

Social Media as a Tool for Peace? Mapping Online Engagement among Mranaw Youths

Raihan A. Yusoph

History Department, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mindanao State University

Abstract

Social media is profoundly shaping youth political participation and discourses globally. However, its specific role in influencing peace and conflict narratives remains understudied, especially in the Philippines. This study aimed to provide useful baseline data on how Mranaw youth social media users engage with and perceive online dialogues on peace issues. Findings revealed most passively consumed rather than actively contributed to discussions, though a sizable minority played an active role. Domestic socio-political contexts shaped narratives far more than international events. Sentiments were largely positive or neutral versus negative. The study is limited by its small non-representative sample but offers initial evidence countering assumptions that social media mainly drives extensive youth activism or polarizes discourses on peace. Key contributions include highlighting the significance of grounding digital peacebuilding efforts in local values and generating youth perspectives unveiling a more multifaceted public discourse. Practical implications emphasize tailoring awareness campaigns to resonate locally, encouraging critical evaluation of content, and promoting inclusive dialogues embracing diverse identities. Further research building on these exploratory findings can support evidence-based policies and initiatives harnessing social media's potential for constructive exchange on peace and conflict issues.

Key words: Bangsamoro, Mranaws, Peacebuilding, and Social Media

1. Introduction

Social media has profoundly shaped political discourse and activism among youth across the globe. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube have enabled new forms of political participation, protest coordination, and public debates on societal issues (Valenzuela 2013). More recently, TikTok has also emerged as a hub of youth political expression and commentary, with its popularity skyrocketing globally since the pandemic in 2020 (Kennedy 2022). However, its impacts on peacebuilding attitudes and narratives remain unclear, representing a critical gap in research. With over 60% of Filipinos aged 15-35 active on social media (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022), examining these dynamics in the Philippines provides important insights. This study aims to address gaps in understanding social media's role in youth peace dialogues in the Philippines undergoing rapid technological transformation.

Moreover, research on the intersection of social media and peacebuilding reveals a complex, context-dependent mix of risks and opportunities. As according to Froio and Ganesh (2018), social media facilitates greater youth political participation, mobilizes protests, and humanizes opposing groups. Yet it also contributes to polarized echo chambers and viral misinformation that exacerbates conflicts (Oh et al., 2013). These potential pros and cons have played out through social media's role in diverse peace and conflict situations worldwide, from the Arab Spring, the recent Israeli genocide towards the Palestinian people in

Gaza, the 2017 Marawi Siege, and to the Rohingya genocide in Myanmar. The impacts depend heavily on the integration of online and offline work, the substantiveness of narratives, and the unique features of each socio-political and cultural context (Zuckerman 2019).

In Southeast Asia, social media has facilitated greater youth political participation and amplified marginalized voices (Saeed & Rohde 2021). However, formal studies on its specific role in peace and conflict attitudes remain limited. This study helps address gaps in understanding these dynamics through a survey on social media and peace dialogues among youth in Philippines. It provides useful baseline data on how young people participate in and perceive social media narratives on peace issues against the backdrop of its domestic socio-political environments.

2. Research Questions

The study aims to address several key research questions:

1. How do different age groups among youth in the Philippines engage with peace-related content and dialogues on social media platforms?
2. In what ways does passive consumption versus active contribution to peace discussions on social media influence perspectives among youth in the Philippines?
3. How do specific domestic socio-political contexts and events in the Philippines influence the sentiments and substance of discussions about peace issues on social media?

3. Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study integrates four key theoretical lenses to examine the role of social media in youth peace narratives: Media Richness Theory, Critical Cosmopolitanism, Framing Theory, and Youth Bulge Theory. According to Daft and Lengerl (1986), Media Richness Theory analyzes how the richness of information affects human understanding. It suggests interactive media like social media facilitate better comprehension of complex topics like peacebuilding versus traditional media. This lens helps assess how social media features shape youth perspectives. In addition, the researcher also used the Critical Cosmopolitanism framework by Delanty (2009). This theory recognizes global digital platforms intersect with local contexts, embracing diverse identities and struggles rather than a universal global community (Delanty, 2009). It provides a framework to analyze how domestic socio-political environments in the Philippines shape social media narratives more than global discourses. These theories help contextualize how the expanding Filipino youth population engaged on social media can impact prospects for peacebuilding. Furthermore, this multifaceted theoretical framework centered on media richness, critical cosmopolitanism, framing, and demographic factors provides a strong foundation for examining the research questions and data exploring social media, youth, and peacebuilding. The integration of communication, cultural, narrative, and political theories allows for a holistic analysis of the complex dynamics involved.

3. Result and Discussions

In this paper, the researcher explored how young people in the Philippines use social media to talk about peace. Questions about different age groups, how active or passive involvement affects their views, the influence of the country's politics, and the types of content that interest young people in Marawi in discussions about peace.

My study looks at what I found in the data to understand how different age groups use the internet, how being more or less active in discussions matters, how politics affects what they say, and what kind of content they like. I want to not only share what I discovered but also understand what it means for young people in Marawi when they talk about peace online.

The next parts of this paper go into more detail about what we learned, why it's important, and what it could mean for having better and more inclusive conversations about peace among the diverse youth in Marawi, Philippines.

