



# International Journal of Political Science and Public Administration

Publisher's Home Page: <https://www.svedbergopen.com/>



Research Paper

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## Effects of Social Media Algorithms on the Political Perspectives of 4<sup>th</sup> Year Political Science Students

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### Article Info

Volume 4, Issue 1, June 2024

Received : 04 March 2024

Accepted : 23 May 2024

Published : 05 June 2024

doi: [10.51483/IJPSPA.4.1.2024.72-95](https://doi.org/10.51483/IJPSPA.4.1.2024.72-95)

### Abstract

Algorithms are defined as a set of rules, sequential steps, or a series of actions that create a desired outcome. In computational and electronic terms, it's a set of directions, written in code, that determine the actions and reactions that occur when using a computer (Farnham Street Media Inc., 2018). These algorithms are the basis of every computer search and every news feed for individual users. Algorithms-and the computer code upon which they rely-are often thought to be neutral, however truth is, they are "actually imbued with the agenda, biases, and vulnerabilities of the programmer" (Cohen, 2018). When people are only exposed to information that they perceive to be true, it reinforces their potentially conflicting views and creates polarization of ideas. In consequence, differences among individuals lead to polarization of viewpoints particularly on political matters. In fact, Michael Henry Yusingco a senior research fellow at the Ateneo Policy Center in Metro Manila articulated the apparency of this polarization in the Philippines, where social media played a significant role in advancing narratives and campaigning during the recently concluded 2022 National Election. With this in line, a research study is conducted to look into the deeper aspect of social media algorithms that affects the users' perspectives politically. The study is imperative in providing an overview of how the social media world is redefining the set standards, principles and culture of lifestyle that has been running our society. In the interest of increased engagement, the research study focused on the most social media vulnerable users; the young people of the society that mostly be found in the field of academe, the university.

**Keywords:** Social media algorithms, Political, Vulnerable users

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### 1. Introduction

It is no longer surprising that the widespread use of social media has gained the title of global connectivity. In fact, in the early 2005 when its popularity emerged, the engagement of people became so amusing that according

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to the study of Wellington College (2022) social media turned out to be a powerful tool for social change. Its influence on society over the last two decades increases every day. Social media has developed to be the main source of information for a huge percentage of the world's population, influencing people's beliefs, opinions, and choices on every topic imaginable.

As of 2021, Statista (2022) records over 4.26 billion people were using social media worldwide and this is a number projected to increase to almost six billion in 2027. Market leader Facebook has registered accounts of about 2.7 billion monthly active users making it the most popular social media network. Aside from this platform are other social media sites that are continuously subscribed by many people using it in many ways.

However, the most interesting part of these platforms and social media itself is the connection that it fosters, where dissemination of information is totally easy. Now connection in the world of politics is a very pivotal factor because it is how it works; politics is all about interaction which requires connection. Traditional political arena is characterized by an extensive effort for politicians during elections to go beyond borders in order to raise popularity over voters and invest so much for their personal publicity. Since a politician is prominently known to maintain a good image and social approval from the majority.

The study of Burstein (2023) entitled *The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy* examines the capability of public opinion itself to determine public policy. The major issue that underlies this study is that only few people believe that the voice of the public burdens the policymakers to adhere to that pressure. In the latter, it was revealed in their findings that the impact of public opinion is indeed substantial; salience enhances the impact of public opinion. To decode their study, the significance of public opinion must be recognized and should not be neglected. The views and opinions of every individual for as much as the government is concerned, are all important and that division of opinion impacts the trajectory of governance.

Perspectives among many political and social issues covering the wide political spectrum of the society plays a vital role especially when people elect actors in the government. Today, perspectives are amplified through social media of which it opens an avenue of public access and provides a platform for many people to comment, share, express, etc. to the concerns of the society. The issues on corruption, malversation of funds, dynasty, clash of politicians and other political issues encompassing public administration such as transparency and integrity even campaigns, awareness, communications and delivering services are matters of which people can easily be part of. Meaning, people have no longer gap from its government and it is because of the intervention of social media that serves as a linking component between the government and the people.

Buenaobra (2016) who is the Asia Foundation's Deputy, admitted in one of his articles that social media has dramatically changed the dynamics of elections in the Philippines. He argues about how candidates swing the votes to be in their favor on election day mentioning a number of determining factors such as: track record, patronage, party machinery, vote-buying, and of course the constant use of social media. Looking at how debates are initiated and polls through reaction of emojis are only examples of the great interconnection of social media in the political realm.

The context provided speaks how the political landscape shifted from common traditional politics into a game changing role of social media. And for that matter it is very important to examine the systems and mechanisms built within social media platforms that manifest the influence and other relative effects towards its users. Political polarization, and misinformation for instance, are cases that arise out of the systems designed by social media networks. Indeed, social media has grown in power to the point where it can be used to manipulate the public sphere and augment ideological misinformation.

Actually, there is an unfamiliar feature of social media called algorithms or social media algorithms that works so much in influencing the users' personal viewpoints based on the extent that it allows. For a period of time, many are curious as to how it actually works and its effects towards the user as it is inevitable to be experienced by them.

For this reason, a question arises on why people on this aspect of their news feeds keep seeing the same content on their social media sites after having clicked a particular content. The answer is simple: (1) social media algorithms tailor cultural artifacts customized to the user interest in social media information and distribution systems. (2) User categories are created by social media platforms based on data collected through

online behavior as well as data collected offline through 'dataveillance' methods (Cohen, 2018). So basically, it means that they target the interests of a user in order for them to stay and engaged long in the social media apps, until everything they see seems so true to them because gradually, it has now placed them in an echo chamber of convenience where it further fortifies their existing ideology on particular matters not excluding politics.

When people are only exposed to information that they perceive to be true, it reinforces their potentially conflicting views and creates polarization of ideas. In consequence, differences among individuals lead to polarization of viewpoints on political matters. In fact, Michael Henry Yusingco a senior research fellow at the Ateneo Policy Center in Metro Manila articulated the apparency of this polarization that it can actually be seen in countries all over the world, including the Philippines, where social media played a significant role in advancing narratives and campaigning during the recently concluded 2022 National Election.

Researchers at the University of Wyoming also shared the same point, claiming that 'political division' in its extent makes it more difficult for elected authorities to rule efficiently. According to their study, the presence of disinformation impoverishes government and produces nonessential division that does not portray a deliberative and critical decision making rather than owing to a variety of variables, such as empirical policymaking.

This research will look into the impact of social media algorithms on the political views of Western Mindanao State University students. It will examine the level of effect including the scope of where it has launched an influence on their political behavior and political beliefs which leads to them voting for a certain candidate they believe in and shaping their political stands on various issues based on information they have gathered from social media platforms.

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Social media is so influential that it has the potential to transform perceptions which extends towards shifting political discourse. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube are some of the most popular social media platforms; on the surface, these are just applications and websites, but if we delve deeper, we'll uncover a sophisticated concept that should concern everyone (Bell, 2021).

One of the most important concepts in social media is Algorithm, this is a way of sorting posts in a users' feed based on relevancy instead of publish time. Meaning, social networks provide what the users should see first, based on their interest.

Vizion Interactive, a Search Engine Optimization Company based in Dallas, Texas, defined Algorithm as a pattern or collection of rules used by problem-solving activities (particularly computers) to perform calculations. A social media algorithm is a statistical formula used by sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Snap Chat to assess user habits and personalize their social experiences. Social media algorithms function invisibly behind the scenes, improving the user experience without the user even realizing it.

This concept increases Political Polarization – creating an online echo chamber that isolates their viewpoints. Social media algorithms are influencing what information you can read and who you vote for, indicating that they will persuade you to believe in something and will serve as the foundation for all of your beliefs, particularly in politics. This is known as persuasive technology, which is built with the goal of changing behavior and manipulating users' emotional and psychological responses, meaning this might be a tool for mind-conditioning to make people believe in something.

Facebook's algorithm has been found to prioritize content in users' news feeds that provokes the strongest emotional response, in order to keep people on the network for as long as possible. Many of the unsupervised machine learning algorithms deployed by social media businesses are also meant to prioritize high-engagement material above misinformation (Moorehead, 2021).

According to a Pulse Asia study conducted in September, over half of Filipino adults (48%) acquire their political news from the internet. Facebook was mentioned by 44% of those polled. This supports the idea that while social media's growth is unquestionable, it is also rife with fake news.

For Associate Professor Danilo Arao of the University of the Philippines Journalism Department of the College of Mass Communication, a large number of Filipinos believe articles from fake news websites and dubious social media pages. It is particularly concerning that some people actively promote and distribute these stories. He claims that if people begin to believe fake news more than authentic news, they will be more likely to make judgments that are not based on reliable information. Which then appeases their comfortability on information that no longer sought for validation as published.

### **1.2. Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to determine the effect of social media algorithms on the political views of Selected Political Science Students of Western Mindanao State University students. To assess the effects, researchers have indicated the following questions below:

1. To determine what politically related contents do the respondents usually see in their newsfeeds.
  - a. International
  - b. Domestic
2. To determine the effects of Social Media Algorithms on the respondents' point of view in terms of:
  - a. Integrity
  - b. Transparency

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore and assess the effect of Social Media Algorithms on the Political Views of Western Mindanao State University students.

