on Social Media*

Platform	Mean	Interpretation
Facebook	5.33	3–5 times a day
Twitter/X	3.75	2–3 times a week
TikTok	5.38	3–5 times a day
Instagram	4.89	1–2 times a day
Google	4.50	1–2 times a day
YouTube	4.23	2–3 times a week
Overall Mean	4.68	1–2 times a day

Exposure to political advertisements was highest on TikTok ($M = 5.38$) and Facebook ($M = 5.33$) and lowest on Twitter/X ($M = 3.75$) and YouTube ($M = 4.23$) (Table 9). The overall mean of 4.68 (“1–2

times a day”) indicates that respondents encounter political advertisements on social media on a fairly regular basis.

Relationship between Exposure to Political Advertisements on Social Media and Political Behavior

Table 10. *Pearson Product-Moment Correlation between Exposure to Political Advertisements on Social Media and Political Behavior*

Political Behavior Indicator	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Decision ($\alpha = .05$)	Strength
Political Self-Efficacy	−0.364	<.0001	Significant	Low
Situational Political Involvement	−0.422	<.0001	Significant	Moderate
Perception of Political Advertisements on Social Media	−0.398	<.0001	Significant	Low
Political Influence	0.092	0.0798	Not Significant	Negligible
Overall Political Behavior	−0.368	<.0001	Significant	Low

Table 10 shows that exposure to political advertisements on social media was significantly correlated with political self-efficacy ($r = -0.364$, $p < .0001$), situational political involvement ($r = -0.422$, $p < .0001$), perception of political advertisements on social media ($r = -0.398$, $p < .0001$), and overall political behavior ($r = -0.368$, $p < .0001$). The relationship with political influence was not significant ($r = 0.092$, $p = .0798$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected for self-efficacy, involvement, perception, and overall political behavior, but not for political influence.

The respondents were mostly young students aged 18–22 from the largest colleges, mirroring the age and enrollment patterns commonly reported in Philippine studies on youth and social media. Ascura et al. (2022) similarly surveyed first-time voters in their late teens and early twenties, the segment of the electorate most newly exposed to electoral participation, and Arugay and Baquisal (2022) observed that Filipino youth make up a disproportionately large share of social media users. The proportional, multi-college sampling follows the approach of Velasco et al. (2024), who likewise drew from several colleges to capture a broad cross-section of Generation Z political engagement.

The very high political self-efficacy ($M = 8.71$) aligns with Wool (2026), who found a meaningful relationship between social media use and general self-efficacy among college students, and with Venus et al. (2025), who found that political advertising on social media strengthens internal political efficacy among Generation Z. It should be read with caution, however, since Hopp and Kazmi (2023) reported that frequent social media use combined with high confidence in detecting misinformation was associated with lower actual political knowledge, so strong efficacy beliefs do not always reflect accurate political understanding. The strong situational political involvement ($M = 8.84$) supports Arugay and Baquisal’s (2022) description of Filipino youth as a mobilized netizenry that relies heavily on social media for election information, and is consistent with Velasco et al. (2024), who found frequent latent and expressive engagement, such as searching for and consuming political content on Instagram and TikTok. The tempered perception of political advertisements ($M = 7.80$), useful yet sometimes misleading, echoes Ascura et al. (2022), whose first-time voters in Iloilo City found political advertisements informative but questioned their trustworthiness.

Political influence was the lowest dimension ($M = 6.29$). This diverges somewhat from Gomez and Pietryka (2025), who found that randomly assigned college roommates influenced turnout about as much as parents, and from Zainurin et al. (2024), who identified peer pressure as an influential mechanism of youth political socialization. A plausible explanation is that, among these respondents, peer and family influence works more through the exchange of political knowledge than through direct pressure to vote, consistent with the political knowledge pathway of peer influence identified by Zainurin et al. (2024).

The dominance of TikTok, with Facebook and Instagram close behind and Twitter/X trailing, is corroborated by Velasco et al. (2024), who found Filipino Generation Z respondents increasingly turning to TikTok and Instagram for political content, and by Meltwater (2026), which reported TikTok among the most-used platforms among Filipino internet users, with Facebook remaining dominant and X far behind. Arugay and Baquisal (2022) likewise documented the rise of TikTok as a campaign platform among Filipino youth in the 2022 elections. That respondents visited platforms more often than they interacted with content suggests a largely observational pattern of use, consistent with the latent engagement described by Velasco et al. (2024).

The significant low-to-moderate relationships between exposure and self-efficacy, involvement, and perception are in line with Venus et al. (2025), who found that political advertising and influencer content affect Generation Z's political participation indirectly, through political interest and internal efficacy, rather than through a large direct effect on behavior. The modest size of the coefficients is also consistent with Guess et al. (2023), who found that substantially altering exposure to political content on Facebook and Instagram did not significantly change several measures of political behavior, which cautions against overstating the persuasive power of exposure alone. The absence of a significant relationship with political influence is compatible with Zainurin et al. (2024) and Gomez and Pietryka (2025), who emphasized that peer and family influence arises from direct relationships, discussion, and shared identity rather than passive exposure to online content. Taken together, exposure to political advertisements on social media appears to play a meaningful but modest and selective role in students' political behavior, operating alongside rather than replacing interpersonal channels of political socialization. As the study is correlational and cross-sectional, these associations should not be read as causal.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that University of La Salette students exhibit strongly favorable political behavior, particularly in political self-efficacy and situational political involvement. They agree that political advertisements on social media are informative and useful, with comparatively lower agreement on items describing these advertisements as misleading or personally applicable. Political influence was rated lowest, indicating that students feel comparatively little pressure from peers or family to vote even as they regard both groups as politically knowledgeable. Students visit social media, interact with it, and encounter political advertisements about one to two times a day, with TikTok the most frequently visited, interacted with, and politically advertised-to platform, followed closely by Facebook and Instagram, and Twitter/X consistently the least. Exposure to political advertisements on social media is significantly, though modestly, related to political self-efficacy, situational political involvement, and perception of political advertisements, but not to political influence.

These findings imply that political advertising on social media is associated with how confident, engaged, and discerning students are as political actors, while peer and family influence appears to run through separate, more interpersonal channels. Because the study is correlational and limited to one university, the results describe associations among USLS students rather than causal effects.

Recommendation

Since students show strong self-efficacy and involvement but also reservations about the trustworthiness of political advertisements, the University of La Salette may conduct media and information literacy sessions to help students critically evaluate political content on social media. Since political influence was rated lowest, student organizations and academic departments may encourage open political discussions among peers and within families, particularly ahead of election periods. Since TikTok and Facebook recorded the highest usage and exposure, candidates, campaigners, and campus voter-education

initiatives may prioritize these platforms in disseminating accurate and responsible political information to students.

Future researchers may expand the study to other universities and a broader student population to determine whether the same patterns hold across institutional contexts, may give less weight to Twitter/X, which recorded the lowest usage across all measures, in favor of more actively used platforms, and may use designs that allow causal inference or mixed methods to explain how exposure and interpersonal influence interact.

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