3.1. Age-Based Engagement with Peace Content on Social Media

This study provides interesting insights into how youth in the Philippines engage with peace dialogues on social media. The predominance of Facebook as the most used platform aligns with its status as the leading social media site globally and in the Philippines more specifically. However, the relatively high usage of TikTok among respondents also reflects the rising popularity of this platform. TikTok's growth as a hub for political and social discourse, especially among younger demographics, has been noted across different cultural contexts (Kennedy 2022). It's evolving role in peacebuilding narratives in Southeast Asia merits further research.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15-17 years	10	4.7	4.7	4.7
	18-21 years	183	86.7	86.7	91.5
	22-25 years	18	8.5	8.5	100.0
	Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table 1: Age Distribution of the respondents

The age distribution data reveals a strong emphasis on the 18-21 age range, with 86.7% of respondents falling into this category, likely representing university students. The 22-25 age group comprises 8.5%, while the 15-17 age bracket is the smallest at 4.7%. This age skew, particularly the lower participation of 15-17 year olds, suggests challenges in reaching or engaging this age group, possibly due to less active social media use. The prevalence of 18-21 year olds reflects research indicating this age group has the highest social media usage rates in the Philippines (Pew Research Center, 2019). However, lower engagement from minors aged 15-17 corroborates studies showing limitations in digital access and literacy skills among this demographic (UNICEF, 2021).

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	135	64.0	64.0	64.0
	Male	76	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

In terms of gender, the survey indicates a significant imbalance, with 64% of respondents identifying as female and 36% as male. The heavy skew towards female participants, while offering diverse perspectives, limits the survey's ability to capture potential differences in how young men and women engage with digital peace discussions. The findings may better represent young women's behaviors and attitudes in this context, emphasizing the need for further research to explore gender-specific dynamics. Overall, the data provides valuable insights into female youth behaviors but acknowledges limitations in gender representation. The gender imbalance supports findings that young women tend to be more active on social media than men in the Philippines (Statista, 2022). But varied perspectives are needed, so further research should explore how young males engage in online peacebuilding discourse (Santos, 2022).

3.2. Frequency of social media usage among Mranaw youths

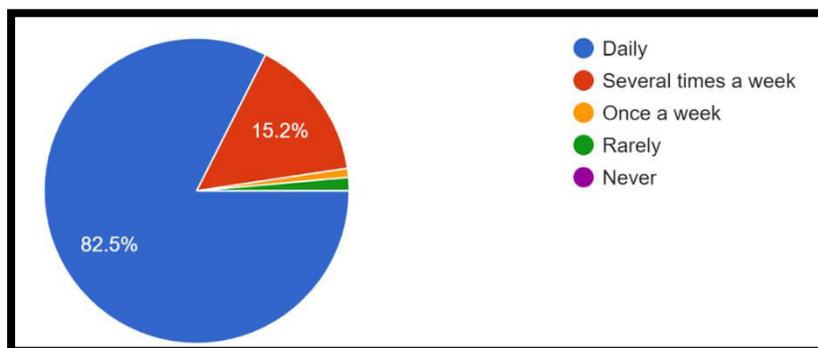


Figure 1. Frequency of Social Media Usage

The majority, at 82.5%, engage with social media daily, highlighting its integral role in daily life for personal connections, news, or entertainment. Meanwhile, 15.2% participate several times a week, indicating frequent engagement for specific purposes or events. Those using social media once a week (0.9%) are a small but noteworthy group, likely prioritizing essential updates or specific connections. The "Rarely" category, at 1.3%, suggests infrequent use driven by privacy concerns or a preference for in-person interactions. The diverse usage patterns underscore different preferences and priorities, influenced by demographics, age, and culture. Platforms can leverage these insights to tailor services, content, and features, recognizing the substantial impact of daily usage on societal interactions. Recommendations include targeted marketing, platform enhancements for diverse user patterns, and promoting responsible social media use, especially for infrequent users. Overall, the interpretation of the frequency of social media usage provides valuable insights for

researchers and digital stakeholders. Frequent daily social media use aligns with reports that Filipinos spend over 4 hours per day on these platforms on average (Hootsuite, 2022). However, tailored features and policies could better serve diverse usage patterns based on demographic factors (McKinsey, 2021).

4. Active vs. Passive Participation in Peace Discussions

In recent years, the role of social media in shaping public discourse, particularly in the context of peace-related discussions, has garnered significant attention. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, individuals, particularly the youth, are actively engaging with and participating in conversations related to peace on various social media platforms. This study aims to delve into the dynamics of active engagement and participation concerning peace-related content, seeking to understand the perspectives, behaviors, and contributions of individuals in the online sphere. By exploring the intricacies of how users interact with peace-related content on social media, this research seeks to shed light on the potential impact of digital platforms in fostering discussions, awareness, and ultimately, contributing to peacebuilding efforts.