The result is beneficial to the following:

- **Western Mindanao State University Students:** The result of this study will increase their awareness, which is important in societal changes. An informed citizenry will be a strong force for the nation. They will be able to mitigate problems by knowing the effect, especially in shaping political views that will determine the nation's fate.
- **Government:** This research will be useful in formulating policies and programs to regulate the impact of social media algorithms not only at the local level, but also at the national level.
- **Future Researchers:** This study will serve as precedent for future researchers to widely explore the effects of social media algorithms with varying respondents. They could conduct similar research in their own areas to determine if the results are similar, resulting in significant support for this research endeavor around the country.

### **1.4. Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This study focused on determining the effects of Social Media Algorithms on the political views of the Western Mindanao State University students. The scope of political views used to determine the effect are opt and limited into the following: Integrity is concerned with the honesty of an individual in his service to the people. Transparency, on the other hand, is concerned with politicians willingly disclosing vital and significant information to the public, such as their whereabouts, public records, daily affairs, and riches. Moreover, the scope of social media used to analyze the mechanism of algorithms present in particular news feeds, are opt and limited into the platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Tiktok and Youtube.

The primary respondents of this study are political science students of Western Mindanao State University. With a total number of (102) 4<sup>th</sup> Year Political Science students and a 5% margin of error, the researchers came up with (81) study participants.

Thus, the researchers employed a combination of quota and random sampling as a research sampling technique of this paper. A sampling method where researchers form a quota sample of individuals who are representative of a target population and randomly selects final respondents to be part of the research study.

Descriptive-survey quantitative design was used in this study. This research design opts to describe the characteristic of the population or the phenomenon being studied at the same time. This paper is quantitative, since the objective data to be gathered can be clearly communicated through statistics and numbers.

### 1.5. Operational Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined according to how they are being used in the study:

1. **Algorithms:** This refers to the content that users keep seeing in their feeds; relevance is considered rather than publication date. For instance, Facebook will continue to display the political topics that users are most interested in.
2. **Apolitical:** Refers to a person whose: political opinions and political beliefs are not in cognizance of any political party neither does this person have a deep concern to the political actions made by the government.
3. **Dataveillance:** A system where an individual's personal information is tracked from their actions to communications, such as when someone subscribes to a certain political issue, social media sites will then collect that as their behavior.
4. **Fake News:** These are news reports that are false: the political issue presented has no basis and not true. This is especially prevalent among the youth in their usage of Tiktok, Youtube, etc., increases, where news is frequently unverified.
5. **Filter Bubble:** This refers to a state of political topic isolation that can be brought on by tailored searches as a result of website algorithms that are set up to anticipate what users want to see based on their activity. Users of Twitter will continue to see issues that they agree with; for example, if they support the government, all content related to that will continue to appear in their feed.
6. **Online Echo Chamber:** This refers to the echo chamber effect that occurs on social media when a group of people repeatedly encounter the same political viewpoints and reactions. Due to the lack of exposure to opposing viewpoints, users in this situation will never at least attempt to learn about the opposing viewpoint on the subject because they have been accustomed to believing in it due to the consistency of the information they have.
7. **Opposition:** This refers to having a view different from the state or government, and criticizing programs that one thinks is not principally just. However, this individual does not necessarily disagree with all of the political actions made by the government.
8. **Political Behavior:** This is an action taken as a result of one's political beliefs or views, such as Western Mindanao State University students exercising their right to vote.
9. **Political Beliefs:** This refers to the belief that has influence on government-related concerns. This is developed throughout time and is difficult to change, implying that it extends to political affiliation.
10. **Political Views:** This refers to WMSU students' perspectives on anything related to politics, particularly their beliefs and opinions, such as whether a political action or politician is good, bad, right, or wrong.
11. **Political Polarization:** Refers to the degree to which someone's political and intellectual views become ideologically entrenched, widening the gap between them and people who hold opposing views. Due to political polarization and the emergence of the "we versus them" mentality, the 2022 national elections became the most polarizing in Philippine history.
12. **Politically Related Contents:** This refers to the videos, posts, and tweets that suggest/connotes political agenda (subjects, problems, and issues concerning the state) either directed towards the government or informing the public which extends to International and Domestic spheres.
13. **Political Standpoint:** This refers to an individuals' political leanings; for instance, Person A agrees with most of the policies enacted by the party affiliated to the present administration. On the other hand, Person B is challenging the enacted policies supporting that this is not supplemental. Lastly, an individual without leanings is another political standpoint to consider.

14. **Pro Government:** This refers to an individual whose: political opinions and political beliefs are heavily conceding to the management of the government; however, this individual does not necessarily agree to all of the political actions made by the government.
15. **Social Media:** Refers to the platform where Western Mindanao State University students create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Facebook, Tiktok, Twitter, and Youtube are among the social media sites mentioned in this study.

## 1.6. Literature Review

### 1.6.1. Foreign Studies

The ubiquity of different social media channels and wireless social networks, explains that the world is no longer at the same path from decades ago. An era where information flows are naturally connecting people from diverse geographical landscapes, ethnicities, cultures etc. In fact, technologies such as cellphones have already become part of an individual's life bringing them in almost every place they go. The advancement of technology provides an avenue for a greater and wider diffusion of information whereby in a single click people can now share information and receive information. Not only through traditional authoritative media outlets such as; newspapers, television, and radio broadcasting but also user-driven news channels like vlogs and just a simple Facebook live disseminating information and diffusing influence in a bigger picture of: lifestyle, news, beliefs and behaviors (Myungcheol, 2020).

According to Kenyeres (2019) the wide and various usage of social media platforms have revolutionized the way people now interact with one another including how they gather and gain information. In effect, vulnerability online for most online users, especially the young people, became eminent added by social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook where people create unknown accounts to rant and post various contents depending on the user's liking. However, these platforms became more than just for rants; different people groups, political parties and other community sectors turn these platforms for the public information section where they easily spread certain details that allows the public to be informed, encouraged, aware and to far convinced. But the power of spreading information reached the peak of extreme manipulation, amplifying political or ideological misinformation all throughout the internet world.

Zoltan (2021) in his dissertation reveals that today, automated accounts exist purposely to share hate, spread misinformation and manipulate public opinion without any regular user's participation. It is considered to be another form of AI called "bots" which become the instrument of political partisans to fuel online echo chambers. Whereby, bots are used to empower an ideological preference and encourage people to be convinced through their numbers making them believe that their proposition is right and true so it is well to be followed.

A correlating study conducted by Cota *et al.* (2019), further reveals another form of facilitating misinformation, spreading and contributing to the radicalization particularly of political discourse. This is called "echo chamber" most popular in online social networks; it is where users prefer to interact and connect only with people who are ideologically aligned with them such as being a follower of a certain candidate or celebrity for instance. To advance their study, they test the interchanging opinions in twitter messages using a simple spreading model: through the impeachment of former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff in 2015. And that study reveals that the capability of every user in spreading and sharing the content they produce added by measuring the associated spreading capacity has shown to be greatly dependent on the user's attitude. It further indicates that users who express strong pro-impeachment leanings are intensely capable of transmitting information, on average unto a larger number of audiences reached compared to users expressing anti-impeachment leanings. Additionally, the data was apparent to show the users' spreading capacity which is notably correlated in diversity in terms of political position among the audiences' that has been reached.

On the same point of view lies the concept presented by the GCF Global (2022), describing an echo chamber as an environment where a person only encounters information or opinions that reflect and reinforce their own. Echo chambers can create misinformation and distort a person's perspective knowing that they would certainly have difficulty considering opposing viewpoints and discussing complicated topics especially in the course of politics where people have mostly diverse politicians and candidates being supported.



Just in recent years, another closely related mechanism of echo chamber has become well-known in the online community but most casual users are unaware, it is the existence of what is called “filter bubbles”, this refers to a state of intellectual isolation that can be a product of personalized searches when a website algorithm selectively guesses what information’s and contents a user would like to see rooted from the users’ information online including their activities or behavior online (Lucas, 2022).

The implication of a filter bubbles is that, users is trap on its own related and relevant contents of issues and information; this was the point raise by an internet activist Eli Pariser who coined the term filter bubble in 2011, in his book entitled “Filter Bubbles” it claims that “users get less exposure to conflicting viewpoints and are isolated intellectually in their own informational bubble”. In these bubbles there is a huge concern that posting is one-sided that can shut the society down and manipulate, among other things, political opinions. Filter bubbles are considered by many to contribute to increased polarization particularly in politics, not only because of the posts that are actually displayed, but also the posts that the algorithm chooses not to display on each user’s news feed (Brynjarsson and Wotango, 2022).

Now Algorithms according to Farnum Street Media Inc. (2018) is set to be the basis of every computer search and newsfeed catering the interests of each user worldwide. Algorithms are defined as a set of rules, sequential steps, or a series of actions that create a desired outcome. In computational and electronic terms, it’s a set of directions, written in code, that determine the actions and reactions that occur when using a computer.

The case of algorithms why it turns out to be controversial is because as reasoned by Cohen (2018) argues that algorithms and the computer code upon which they technically rely so much – are supposed and often thought to be essentially neutral and out of unnecessary partiality. However, it wasn’t the case for in fact they are “actually imbued with the agenda, biases, and vulnerabilities of the programmer”. The study on Media Literacy Education (2018) have acknowledge that while majority of the people are informed and critically aware of the ploy in social media, it is still undeniable that media users are prone to often fall and see contents found in suggestions provided by social media networks after a user conducts a search on *YouTube*, *Facebook*, or *Google*, even those having the skills in computer and technology fail to palpably realize the culpability of the underlying algorithms in their daily activities online.

Fortifying an existing ideology to proliferate an online echo chamber that is largely supported through filter bubbles which limit and manipulate the users’ obtained information are all implication of algorithms. According to Shmeleva (2019), she indicated the powerful impact of algorithms to in extent push antagonistic and one-sided narratives into social media feeds, search results and primarily through recommendations. In the same way she said that the same is happening to the people on the other side of the ideological barricades meaning there is some sort of isolation between information which again is not good for it raises political polarization. Media Literacy Education (2018) in the same dissertation emphasize that algorithms are system purposely established to analyze past user data including search history and personal information profile in connection to the mutually related other users’ searches and history integrated to calculate digital outcomes, anticipate possible recommendations, and present to the consumers with feeds that represent their own unique immersive media environment that solely personalized their social media experience which leads to concluding that a user will inevitably receive information even coming from unverified sources and websites just to compliment the idea of unique media environment caused by the users behavior and interaction online.

Cohen (2018) again substantiates and affirms this idea saying that users may tend to believe misinformation or fake news regardless of their personal information echo-chamber and this is because algorithms tailor cultural artifacts customized or personalized for the users’ interest while staying in experiencing social media. Platforms in social media such as Facebook create user categories based from the data collected through online behavior of a user as well as data collected offline through ‘dataveillance’ methods. This dataveillance further complicates in understanding information network analysis because of its general ‘invisibility’ as an algorithm in end-user interaction within social networking sites. Making it hard for users even more, the fact that users often access media without checking the reliability of information they get which is why fake news was able to find its way through algorithms in the different social media feeds.

Generally, this is because aside from bots, users are human beings who are vulnerable and are not exempted to contemplate information based on their own psychological way. Perhaps, this could be hinted at what

English Psychologist Peter Wason described as “confirmation bias” where people are likely to believe information that supports or back up their beliefs or biases and therefore repudiate information that does not align into their belief system, or undervalue their existing theories. Thus, making it extra complex because when people are only exposed to the information that they perceive is true, it deepens their possibly opposing beliefs and principles that leads to an increased polarization of opinions. In effect, diverseness among people from polarization of opinions over political issues and concern, poses an eminent attention to the role of the government in supplementing and promoting the welfare of the people. Researchers from University of Wyoming assert that, from a public policy standpoint, political polarization makes it more difficult for elected officials to effectively govern. In their research paper, it claims that due to a number of factors, including a lack of trust in scientific policymaking, the prevalence of misinformation and polarization in itself makes governance impoverished and causes unnecessary division that does not in any way embody a deliberation of ideas that uses critical thinking rather it only misleads people.

Over the last two decades, Republicans and Democrats in the United States of America have become well known in the world to be the most politically divided party at any other point in history. According to a poll in 2014, it reveals that polarization between the two major political parties in the USA manifested not only in politics but even in everyday life, where apparently its largest increase was seen from 2011 to 2014 (Bell, 2021). This was also the period when social media giants Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube experienced their remarkably high user growth. This enlightens the idea that social media algorithms is considerably one of the driving forces promoting polarization due to how it curates a user’s newsfeeds, recommendations and etc. to put up contents uniquely preferable for the user propagating an online echo chamber that strongly isolates their political views.

According to a research paper written by Erica Bell, a graduate of Bachelor of International studies from the University of Wollongong, claims that the ongoing consequence of social media algorithms prioritizing engagements over accuracy causes the distrust for people on facts and journalism which are extremely necessary in protecting democracy. Take for instance the polls from Pew Research Center where it shows that Republicans trust only fewer news sites like Fox News, whom former President Trump’s speeches and posts on social media are some of those few sources that they regularly read and believe. Which in effect, become the standards of their principles that are then fed back to social media amplifying more divisive opinions (Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensic Research Lab, 2021).

New media algorithms, according to Fondation Descartes (2020), a non-partisan research institute, are thus able to recommend increasingly personalized content to users of digital platforms. At first, the information collected about Internet users is quite basic: age, gender, and then contacts added. But new web-based media have integrated several mechanisms that allow for websites to collect much more precise information. These include “share”, “like”, “subscribe” buttons, etc., which inform algorithms about users’ online behavior. Facebook, for example, introduced its “like” button in 2009 and more than a week later, 50,000 websites had integrated this button into their architecture (Olin, 2018). Apparently, these mechanisms of social media networks have become the reason for increased personalized algorithms which trap users into a bubble of information relevant only to their preference.

It is conceivable that these systems of filter bubbles and online echo chambers are a consequence of (biased) selection of content to which users of social media are likely to be exposed. To comprehend the origin of a biased selection, consider how the elements of an algorithmically curated news feed are sorted and prioritized. Moller (2022) mentioned that in general, there are two main principles that determine the newsfeed. The first is classified as ‘explicit personalization’ (also called self-selected personalization), which describes all processes in which users of the platform actively opt in and out of information, for example by following other users or selecting into groups. The second is known as ‘implicit personalization’ (or pre-selected personalization), in which an AI-driven algorithm predicts the user preferences based on past behavior and matching the data with those of other users through collaborative filtering.

Douyin for instance, the Chinese version of TikTok, is the fastest growing participatory short video platform in China today. As the data in Pengpai News (2020) shows, the number of daily active Douyin users reached 600 million in August 2020, nearly half of China’s population. And yet, the way content is distributed in



Douyin relies heavily on an algorithm, instead of users socializing with each other (Liang, 2022). From a historical perspective, this highlights the broader trends of where algorithmic recommendations are used to distribute information and media (Cooper, 2021). Empirical evidence therefore suggests that algorithm is an inevitable mechanism applied in various media platforms to attract engagement rather than having the liberty to stroll for the users themselves.

Increasing the possibility of open deliberation to be slammed on certain issues particularly political discourses which have vital role on empowering democracy. The US Senate hearing was able to convince researchers from a particularly technological company to testify and in their statement, it affirms that the algorithms used by the platforms to generate revenue by keeping users engaged pose existential threats to individual thought, and democracy itself (DC Editors, 2021). According to the senators who are deliberating the matter they have mentioned that "Algorithms can be useful, but they also amplify harmful content and may need to be regulated" (DeChiaro, 2021). With Government relations and content policy executives from Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter during the senate hearing described and explained to the senators how their algorithms help them identify and remove content that violates terms and conditions, including hateful or harassing speech as well as disinformation and they said that right now their algorithms have begun "down ranking," or suppressing, "borderline" content.

In an informal Instagram poll on The Daily Universe's account, 89% of the 273 respondents were found to believe social media has affected their political views and involvement. The poll accounts for details and asked for specifics, the majority of commenters responded that social media has exposed them to different viewpoints and a few said social media can create echo chambers. Appealing to the extensiveness of social media penetrating political knowledge.

#### 1.6.2. Local Studies

According to the Statista Research Department (2022), it is expected that by 2026, over 91 million Filipinos will become users of a social network. Considering the forecasted population of around 118 million, it apparently reflects the high popularity of social media in the Philippines. As of the third quarter of 2021, Facebook actually was the most used social media platform in the Philippines with 96.2 percent of internet users accessing the platform. In that same period, data shows that Filipinos spent over four hours staying online and experiencing social media (Statista Research Department, 2022). According to their recently conducted survey in the Philippines, it appears that Facebook is not only considered as a social media platform but also the principal source of news and information for most Filipinos. Perhaps, it is not surprising how the app dominated the social media market in the country, as it is visible in the increasing population of Filipino users nowadays.

These statistics only show that while Filipinos are able to fully enjoy and exhaust social media it is also undeniable that they are at high risk of the negative implication that social media brought. For instance, the risk of affecting their political views which play a vital part in formulating public policies and legislation through the principles of public opinion; it is where governments listen and address the clamor and grievances of the citizens. According to a recently concluded survey of Statista Research Department (2022) from September 1 to 7, 2018 on 'Social Media Use and its Impact on Political Views in the Philippines' presented a result that reinforce the above poll from Daily Universe account; during the period examined, 71% of the respondents from the Visayas region claimed to have changed their political views because of something they saw on social media. Meanwhile, in the national capital region 58% of the respondents stated to have not changed their political views through social media influence.

Apparently, the effect is beginning to be more rigorous with the PUBLiCUS Asia Inc. (2021) released its second quarter poll conducted from 13 and 19 of July 2021. It is a nationwide purposive sampling survey of 1,500 respondents drawn from a research panel of approximately 100,000 Filipino registered voters maintained by a Singapore-based firm. And it shows that social media has driven most conversations and interactions of social issues into the mainstream with a single click of a button. The survey shows an outcome that news consumption of most Filipinos is taken from social media at 78.8% rating – rated as the most popular media-related activity among the respondents.