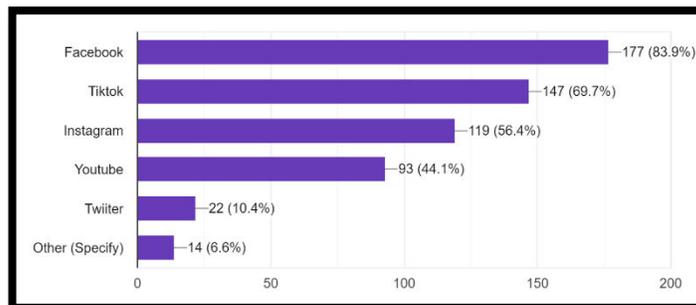


Figure 2. Social Media Platforms Actively used by the respondents

The data on social media platform usage among respondents provides key insights into preferences and habits. Facebook stands out as the most used platform, with 83.9% active engagement, showcasing its enduring popularity for diverse age groups in Marawi City. TikTok follows closely with 69.7%, especially popular among younger demographics, emphasizing its appeal for dynamic and creative content. Instagram maintains strength at 56.4%, attracting users who appreciate visual storytelling. YouTube, at 44.1%, remains a significant source for varied content, from education to entertainment. Twitter, with 10.4%, appeals to users preferring real-time updates and short-form communication. The "Other" category, at 6.6%, hints at niche or emerging platforms catering to specific interests. Overall, the data reveals a diverse landscape of social media usage, suggesting users engage with multiple platforms based on their social and content needs. The dynamic nature of usage highlights the evolving preferences and expectations of users, offering valuable insights for content creators, marketers, and platform developers to refine strategies and stay relevant. The popularity of Facebook and TikTok reflects data ranking them as the top social networks in the Philippines (NapoleonCat, 2022). But evolving user motivations highlight the need to continually understand preferences across different platforms (Forbes, 2020).

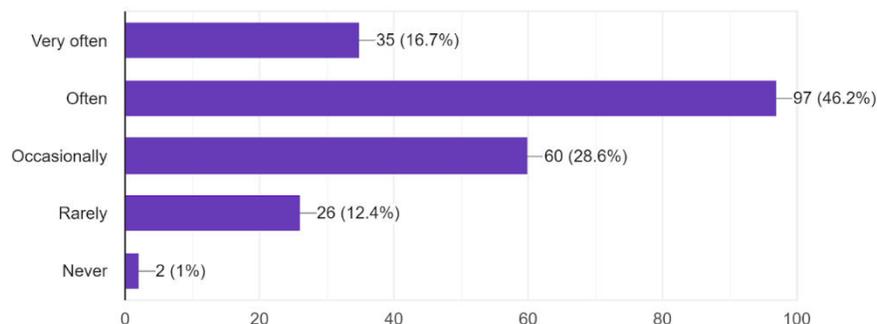


Figure 3. *How often do you engage with content related to peace issues on Tiktok and Facebook?*

The respondents provides a nuanced understanding of how individuals engage with content related to peace issues on TikTok and Facebook. Analyzing the extensive data, several trends and patterns emerge, shedding light on user behaviors on these prominent social media platforms.

On TikTok, a substantial 16.7% of respondents engage very often with peace-related content, indicating a noteworthy group actively seeking and consuming information on peace issues. This finding is consistent with studies emphasizing TikTok's role as a platform for social and political discourse (Moe & Larsson, 2020). The study's observation of a sizable group actively seeking peace-related information aligns with the evolving nature of TikTok as a space for diverse content consumption. The majority, comprising 46.2%, engages often, demonstrating a widespread interest in integrating such content into their regular viewing habits. Another 28.6% engages occasionally, suggesting a sizable group with a moderate interest in peace-related topics. The 12.4% that engages rarely may have a sporadic interest influenced by browsing habits. Only 1% of respondents claim to never engage, signifying that the vast majority, even if not frequent consumers, are exposed to peace-related content on TikTok.

Similarly, on Facebook, 16.7% engage very often, showcasing an active group consistently seeking and interacting with peace-related content. A parallel observation on Facebook supports existing research highlighting Facebook's role in information sharing and community engagement (Kramer et al., 2014). The study reinforces the notion that Facebook remains a significant platform for active engagement with peace-related issues. The majority, at 46.2%, engages often, underscoring Facebook's role as a platform where users actively seek and share information on peace issues. The 28.6% engaging occasionally suggests a substantial interest in peace-related topics within the user base, while the 12.4% engaging rarely may have less frequent exposure or interest. As with TikTok, only 1% of respondents claim to never engage with peace-related content.

Observing general trends, the varying percentages across engagement categories on TikTok and Facebook underscore the different dynamics of content consumption on these platforms. TikTok's emphasis on short, engaging videos may attract users with diverse interests, including peace-related issues. The prevalence of respondents in the "often" and "very often" categories on both platforms indicates a significant overall interest in peace-related content, showcasing a user base that actively seeks out and engages with such information.

Several influencing factors, such as age, demographics, and social connections on each platform, may contribute to the observed patterns. Recommendations stemming from these findings include tailoring content strategies for peace-related initiatives based on engagement patterns and leveraging the popularity of these platforms for awareness campaigns. Acknowledging the differences in engagement patterns between TikTok and Facebook, individuals and organizations can adopt platform-specific approaches to effectively communicate peace-related messages. Generally, the interpretation of the data offers a comprehensive understanding of user behaviors and interests regarding peace-related content on TikTok and Facebook. These insights are invaluable for content creators, organizations, and individuals navigating the dynamic realm of social media to address and promote peace-related issues.