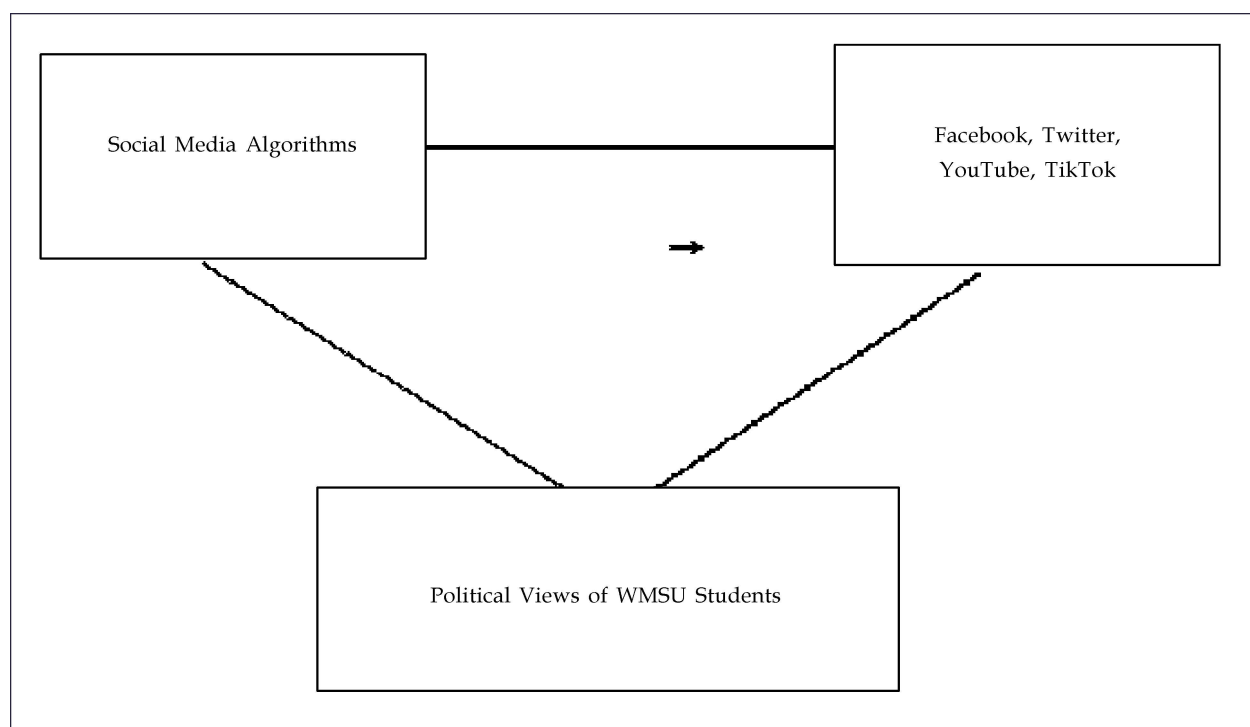
Moreover, because of this fact that most Filipinos acquire news information online displays an increased concern for the widespread of misinformation. According to a study found by the Programme for International Student Assessment (2021), Filipino youth were among the most vulnerable to fake news and misinformation. PISA’s latest data showed that the most common digital skill taught at school on average is understanding the consequences of making information publicly available online. Meanwhile, the least common skill was how to detect phishing or spam emails which is tantamount to the chances of being deceived.

Michael Henry Yusingco, a senior research fellow at the Ateneo Policy Center of the Ateneo School of Government in Metro Manila argues that it is highly imperative for the Filipinos to undergo critical examination of the interplay of social media and democracy. To which the various ploy of political parties using social media for campaigning are apparent in the recently concluded 2022 national election. According to veteran journalist and news anchor, Christian Esguerra, who covered the midterm election closely, “social media seemed to be a top weapon of choice for campaign disinformation, complementing old-school negative propaganda on the ground”. Thus, begging the question of whether more stringent measures regulating online political advocacies should be adopted? A move that ironically could be viewed as undemocratic being a curtailment of free speech.

Indeed, social media in the democratic context poses a huge dilemma for many democracies around the world. As maintained by Griffith Asia Institute (2020), negative campaigning, fake news, and other modes of disinformation on the web are preventing people from having an honest-to-goodness deliberation of urgent issues that impact everyone. They highlight that the absence of open public discussion then enables purveyors of these types of unscrupulous tactics to put more garbage on the internet. Consequently, poisoning the well even further to the severe detriment of frequent social media users like Filipinos. Clearly, social media significantly impacts the trajectory of Philippine democracy. However, when these platforms are utilized the right way, these can greatly help elevate the level of political consciousness of citizens (Malindog-Uy, 2020).

### 1.6.3. Conceptual Framework

Below is a conceptual paradigm showcasing the connection of variables. These variables are represented by the boxes and lines demonstrating the flow of connection among the variables. The diagram shows social media algorithms as a separate variable and Facebook, Twitter, Tiktok, and Youtube as another variable. Also, the flowchart displays political views of WMSU students as another variable.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Paradigm**

#### 1.6.4. *Theoretical Framework*

Media Effects Theory, this theory studies and refers to the reactions elicited from people exposed to different ideas, pictures, behaviors, or items through the different avenues of media. According to this theory, the media influences people by showing the same images or conveying the same thoughts over and over again which could be reflected in the activity performed by the algorithms. This theory is so ideal that it can be used to either encourage or discourage how we dress, behave, purchase, and even view others. Furthermore, it is important to note that the more media is consumed, the more people see the media as reflecting reality, which is not always the case thus, affecting and influencing the views of a person.

Direct Effects Model, under this framework it assumes that the audience passively accepts media messages and would exhibit predictable reactions in response to those messages. Using this model, it could be perceived that users who are exposed to repetitive content because of algorithms are highly susceptible to accept media messages. Therefore, their active engagement online poses an imminent threat to the widespread influence of algorithms effect shaping political stands and beliefs.

Cultivation Analysis Theory, a paradigm which states that heavy exposure to media causes individuals to develop – or cultivate – an illusory perception of reality based on the most repetitive and consistent messages of a particular medium. Under this theory, someone who watches a great deal of television for example, may form a picture of reality that does not correspond to actual life.

## 2. **Methodology**

This section presents the research design, research locale, sampling procedure, population and samples, data gathering procedure, statistical treatment of data and the ethical consideration of the study.

### 2.1. *Research Design*

This research capsule employed a descriptive research design. Descriptive research can be defined as a simple endeavor to identify, describe, or determine a situation or phenomenon. The adoption of this research design is justified for this reason; it determines the effects of social media algorithms on the political views of selected Political Science Students of Western Mindanao State University students.

Since the data acquired are best expressed through statistics and figures, this research uses a quantitative approach. A survey approach through a systematic questionnaire with prepared questions was used for data collection of this study. The researchers created a hard copy for the in-person data gathering and due to the uncertainty of the time and current COVID 19 restrictions, the researchers also prepared a google form for the internet survey. The respondents provide answers to particular questions in order to address the situation as stated.

### 2.2. *Research Locale*

This study was conducted in Western Mindanao State University, a state university in Zamboanga City with 79,000 square meters and 9,147 square meters in the city proper.

### 2.3. *Population of the Study*

This study focuses on one type of respondents, which are the Political Science college students from Western Mindanao State University. In order to determine the number of students who will be part of the study, the researchers utilized the slovin's formula. With a total number of (102) 4<sup>th</sup> Year Political Science students and a 5% margin of error, the researchers came up with (81) study participants.

The researchers decided to focus on college students because they were the most exposed and vulnerable ones' when it comes to the internet. In the recent election these students are part of the major registered voters comprising 52% (COMELEC, 2021), student voters also took part in discussions especially in social media where it became their field that furthermore extends to 'on-the-ground' political activities.

The respondents will be described according to their demographic profile, which includes age, sex, and ethnicity. The researchers place a high priority on the respondents' personal data protection in accordance with Republic Act No. 10173, often known as the Data Privacy Act, a law that tries to keep all kinds of

information, including sensitive, confidential, and private information, safe. As a result, the researchers are not permitted to make the respondents' information public.

**2.4. Sampling Procedures**

The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling. A sampling method where researchers forms a sample of individuals based on their capacity and capability to address the objectives of this study. As a result, researchers conducted a high priority on the qualifications' criteria of the respondents. Whereby, the researchers purposively select the participants of this research study

The researchers employed Slovin's formula to determine an accurate and reliable number of respondents. With a total number of (102) 4<sup>th</sup> Year Political Science students and a 5% margin of error, the researchers came up with (81) study participants.

**2.5. Research Instrument**

The research instrument used for data gathering of this study is a survey questionnaire. The researchers create a questionnaire which is available online and in-person. For online, the researchers create a google form, while for in-person conduct a hard copy will also be provided, this is in a form of checklist to gather the needed data in determining the Effects of Social Media Algorithms on the Political Views of Students.

The title of this study is stated in the survey questionnaire. The researchers guarantee that the survey's information will be kept fully confidential. The survey questionnaire consists of two main sections. The first section is respondent's personal information where they provide information such as their name (optional), age, sex and ethnicity. The second section is the questionnaire part emphasis is on the research itself highlighting social media algorithms.

The Table 1 shows the interpretation of the ranges under the data of this study.

The Table 1 presents the following Values and Ranges utilized on a five-point likert scale. Whereby, 1 has a descriptive equivalent of Never ranging from 1.00-1.80 and can be interpreted as Highly Unnoticeable. Likewise, with 5 as Highly Noticeable when range from 4.21-5.00 bearing a descriptive equivalent of Always. This Table was used to measure, analyze, and interpret the first and second data of Tables 3 and 4 of this research.