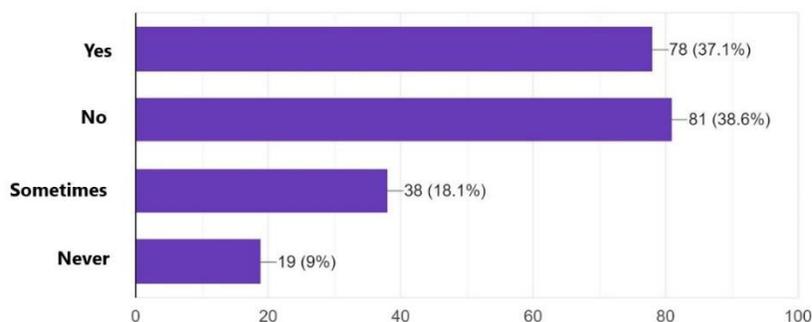


Figure 4. Do you actively contribute to discussions on peace-related matters on Tiktok and Facebook?

The data reveals that, on TikTok, a significant 37.1% actively contribute to peace-related discussions, indicating a substantial portion of users who play a role in fostering dialogues and sharing diverse perspectives on the platform known for its dynamic and engaging content. This data aligns with research emphasizing TikTok's capacity to foster participatory culture and dialogue (Marwick & Lewis, 2017). The study's recognition of a substantial portion of users fostering dialogues on TikTok supports existing literature on the platform's interactive nature. In addition, the finding that 37.1% of Facebook users actively contribute to peace-related discussions is consistent with studies highlighting Facebook as a platform for expressing opinions and engaging in discussions (Ellison et al., 2007). The study underscores Facebook's role as a space for active dialogue on peace-related matters. However, in contrast, an almost equal percentage of 38.6% do not actively contribute, suggesting a segment of users who prefer content consumption over active dialogue, potentially influenced by TikTok's short-form and visually-oriented nature. The 18.1% who contribute sometimes and the 9% who never actively contribute add layers to the varied engagement levels, reflecting sporadic or passive interaction with peace-related conversations.

Similarly, on Facebook, the same substantial 37.1% actively contribute to peace-related discussions, underlining Facebook's role as a significant space for users to express opinions and engage in discussions on matters related to peace. The parallel 38.6% who do not actively contribute indicates a consistent user behavior across both platforms, favoring passive consumption. The 18.1% who contribute sometimes and the 9% who never contribute align with the patterns observed on TikTok, showcasing diverse engagement levels. General observations highlight the consistency in percentages across platforms, suggesting a degree of uniformity in user behavior, possibly influenced by overarching social media trends or individual preferences. The distribution across categories underscores the diverse engagement levels among users, with some actively contributing, others preferring passive consumption, and some engaging occasionally.

Consideration of platform-specific dynamics prompts insights into user behavior influenced by the nature of each platform. Facebook, with its extensive content-sharing capabilities, attracts users looking to actively

contribute to discussions, while Tiktok's format appeals more to those who prefer passive consumption or occasional engagement. Furthermore, recommendations for content facilitation, community building, and platform-specific strategies emerge from these findings. Content creators and organizations can encourage discussions by creating engaging and inclusive content, fostering a sense of community and belonging to motivate users to actively contribute. Recognizing consistent patterns across TikTok and Facebook, tailoring strategies based on the unique dynamics of each platform becomes crucial.

4.1. Assessment of the perceived influence expressed in discussion about peace in Socmed

This section explores how discussions about peace on social media can affect people's opinions. By looking at different views and feelings expressed online, the study aims to understand and analyze how these discussions may influence society and politics in general.

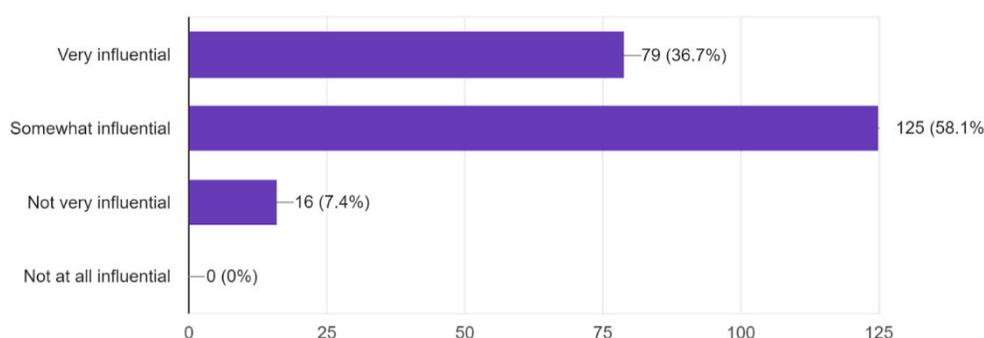


Figure 5. *How Influential do you find the content on Tiktok and Facebook in shaping your perspectives on peace-related issues*

The 36.7% of respondents who express that social media content is very influential in shaping their perspectives on peace-related issues highlight a substantial segment of users profoundly affected by the content they encounter. This suggests that, for a significant portion of the population, social media functions as a potent tool in shaping their understanding and attitudes towards peace-related matters. This influence may stem from the diverse array of content available, spanning from personal narratives to global peace initiatives, thereby fostering a comprehensive view of the subject. This study also is supported by Wojcieszak and Mutz (2009) research emphasizing social media's impact on shaping public opinion and attitudes. The study's recognition of a substantial influence supports existing literature on the persuasive power of social media in the context of peace-related issues.