The Table 2 presents the following Values and Ranges utilized on a five-point likert scale. Whereby, 1 has a descriptive equivalent of Strongly Disagree ranging from 1.00-1.80 and can be interpreted as Very Influential. Likewise, with 5 as Very Influential when range from 4.21-5.00 bearing a descriptive equivalent of Strongly Agree. Also, it can be observed in the table that the value 3 which is Neither agree or disagree ranging from 2.61-3.40 has a result interpretation of Uninfluential where the researchers believed that influence could be done in two ways either it is leaning to disagreement or agreement but being neither of the two means unaffected or it is uninfluential. This Table was used to measure, analyze, and interpret the first and second data of Tables 5 to 9 of this research.

<b>Table 1: Frequency</b>			
<b>Descriptive Equivalent</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Result Interpretation</b>
Never	1	1.00 - 1.80	Highly Unnoticeable
Rarely	2	1.81 - 2.60	Unnoticeable
Sometimes	3	2.61 - 3.40	Moderate
Often	4	3.41 - 4.20	Noticeable
Always	5	4.21 - 5.00	Highly Noticeable

<b>Table 2: Agreement</b>			
<b>Descriptive Equivalent</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Result Interpretation</b>
Strongly Disagree	1	1.00 – 1.80	Very Influential
Disagree	2	1.81 – 2.60	Influential
Neither Agree or Disagree	3	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral
Agree	4	3.41 – 4.20	Influential
Strongly Agree	5	4.21 – 5.00	Very Influential

These values and ranges deal with whether a person agrees or disagrees with the statement provided to him and its significant result impact. Numerous elements, including bias and emotions, as well as the emergence of social media with the advancement of advanced communication technology, have an impact on how strongly people agree or disagree (Onofri, 2019). This then supports the notion that, depending on social media’s dynamics, it can still be viewed as having an impact whether people agree with it or disagree.

**2.6. Statistical Tools**

In the first part of the questionnaire, which is the personal information of the Selected Political Science of Western Mindanao State University Students the researchers get the percentages and the frequency of their sex, ethnicity and age. As for the percentages, the researchers use a 100% pie chart to show the percentages of each moderator variable. For frequency it was presented in a table showing the number of people in a particular moderator variable.

For the second part of the questionnaire which contains all the relevant questions regarding the Effects of Social Media Algorithms on the Political Views of Students, the researchers used frequency to determine the number of answers of the respondents per table of questions. Each table of questions has a specific frequency table.

Additionally, the researchers separate the respondents according to their sex, ethnicity and age where in frequency and mean is used to determine the answers according to their demographic profile.

**2.7. Data Gathering Procedure**

This research has gone through the procedures required to do the research properly. After the questions included in the instrument were finally decided upon, a detailed survey questionnaire was created to gather all the data and responses required for the study. This study is conducted in Western Mindanao State University, Normal Road, Zamboanga, 7000 Zamboanga del Sur, during the academic year 2022-2023.

This research as specified has gone through technical procedures. In moving on and starting the data collection, the researchers decide the research design used in the conduct of the study. The researchers created a questionnaire which was approved by the research professor. Also including obtaining a written permit, due to the restrictions imposed by Covid 19, the researchers have conducted the study both online and in person. The online survey-questionnaire is available through a Google form and can be answered depending on the respondent’s availability, while the in-person researchers handed out hard copies of the survey questionnaire.

The researchers promote the said research through online posting as well as in-person campus posting in order to make use of all opportunities to recruit participants who fit the predefined criteria. When respondents express interest in participating, the researchers carefully determine whether they meet the criteria, at which point they give them a brief explanation of the significance and relevance of the research, including the concept that will enable them to provide the most accurate answers. The researcher gathered, totaled, and



interpreted the data once the respondents had completed the examinations. All interpretations are based on the data obtained to arrive at reliable recommendations and a conclusion, the data gathered were utilized.

**2.8. Ethical Consideration of the Study**

Prior to the conduct of this study, the researchers sought ethical approval from the Research Ethics Oversight Committee, Western Mindanao State University and were granted so for implementation thereafter.

During the conduct of the study, the researchers assessed the participants through online survey questionnaires and in person, informed them of the general purpose of the study and obtained their appropriate consent to participate in the study beforehand. In the collection and analysis of data, the researchers discussed to the respondents how the data will be used. The researchers ensure the data collected is treated with utmost confidentiality and in compliance with Republic Act 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

**3. Results and Discussions**

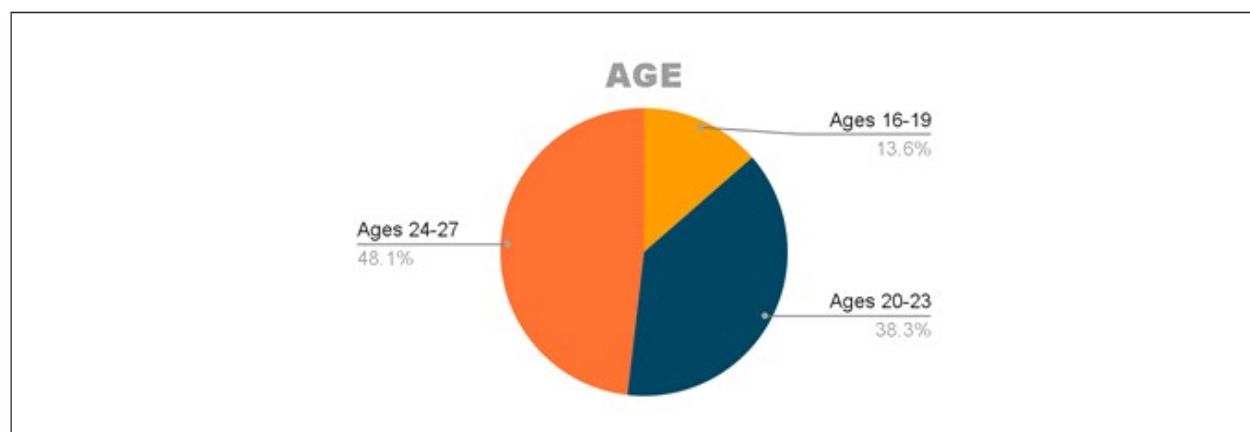
This section details the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data that was gathered from the respondents. That data was classified in a way that answers the research problem.

**3.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Table 3 shows the socio-demographic profile of respondents in terms of age. The highest frequency is 39 or 48.1% which belongs to the age bracket of 24-27 years old. On the other hand, the lowest frequency is 11 or 13.6% which belongs to the age bracket of 16-19 years old. Therefore, the majority of the respondents were aged 24-27 years old.

People aged 24 to 27 are easier to reach through social media and thus are more likely to respond to surveys. As a matter of fact, according to the statistics provided by the “The 2021 Social Media Demographics Guide”, 86% of people ages 18-29 use Facebook. In line with this, this study has majority respondents of those belonging to 24-27 years old.

Age	Frequency	Percentages	Rank
16-19	11	13.6%	3
20-23	31	38.3%	2
24-27	39	48.1%	1
Total	81	100%	



**Figure 2: Pie Chart Showing the Respondents According to Age**

Table 4 shows the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex. The highest frequency belongs to male respondents with 50 or 61.7%. On the other hand, females get the lowest frequency with 31 respondents or 38.3% of the research population. Therefore, males are the majority respondents of this study.

Males are more active on social media than females. As a matter of fact, according to the study published by Statista Research Department in "Gender Distribution of Social Media Audiences Worldwide 2021", 56.6% of its total users are men, while 43.5% are women. Similar to this study, the respondents who take part in this study are more males.

Table 4: Respondents According to Gender		
Gender	Frequency	Percentages
Male	50	61.7%
Female	31	38.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>

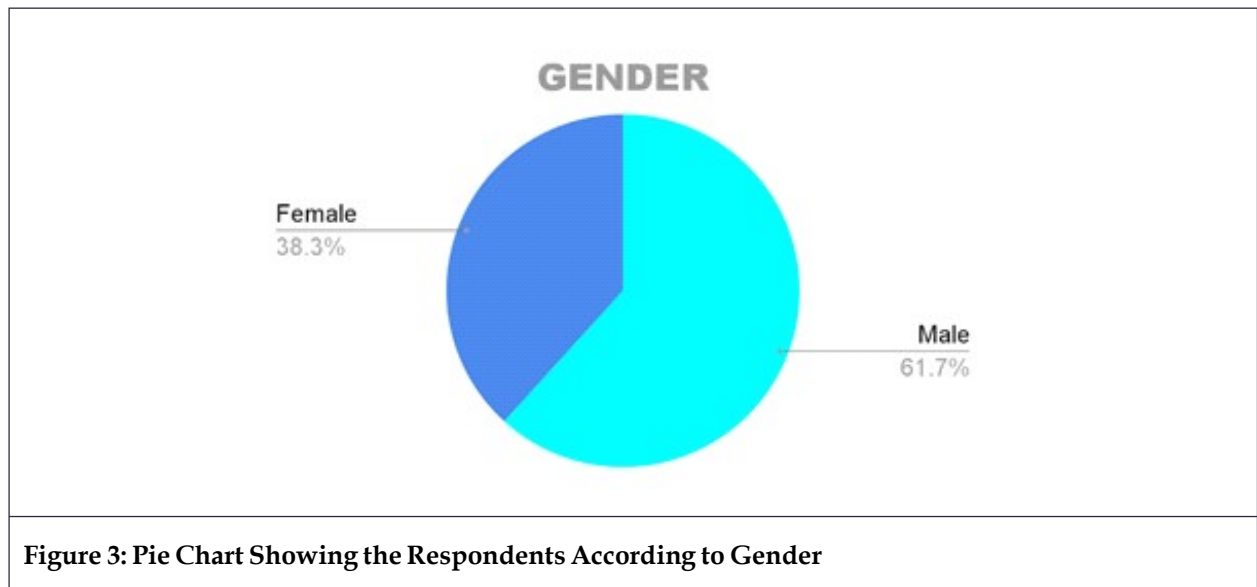


Table 5 shows the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in-terms of ethnicity. The highest frequency is 29 or 35.8% which belongs to the Chavacano ethnic group. On the other hand, the lowest frequency is 7 which belongs to the Ilonggo or 8.6% of the respondent's population.

Table 5: Respondents According to Ethnicity			
Ethnicity	Frequency	Percentages	Rank
Bisaya	11	13.6%	4
Chavacano	29	35.8%	1
Ilonggo	7	8.6%	5
Tagalog	13	16.0%	3
Tausug	21	25.9%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Among many ethnic groups residing in Zamboanga City, the majority of them is Chavacano which is why it was apparent in this research. Similarly, “Chabacano in the Age of Facebook 2013” concluded that the engagement of these people are proliferating throughout the years. Notably, the study has shown similar results.

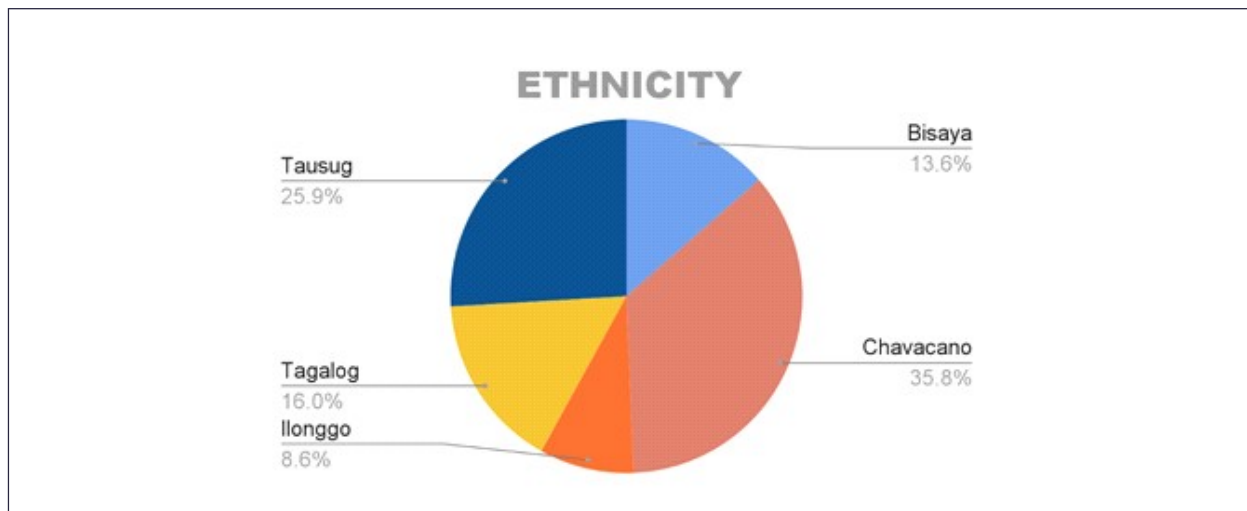


Figure 4: Pie Chart Showing the Respondents According to Ethnicity

### 3.2. Politically Related Contents Usually Seen in their Newsfeeds

Table 6 shows the number of responses of 4<sup>th</sup> year Political Science students towards their perspectives on what politically related contents do they usually see on their social media platforms such as: Facebook, Youtube, Tiktook, and Twitter.

Out of the (81) respondents that participated in the study the average mean revealed as (2.67) describing as “often” when it comes to how frequently they see political content driven by algorithms according to international landscape. It is apparent in the data that most 4<sup>th</sup> year Political Science students are positively seeing and receiving posts from identified social media platforms exhibiting the coherence of information presented. This study found that the majority of the respondents believe that social media algorithms in the international sphere drive the updates displayed in their newsfeeds. Below is its column graph showing the level of responses.

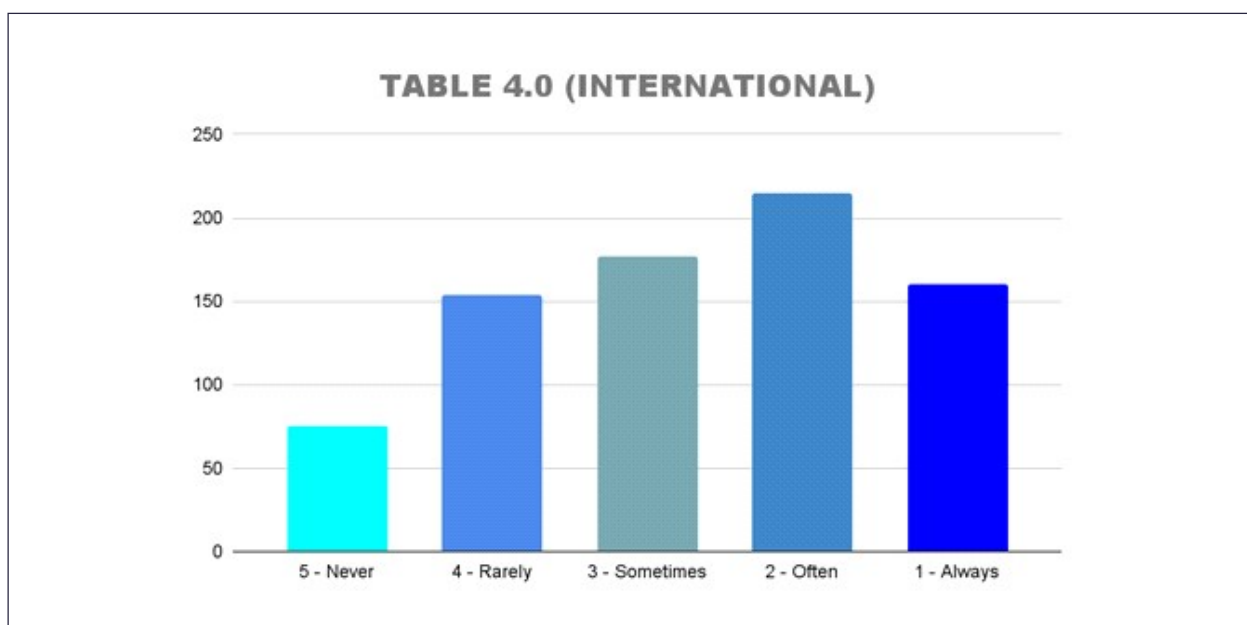


Figure 5: Column Graph Showing the Response According to International

<b>Table 6: Political Content According to International</b>								
International	Responses					Mean	Adjectival Equivalent	Rank
	5	4	3	2	1			
1) I watched international news such as the war between Russia and Ukraine through my Facebook watch.	9	12	9	28	23	2.46	Often	4
2) I read some news on Facebook and Twitter on the economic sanctions imposed by the United States to nations aiding Russia.	8	26	16	21	10	3.01	Sometimes	8
3) I've seen news content like Taiwan and China tensions repeatedly posted on my walls in YouTube.	5	14	25	15	22	2.57	Often	5
4) After I clicked a post on Chinese news where the former Chinese President Hu Jintao was escorted out of China's Communist Party Congress, my newsfeed was blotted with almost the same content.	13	24	16	17	11	3.14	Sometimes	9
5) After viewing the video of the British Parliament in turmoil followed by the resignation of Prime Minister Liz Truss, I am now seeing posted topics of UK politics.	14	18	29	12	8	3.22	Sometimes	10
6) I viewed news on Facebook revealing the interest of Saudi Arabia joining BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), the five emerging economies in the world.	7	20	21	24	9	2.90	Often	7
7) I've seen videos on YouTube of Chinese vessels roaming in the disputed territory of the West Philippine Sea.	3	12	11	26	29	2.19	Often	2
8) When I clicked the Like button of a post on ICC (International Criminal Court) coming into the Philippines to investigate extrajudicial killings that transpired during former President Rodrigo Duterte campaign against war on drugs, I experienced a multiple display of the same content in my newsfeed.	8	14	19	28	12	2.73	Often	6
9) I spotted some YouTube videos forecasting China as the world's next emerging superpower.	5	10	21	25	20	2.44	Often	3
10) I tracked the world leader's response on COVID-19 global outbreak through updates in Twitter and Facebook posts.	3	4	10	36	28	1.99	Always	1
<b>Average Mean</b>						<b>2.67</b>	<b>Often</b>	

**Note: Legends:** 5 – Never; 4 – Rarely; 3 – Sometimes; 2 – Often; 1– Always.

Table 7 shows the number of responses of 4th year Political Science students towards their perspectives on what politically related contents do they usually see on their social media platforms such as: Facebook, Youtube, Tiktok, and Twitter.