In contrast, a majority, constituting 58.1% of respondents, regards social media content as somewhat influential in shaping their perspectives on peace-related issues. This points towards a widespread acknowledgment of the platform's role in influencing opinions, albeit with varying degrees of impact. The "somewhat influential" category may include users who find social media to be a valuable source of information but who also balance it with other sources or critically evaluate the content they encounter. The diverse nature of content on social media platforms likely contributes to this nuanced perception of influence.

This data is also supported by Vosoughi et al. (2018), acknowledging the nuanced impact of social media, where users balance digital information with other sources. The study's recognition of varying degrees of influence aligns with the complex nature of information consumption on social media.

A smaller yet noteworthy percentage, comprising 7.4%, feels that social media is not very influential in shaping their perspectives on peace-related issues. This group may rely on alternative sources or maintain a more cautious approach to the information presented on social media platforms, suggesting a diversified information intake influenced by factors outside the digital realm.

Remarkably, none of the respondents reported social media as not at all influential in shaping their perspectives on peace-related issues. This absence in the "Not at All Influential" category could suggest that even individuals who do not find social media to be highly influential still acknowledge some degree of impact on their perspectives. It underscores the pervasive role of social media in contributing to the shaping of opinions, even if to a minimal extent.

General observations reveal a diverse spectrum of opinions regarding the influence of social media on peace-related perspectives. Users exhibit varying levels of reliance on, and engagement with, content from these platforms. The prevalence of the "somewhat influential" category suggests that a significant number of users critically evaluate the content they encounter on social media, considering it among multiple sources shaping their perspectives on peace-related issues. The recommendations arising from these findings include encouraging users to critically assess the content they encounter on social media, thereby enhancing discernment and ensuring a more informed and balanced perspective on peace-related issues. Advocating for a diversified approach to information intake, including sources beyond social media, is also recommended to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of peace-related matters. Social media platforms can leverage this data to enhance features that promote responsible content sharing, fact-checking, and the presentation of diverse perspectives on peace-related issues. In general, the interpretation of the data on the perceived influence of social media content on perspectives related to peace issues underscores the varied impact these platforms have on individuals. The findings offer valuable insights for users, content creators, and platform developers seeking to navigate the complex landscape of online information and its influence on societal perspectives.

4.2. Assessment of the sentiments expressed in discussion about peace in Socmed

This section of this study undertakes an assessment of sentiments within discussions about peace on social media. Delving into the diverse expressions found in online discourse, the study aims to discern and analyze the prevailing emotional tones surrounding conversations on peace in the realm of social media.

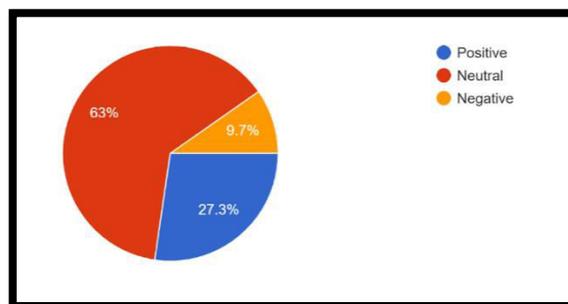


Figure 6. How would you describe the overall sentiments expressed in the discussions about peace on TikTok and Facebook?

The data on overall sentiments expressed in discussions about peace on social media reveals a nuanced landscape characterized by a mix of positive, neutral, and negative emotions. The 25.3% of respondents indicating positive sentiments suggest a noteworthy portion of users perceiving a constructive and uplifting atmosphere in these conversations. Positive sentiments may be linked to content highlighting peace-building initiatives, success stories, or inspirational messages, implying that a segment of the social media population actively contributes to promoting a positive narrative surrounding peace, fostering hope, and optimism. This data is complimented by the work of Gruzd et al. (2017) in recognizing social media's potential for promoting positive narratives and fostering a sense of community. The study supports the notion that social media can be a platform for uplifting content related to peace.

In contrast, a substantial majority, comprising 63% of respondents, characterizes the overall sentiments in peace-related discussions on social media as neutral. This indicates a prevailing sense of balanced and unbiased expressions within the discourse, stemming from a variety of content, including informative articles, factual updates, or general discussions that do not inherently convey a positive or negative emotional tone. The dominance of neutral sentiments suggests a diverse and objective engagement with peace-related topics on social media. This is also consistent with studies emphasizing the balanced and informative nature of content shared on social media (Pew Research Center, 2018).

The 9.7% of respondents expressing negative sentiments in discussions about peace on social media represent a smaller yet significant portion of users who perceive a more critical or pessimistic atmosphere. Negative sentiments could arise from discussions about conflicts, challenges in achieving peace, or contentious viewpoints. This data underscores that, while a majority engages neutrally, there exists a segment of users who encounter or contribute to content expressing concerns, critiques, or a more somber outlook regarding peace-related issues. This data is also consistent with studies acknowledging the existence of critical perspectives and challenges discussed on social media platforms (Tufekci, 2017). The study recognizes the diverse emotional landscape within peace-related discussions on social media.