Out of the (81) respondents that participated in the study the average mean revealed as (2.80) describing as “often” when it comes to how frequently they see political content driven by algorithms according to domestic landscape. It is undeniable based on this data that the respondents are dominantly exposed to

**Table 7: Political Content According to Domestic**

Domestic	Responses					Mean	Adjectival Equivalent	Rank
	5	4	3	2	1			
1) I've witnessed how the government passively responded to the outbreak of COVID-19 cases March of 2019 in the country.	0	11	9	32	29	2.02	Often	2
2) I've witnessed how the government proactively responded to the outbreak of COVID-19 cases in March of 2019 in the country.	20	23	13	22	3	3.43	Sometimes	10
3) After the Cease and Desist order of NTC, through Facebook I've witnessed the closure of ABS-CBN in television due to franchise expiration which the 18 <sup>th</sup> Congress denied to grant in violation of constitutional limits of foreign ownership.	0	5	5	21	50	1.57	Always	1
4) I happen to view the first SONA (State Of the Nation Address) of President Marcos Jr. in some of the TikTok videos short scenes.	10	25	31	13	2	3.35	Sometimes	9
5) I watched vloggers/youtubers such as Project Nightfall giving 'reaction videos' against the political affairs in the Philippines.	7	16	19	24	15	2.70	Often	5
6) I followed celebrities on Facebook endorsing certain politicians during the campaign period. Subsequently, I have been receiving updates of their latest posts.	12	14	13	23	19	2.69	Often	4
7) Following the announcement of President Marcos Jr. appointing EX-PNP Chief Cascolan as the new DOH undersecretary, my Twitter newsfeed displays many news articles relevant to it.	15	11	8	27	20	2.68	Often	3
8) After I shared a post on Facebook with Senator Jinggoy Estrada stating that he considered proposing a ban on Korean telenovelas, I observed that I started to keep seeing posts of different reactions.	15	27	9	24	6	3.26	Sometimes	8
9) I've seen repeated videos in TikTok discrediting Robin Padilla labelling him as incapable of Senatorial office.	13	22	26	9	11	3.21	Sometimes	7
10) I've seen repeated videos in TikTok lauding Robin Padilla and labelling him as a candidate suitable for Senatorial office.	11	9	26	22	13	2.79	Often	6
<b>Average Mean</b>						<b>2.80</b>	<b>Often</b>	

**Note: Legends:** 5 – Never; 4 – Rarely; 3 – Sometimes; 2 – Often; 1– Always.

seeing political content on their respective newsfeeds. The study confirms the ability of domestic affairs to be relevant in the platforms of the respondents. Below is a column graph presenting the frequency of responses of the respondents.

### 3.3. Social Media Algorithms on Political Integrity and Transparency

Table 8 shows the point of view of students when it comes to integrity which has an average mean of (3.2) which is equivalent to Neither Agree or Disagree, this signifies that most of the respondents were neutral when it comes to what they see in social media, they don't agree nor disagree.



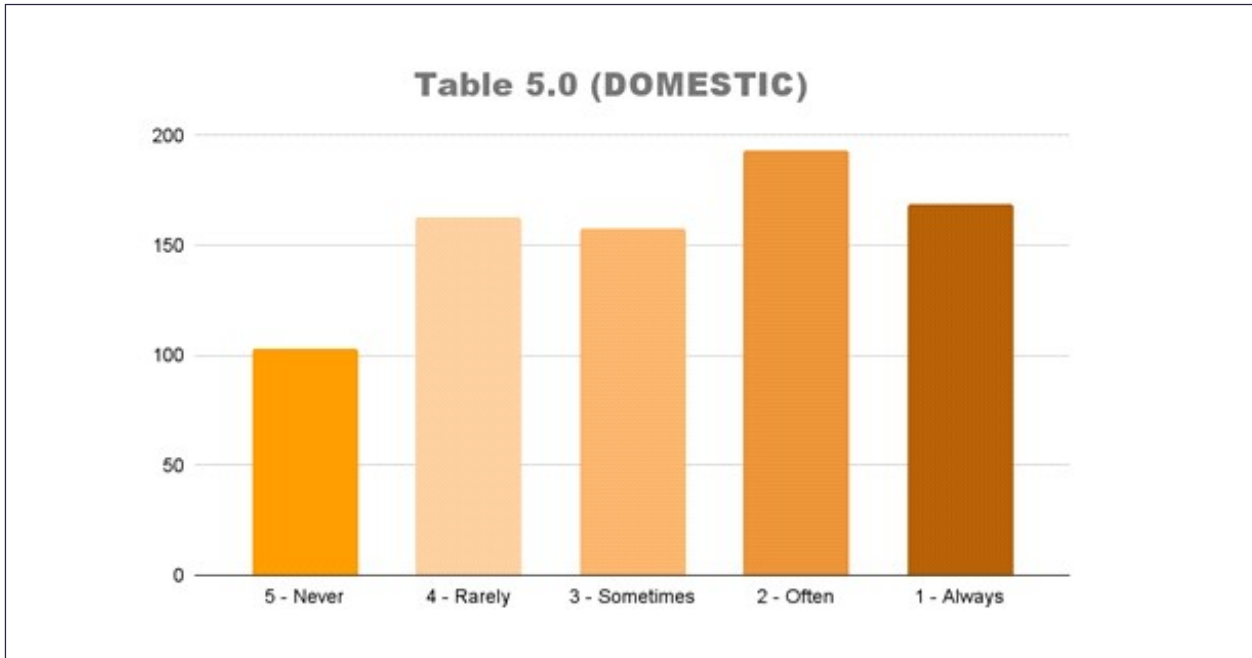


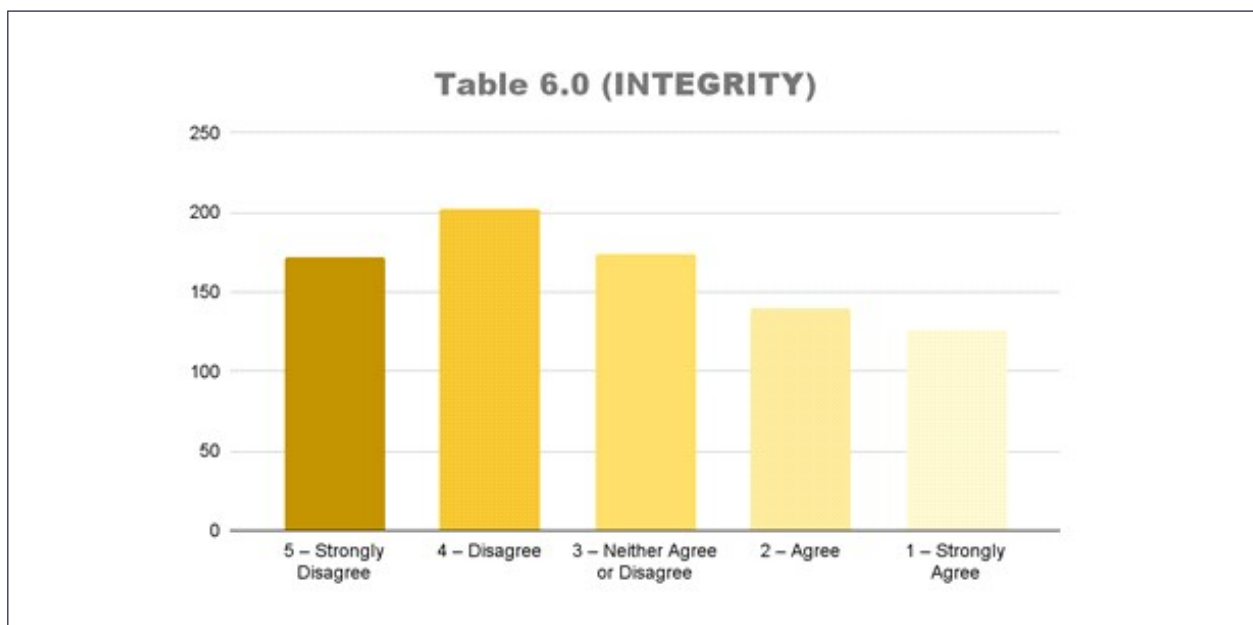
Figure 6: Column Graph Showing the Response According to Domestic

Statement on Integrity	Responses					Mean	Adjectival Equivalent	Rank
	5	4	3	2	1			
1) Do you agree with VP Inday Sara Duterte's statement that leaders shouldn't be judged on their level of honesty after reading numerous articles supporting her position?	34	30	5	7	5	3.85	Neither Agree or Disagree	8
2) Do you think that former DOH Secretary Francis Duque III did not engage in the overpricing of healthcare materials during the pandemic, because many vloggers say so?	22	26	19	13	1	3.68	Neither Agree or Disagree	6
3) Given the recent influx of material, do you agree with the Tiktok community's consensus that the Marcos family shouldn't apologise for their family's role in the killings committed during the martial law era?	27	23	19	10	2	3.78	Neither Agree or Disagree	7
4) Do the countless discussions that the Marcoses should acknowledge their mistakes before moving on, particularly in light of the atrocities done during the martial regime, convince you?	12	32	25	8	4	3.49	Neither Agree or Disagree	5
5) Would you agree that faking credentials is a concern, which during the recent election became one of the debated topics because of materials that claim it is insignificant?	3	5	18	26	29	2.10	Agree	1
6) After reading articles on how people malign the Marcoses, I also think that they are honest and all of the things happening to them are all mere accusations.	28	31	11	8	3	3.90	Neither Agree or Disagree	10
7) I agree with opposition candidates that honesty should always be the metric in electing public officials. This has been the consistent post in my feed.	8	9	16	18	30	2.35	Agree	3

**Table 8: Respondents Point of View in Terms of Integrity**

8) On twitter people are demanding Justice Secretary Boying Remulla to resign after the arrest of his son, for me he should resign to save his name.	5	7	18	24	27	2.25	Agree	2
9) I agree with Facebook posts which state that Marcos Jr. should publicly declare that he doesn't have a college degree.	9	11	26	20	15	2.74	Agree	4
10) I believe with Tiktok videos stating that Marcos have always been honest and faithful especially to the Filipino people.	29	30	10	6	6	3.86	Neither Agree or Disagree	9
<b>Average Mean</b>						<b>3.2</b>	<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	

**Note: Legends:** 5 – Strongly Disagree; 4 – Disagree; 3 – Neither Agree or Disagree; 2 – Agree; 1 – Strongly Agree.



**Figure 7: Column Graph Showing the Response According to Integrity**

The table only proves that social media algorithms do not necessarily have a direct impact on the agreement of students when it comes to integrity, which also gives room for us to understand that they understand and react to things on their own.