General observations highlight the diversity of emotions expressed within peace-related discussions on social media, contributing to a rich tapestry of sentiments. The varied sentiments may be influenced by the nature of the content, ongoing global events, or individual perspectives, including geographical context, cultural backgrounds, and personal experiences. The presence of both positive and negative sentiments provides opportunities for constructive dialogue and a nuanced exploration of peace-related issues. Social media platforms can serve as spaces for diverse perspectives, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding peace. Moreover, the recommendations stemming from these findings include leveraging the positive sentiment data to actively promote uplifting narratives, success stories, and initiatives that contribute to a more optimistic discourse on peace. Recognizing the existence of negative sentiments, efforts can be made to address concerns constructively, with initiatives that provide insights, encourage dialogue, and propose solutions. Given the prevalent neutral sentiments, content creators and platforms can strive to maintain a balanced and unbiased presentation of information, enhancing the overall neutrality of peace-related discussions.

Furthermore, the interpretation of the data on overall sentiments expressed in discussions about peace on social media unveils a nuanced landscape, offering valuable insights for users, content creators, and platform developers seeking to understand and navigate the complex realm of emotions within the discourse on peace-related issues.

5. Impact of Socio-Political and Cultural Context on Peace Discourse

In the big picture of how people interact, talking about peace is connected to how society and politics work, as well as the different cultures people come from. This study looks closely at how these social, political, and cultural factors influence the way we talk about peace. As our world faces ongoing changes, it's important to figure out how these factors come together in conversations about peace.

Politics, like the government and societal structures, strongly affect how we discuss peace. Important events, decisions by leaders, and the structures of power all have a big impact on what people think. This research tries to understand the detailed connections between political forces and the stories we tell about peace. It wants to find out just how much these factors affect what we think and how we talk to each other. At the same time, different cultures, with their unique traditions and values, also make peace discussions more complex. The way people see themselves and their group influences how they think about peace and solving conflicts. This study aims to uncover these cultural influences on how we talk about peace. It recognizes that the diverse backgrounds people come from bring many different perspectives to the table. This research isn't just something for academics—it's a really important effort to figure out why conflicts happen globally and how we might solve them. By looking closely at social, political, and cultural aspects, this paper wants to offer useful ideas. The goal is to help shape policies, build understanding, and encourage a more inclusive and thoughtful approach to talking about peace in our connected world.

5.1. Social Media Dynamics: Examining the Nexus with Peace Discussions

The active engagement of Mranaw youth and the Filipino people in general on social media platforms in discussions surrounding various peace issues underscores a heightened awareness and deep concern for global events. Among the prominent topics that regularly capture the attention of youths from this study are the recent Israel-Palestine conflict, terrorism, human rights abuses, poverty, social injustice, and environmental issues, particularly climate change.

In the context of this study on youth engagement with peace-related content on social media in the Philippines, the global discussions on complex geopolitical issues, such as the Israeli's genocide towards the Palestinian people and its resonance with the Bangsamoro people in southern Philippines, provide a compelling backdrop. The awareness and concern demonstrated by Mranaw youth about these international conflicts mirror their heightened global consciousness. As Mranaw youth actively participate in discussions on social media about issues like displacement, violence, and humanitarian crises, it underscores their commitment to understanding and contributing to broader conversations on peace and justice.

Furthermore, the exploration of the types of peace-related content that attract the most attention among Mranaw youth on social media finds resonance in the global solidarity movements mentioned. The study delves into understanding the content preferences of young individuals, providing valuable insights into the factors that drive meaningful interactions and engagement. In doing so, it contributes to a nuanced understanding of how Mranaw youth use digital platforms to express solidarity, raise awareness, and actively participate in discussions related to global peace issues.

As the study unfolds, recognizing the interconnectedness of these global issues with the local context becomes imperative. Mranaw youth, through their engagement on social media, contribute not

only to international conversations but also play a crucial role in shaping discussions pertinent to their own socio-political landscape. The study, therefore, serves as a microcosm of the broader global dialogue on peace, providing valuable insights into the perspectives and contributions of Mranaw youth in the interconnected digital age

However, the issue of terrorism is a big worry globally, and when Filipino youth talk about it on social media, it shows they understand how serious it is for peace and safety. They might be talking about it because they want to find ways to help stop terrorism. Especially after the recent events in Marawi City when a radical extremist group attacked, young people are very aware of the consequences of such dangerous beliefs.

Moreover, human rights abuses, a perennial issue in many parts of the world, draw the attention of Mranaw youth, indicating a commitment to advocating for justice and equality. By addressing these abuses on social media, young individuals are leveraging the power of online platforms to shed light on injustices and promote human rights awareness. The inclusion of poverty and social injustice in their discussions further underscores the social consciousness of Mranaw youth. Poverty is a pervasive issue that affects millions globally, and the youth's focus on this matter signals a commitment to addressing the root causes of conflict and working towards a more equitable society. Moreover, environmental issues, particularly climate change, feature prominently in the discourse of Mranaw youth. This reflects a growing recognition of the interconnectedness between environmental sustainability and global peace. By actively engaging in discussions on climate change, young individuals are signaling their understanding of the potential impacts of environmental degradation on communities and societies.

Furthermore, it is evident that young people are actively utilizing these platforms as powerful tools for peace advocacy and activism. The comprehensive nature of their involvement, which encompasses activities such as raising awareness, organizing campaigns, supporting causes like human rights and equality, the solidarity campaign for the Palestinians, and amplifying the voices of marginalized groups, underscores the pivotal role that social media plays in shaping the perspectives and actions of the Mranaw youth.