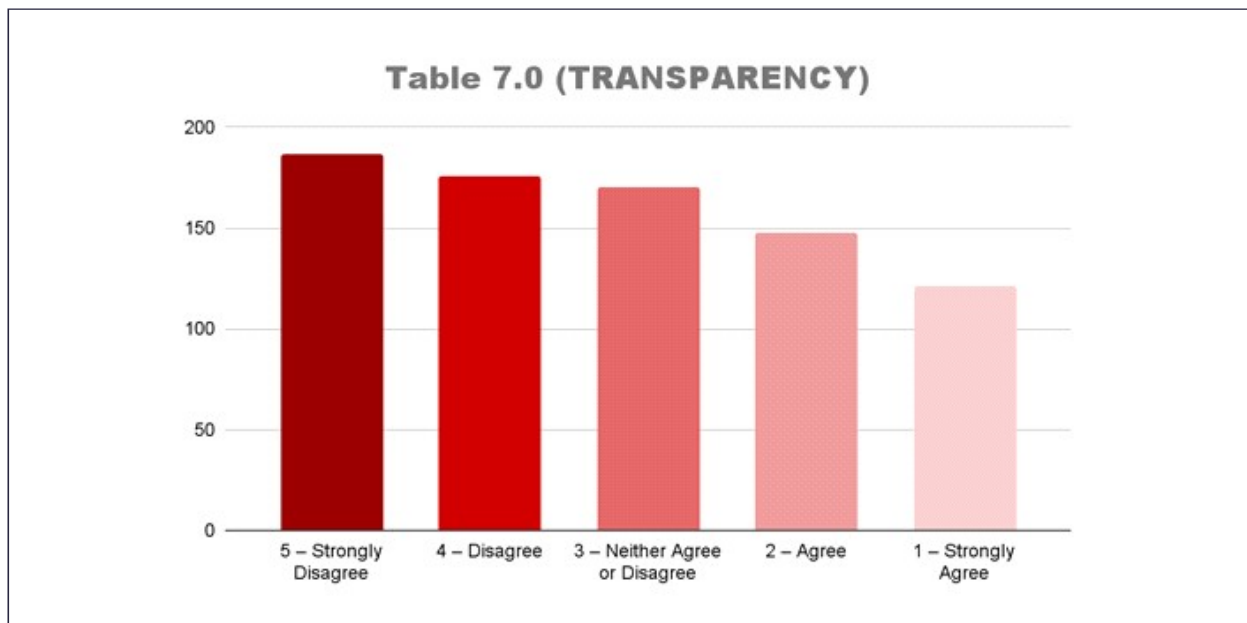
Figure 7 below shows the number of times the students responded with the level of agreement. It shows that almost the majority of the students with (200 responses) disagreed with the following statements which means that they are not affected by the algorithm when it comes to integrity, this is followed by strongly disagreeing, which signifies that student are leaning towards not being affected by the algorithm.

This Table 9 shows the point of view of students when it comes to social media algorithms and its effect on transparency. The average mean is (3.17) which is equivalent to Neither Agree or Disagree, this means that students neither agree or disagree meaning in the influx of information they get based from their algorithm they neither agree or disagree which gives an idea that they are neutral in issues on transparency of government officials.

Figure 8 below shows that most of the students chose Strongly disagreed in most of the statements; this means that most of them were not affected by their social media algorithm because they were convinced about the statements no matter how many times it showed in their feed.

<b>Table 9: Respondents Point of View in Terms of Transparency</b>								
Statement on Transparency	Responses					Mean	Adjectival Equivalent	Rank
	5	4	3	2	1			
1) Do you believe that government officials should not disclose their SALN because you saw Facebook videos claiming that it may be used for political purposes?	19	21	20	15	6	3.40	Neither Agree or Disagree	5
2) President Bongbong Marcos' office has proposed P4. 5 billion in confidential funds for 2023. Will you agree with pro-Marcos vloggers who argue that it's acceptable for people to not know where these funds are used after seeing all of their vlogs in your Youtube suggested video feed?	32	23	13	9	2	3.92	Neither Agree or Disagree	10
3) As you scrolled through your Facebook feed, you may have noticed that Sass Sassot, Thinking Pinoy, and other well-known vloggers disputed the significance of the former vice president Leni Robredo receiving three consecutive highest COA ratings. For them, this was not particularly notable. Do you believe their claim?	35	20	15	6	5	3.91	Neither Agree or Disagree	9
4) Just this past October 2022, "NASAANPANGULO" trended on Twitter. People mostly wanted the president to appear. Do you share the same opinion with them after reading most of their tweets that Marcos Jr. should show up in times of calamity.	2	13	31	25	10	2.65	Agree	3
5) With the recent strikes of calamities it is presumed that the DSWD should provide immediate assistance to the affected people; do you concede that DSWD should repeatedly post on Facebook the distribution of assistance and reliefs?	7	7	19	24	24	2.37	Agree	2
6) I agree with twitter posts that state that officials should be transparent in all their dealings.	12	14	13	23	19	2.72	Agree	4
7) After seeing twitter posts stating that government officials should not publicise their dealings because it might be used for political propaganda, I was convinced that it is fine to keep it private.	27	24	15	8	7	3.68	Neither Agree or Disagree	8
8) Reading many posts on confidential funds of the government saying that it is needed to fight against NPA, I now agree that it must be approved.	24	27	15	7	8	3.64	Neither Agree or Disagree	6
9) Tiktok videos showing how transparent Marcos Jr. is, especially in his daily activities such as eating in a street eatery convinced me that he is one of the best presidents.	26	22	17	10	6	3.65	Neither Agree or Disagree	7
10) I agree with twitter posts that state that the government must always be transparent to people.	3	5	10	22	41	1.85	Strongly Agree	1
<b>Average Mean</b>						<b>3.17</b>	<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	

**Note: Legends:** 5 – Strongly Disagree; 4 – Disagree; 3 – Neither Agree or Disagree; 2 – Agree; 1 – Strongly Agree.



**Figure 8: Column Graph Showing the Response According to Transparency**

#### 4. Conclusion

Algorithms in social media are undeniably powerful, it was evident in this study that most platforms of social media use algorithms as its mechanism to improve users’ experience in using social media of which it influences public discourse in the political landscape and even people’s daily lives, affecting even those who does not have access to it. Recent elections and any public programs that use data and information from social media are only two examples of how it determines people’s fates. According to the findings of this study, taking into account how it affects their attitudes toward transparency, neutrality, and having a negative impression of the government, Social Media Algorithms have an effect on the Political Views of Western Mindanao State University Students.

Social media is influential, it resonates to all ages and crosses different boundaries, while there is a vast influence to change behavior the evidence in this research found out that Western Mindanao State University students usually see content in their feed because of social media algorithms, this can be because of the repetitive feature that algorithm produces.

Understanding better the dynamics of the internet is complex in nature, in this research the researchers found out that even if students see most of the time the contents on transparency and accountability in their feed, most of them strongly disagree which signifies that they are not easily swayed by the content they see in their feed.

This development encourages the academe to understand their students better, for WMSU most of the students are intelligent to be able to safeguard themselves from believing in perpetuated information especially propagandas in social media sites, this does not only secure their chamber of information but make them a better citizen.

The researchers look at the result on a positive note, for this means that students are not affected by the influx of information, no matter how many times they see it, they don’t easily believe it. It then gives us an understanding that they fact check the information they get or conduct their due-diligence before believing on it, this is something that the Filipino youth must be: critical thinkers.

#### 5. Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn in this study, the researchers recommend the following:

To broaden the scope of the study incorporating the various areas that could be part of the study in determining the effects of social media algorithms to wit: determine the influence of Social Media Algorithms

on the respondents' political standpoint, in terms of being pro-government, apolitical, and opposition. Through this inclusion the study will comprehensively discuss the diverse political perspective of respondents with their pre-standing political standpoint.

Second, to address the need to develop comprehensive results of data, there must be statistics of significant differences when respondents are grouped according to age, gender, or ethnicity. In this way, the researchers will be able to identify the effect of moderating variables towards the political perspectives of the respondents.

Lastly, students must be aware of the alarming manifestation of algorithms in the different social media platforms whereby most activities are driven. Increasing awareness will promote a social media environment that is not controlling nor despotic. A safer space where published contents are sorted by publish time and decrease on the aspect of relevance towards the user interest.

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