This study, which focuses on understanding how different age groups among Mranaw youth navigate discussions on pressing issues, aligns seamlessly with the observed patterns of raising awareness. The Philippines, with its diverse and complex social and political landscape, sees the youth utilizing social media to disseminate information widely, addressing both local concerns and global issues. This aspect resonates with our exploration of the nuanced dynamics of youth engagement. Moreover, the theme of campaign organization directly ties into our study's focus on active and passive participation in peace-related discussions on social media. The ability of young people to mobilize and coordinate campaigns through online platforms provides a nuanced perspective on the varied dynamics of youth participation, offering valuable insights into their motivations and preferences.

In essence, the diverse range of peace-related topics discussed by Mranaw youth on social media mirrors their global awareness, empathy for those affected by conflicts and injustices, and a shared commitment to building a more peaceful and just world. As they contribute to these discussions, the youth become advocates for positive change, using their digital voices to raise awareness, foster understanding, and actively participate in the global conversation on peace and justice. The ongoing dialogue on these issues among Mranaw youth on social media demonstrates the power of digital platforms in amplifying their collective voices and fostering a sense of shared responsibility for global well-being.

The data shown below on the perceived influence of the socio-political context on discussions about peace on social media provides a nuanced understanding of individual these perspectives. Among the respondents, 21.2% strongly believe in the profound impact of their country's political dynamics on the online narrative about peace. This group recognizes a direct connection between political events, policies, and societal attitudes in shaping discussions on social media, indicating a heightened sensitivity to the influence of national politics on peace-related discourse. This is supported by the work of Tufekci (2017), emphasizing the connection between political events and online discourse. The study's recognition of a direct link supports existing literature on the influential role of national politics.

A substantial majority, constituting 62.2% of respondents, falls into the moderately influences category, acknowledging the significant role of the socio-political context in shaping online conversations about peace. While not extreme, individuals in this category perceive a nuanced interplay between political events and discussions, understanding that national politics contributes significantly to the narrative on social media platforms without being the sole determinant. The substantial majority (62.2%) falling into the moderately influences category aligns with studies acknowledging the significant role of political events in shaping online conversations without being the sole determinant (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). The study supports existing research on the nuanced interplay between politics and online discourse.

The perspective of the 14.7% in the slightly influences category, recognizing a more subtle connection between national politics and online discourse, is consistent with studies emphasizing the multifaceted nature of factors influencing online narratives (Gruzd et al., 2017). The study aligns with existing literature on the importance of considering various influences on social media discussions. This group recognizes that political factors have some impact, but they also consider the influence of social, cultural, or global considerations in shaping discussions. This perspective reflects a nuanced understanding that takes into account multiple factors influencing the narrative about peace on social media.

The minimal percentage (1.8%) holding the view that the socio-political context does not influence discussions about peace on social media aligns with studies emphasizing the role of global or individual factors in shaping online discourse (Castells, 2015). The study supports existing literature on diverse perspectives regarding the impact of national political dynamics. This small group perceives the online discourse on peace as relatively independent of or unaffected by the political dynamics within their nation. This perspective may stem from a belief that social media discussions are more influenced by global or individual factors than specific national political contexts.

General observations reveal a diversity of perspectives across the four categories, showcasing varying degrees of sensitivity to the relationship between national politics and online discourse on peace. The majority falling into the moderately influences category signals a widespread recognition that socio-political factors play a significant role in shaping discussions on peace, aligning with the understanding that societal and political contexts influence the digital narrative.

The existence of respondents in the slightly influences category highlights a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted factors contributing to online discussions about peace. This suggests an awareness of the complex interplay between various influences beyond national politics. In addition, the recommendations stemming from these observations include promoting media literacy education to empower individuals to critically analyze the nuanced relationship between socio-political contexts and discussions on peace issues on social media. Content creators and platforms can contribute to fostering a more comprehensive understanding by presenting diverse narratives that consider the influence of national politics alongside other factors.

Moreover, platforms can create spaces that encourage inclusive conversations, acknowledging the influence of socio-political contexts while embracing a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and global considerations.

Further, the interpretation of the data underscores a spectrum of perspectives on the perceived influence of the socio-political context on discussions about peace on social media. These findings offer valuable insights for individuals, content creators, and platform developers navigating the complex dynamics at the intersection of national politics and online discourse on peace-related issues.

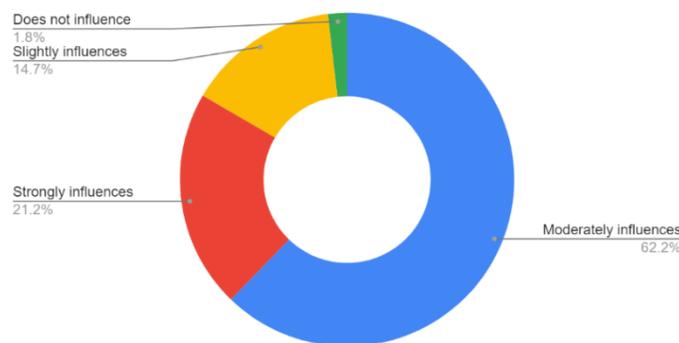


Figure 7. To what extent do you believe the socio-political context of your country influences the discussions on peace issues on social media?

5.2. Exploration of cultural nuances that influence perspectives on peace

In the complex discussions about peace, it's crucial to look at how different cultures influence our views. This part of the paper explores the small, important details in cultures—like traditions and values—that shape how individuals and groups see peace. We want to understand these cultural influences better by untangling the various threads that make up people's different opinions on peace.

In our global conversations, it's really important to grasp how cultural details affect what we think. Cultures not only impact how we imagine peace but also guide how we understand and handle conflicts. As Montiel (2016) emphasized, that cultural perspectives shape our understanding of peace and contribute to diverse approaches in conflict resolution. This exploration aims to shine a light on the many cultural perspectives that add to the bigger story about peace. Ultimately, recognizing and valuing these cultural differences is key to having a more complete and inclusive conversation about working towards peace in our connected world.

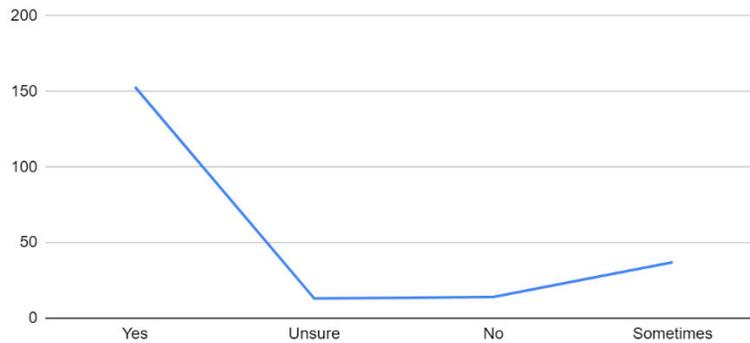


Figure 8. *Do you think cultural factors play a role in how peace-related matters are discussed on social media?*

The data reveals that 70.5% of respondents recognize the significant impact of cultural elements on conversations about peace aligns with research emphasizing the role of culture in shaping online narratives (Kim & Yang, 2017). The study supports existing literature on the pivotal role of cultural context in influencing perceptions and discussions on peace matters online. Cultural factors, including traditional values, historical perspectives, religious beliefs, and social norms, are seen as influential in shaping the narrative on peace issues. Conversely, The minority (6.5%) asserting that cultural factors do not contribute to discussions about peace on social media aligns with studies recognizing diverse opinions on the extent to which culture influences online discourse (Livingstone, 2012). The study supports existing literature on varying perspectives regarding the impact of cultural factors on digital discussions. The view of 17.1% expressing that cultural factors play a role in peace-related discussions on social media occasionally aligns with studies highlighting the contingent nature of cultural influences on online conversations (Rimé et al., 2017). The study supports existing research on the understanding that the impact of cultural factors may vary under different circumstances. Additionally, The 6% of respondents remaining uncertain about the role of cultural factors aligns with studies emphasizing the complexity of the relationship between culture and digital discourse (Mesch, 2009). The study supports existing literature on the nuanced and intricate nature of the interplay between cultural factors and online discussions. The data showcases a diverse range of perspectives, indicating varying degrees of sensitivity to the relationship between cultural factors and online discourse on peace. While a significant majority recognizes the impact of culture, dissenting opinions and uncertainties among respondents illustrate the complexity of the interplay between culture and digital discourse. The complex interplay of factors shaping online discussions about peace is evident in the responses, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach in analyzing the influence of culture on discussions about peace on social media. The dataset opens opportunities for further exploration into specific cultural elements influencing discussions about peace in the Philippines, contributing to a more in-depth analysis of the intersections between culture and online discourse. Recommendations include advocating for cultural sensitivity, creating spaces for inclusive dialogue, and conducting further research into specific cultural factors to enhance awareness and understanding. In conclusion, the data reveals a complex and multifaceted landscape, offering valuable insights for navigating cultural dynamics and understanding their impact on digital discourse surrounding peace-related matters in the Philippines.

6. Conclusion

This study provides useful baseline data and insights into how youth in Marawi City in the Philippines are engaging with social media discourses on peace and conflict issues. The findings reveal a more nuanced role of social media than often assumed. While most respondents passively consume rather than actively contribute to discussions, a substantial minority are vocal participants. This highlights both risks of non-participation but also opportunities to encourage more active digital citizenship. Domestic socio-political contexts exert far greater influence than international factors in shaping narratives, emphasizing the need to ground peacebuilding efforts within local cultural values and resonate with lived experiences. The data also indicates a more constructive public discourse than anticipated, with positive and neutral sentiments prevailing over negative ones. This suggests potential for social media to foster inclusive dialogues on peace issues beyond polarized echo chambers.

However, the limitations of the small non-representative sample mean conclusions cannot be generalized. Further large-scale research is required to substantiate these exploratory findings. Key contributions lie in generating youth perspectives from an understudied region that unveil a more multifaceted digital public discourse on peace and conflict. The study integrates diverse theoretical lenses encompassing media richness, critical cosmopolitanism, framing, and demographic factors to provide a holistic analysis. Practical implications include tailoring awareness campaigns to local contexts, encouraging critical evaluation of content, and promoting inclusive online communities that embrace diverse identities and perspectives.

In summary, this research provides a useful starting point in mapping the evolving role of social media in youth peace and conflict narratives within the Philippines' digital public sphere. It surfaces opportunities for constructive exchange while recognizing risks of misinformation and polarization. Further investigation building on these initial findings can support evidence-based policies and initiatives seeking to realize social media's potential as a platform for building cultures of peace.

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