

**EFFECTS OF FALSE INFORMATION ON THE VOTING BEHAVIOR OF
YOUTH IN BRGY. SIBUT, SAN JOSE CITY, NUEVA ECIJA**

An Undergraduate Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the Department of Communication and Development Studies
Central Luzon State University

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Bachelor of Science in Development Communication

by
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APPROVAL SHEET

This undergraduate thesis entitled "**EFFECTS OF FALSE INFORMATION ON THE VOTING BEHAVIOR OF YOUTH IN BRGY. SIBUT, SAN JOSE CITY, NUEVA ECIIJA,**" prepared and submitted by **JESSALYN D. SORIANO** in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of **BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION**, has been examined and is hereby accepted:

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there is a need to investigate the influence of false information on young voters' decision-making and guide them in preventing the spread of misleading information and avoiding falling victim to false information.

7.2 Summary

The study aimed to investigate the effects of false information on the voting behavior of youth in Barangay Sibut, San Jose City, Nueva Ecija. It aimed to identify the respondents' socio-economic profiles, communication attributes, sources, and level of exposure to false information. Furthermore, the study aimed to analyze the relationship between socio-economic profile and knowledge of respondents on false information and the relationship between the extent of exposure to false information on social media and the voting behavior of respondents.

The study employed a descriptive research design and a random sampling method to distribute questionnaires to 319 respondents. Data analysis involved using various statistical measures such as frequency, percentage, mean, mode, and Cramer's V correlation to determine the relationship between variables. The findings of this research can be used to develop strategies to address the effects of false information on the youth's voting behavior in Barangay Sibut and other similar communities.

7.3 Major Findings

The study revealed that the majority of the respondents were female, aged 21-25, and had college-level education, while belonging to low-income families with

a monthly income of below 10,000 Ph. Most of the youth in Barangay Sibut, San Jose City, Nueva Ecija, were active on social media, particularly Facebook, and accessed it for one to four hours daily. The results suggest that social media is a crucial platform for accessing information among the youth, particularly those with low-income levels. The study found that although the trust in news media was high, there were still concerns about the spread of fake news. The majority of respondents acknowledged the importance of reliable news sources, but they may lack the critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate news content effectively.

Moreover, the study identified the respondents' response to false information on social media. The majority of respondents did not interact or share false information online. However, some respondents reported false information they encountered online and unfollowed Facebook friends who shared fake news. The study found a weak correlation between age and knowledge of false information, with older adults being more susceptible to fake news due to lower digital media literacy skills. Additionally, individuals with lower levels of education were found to be more susceptible to false information.

7.4 Conclusions

In today's age of digital technology, social media has become an essential platform for accessing and sharing information, including news and political updates. During the recent election, false information flooded social media, containing inaccurate information aimed at deceiving and manipulating the public. The study highlights the importance of digital media literacy skills and critical

thinking abilities to combat the spread of false information. The findings indicate that individuals with lower levels of education and older adults are more susceptible to false information. Therefore, there is a need for programs that focus on enhancing digital media literacy skills and critical thinking abilities among the youth and other vulnerable groups.

Additionally, the study suggests the need for collaborative efforts from various stakeholders, including government agencies, media outlets, and civil society organizations, to address the issue of false information on social media. Lastly, results of the two hypotheses of the study suggest that there is no significant relationship between the socio-economic profile of the respondents and their knowledge of false information. This means that factors such as age, gender, education level, and income do not necessarily predict whether an individual has a good or poor understanding of false information. Similarly, the study found no significant relationship between the extent of exposure to false information on social media and the voting behavior of the respondents. This suggests that exposure to false information alone does not necessarily influence an individual's political decisions.

7.5 Recommendations

Education and awareness programs on digital media literacy and critical thinking skills should be promoted and implemented to help the youth and adults to identify and verify false information. The researcher recommends to future researchers to conduct studies in different geographical locations to

determine the prevalence of false information and its effects on voting behavior among various populations, investigate the effectiveness of different strategies in combating false information, examine the role of political actors in spreading false information, and explore the relationship between exposure to false information on social media and other factors on voting behavior.

8. Translated Abstract (Filipino)

8.1 Rasyonale

Ang pagkalat ng maling impormasyon ay isang kilalang problema na maaaring magdulot ng malaking epekto sa mga indibidwal at sa lipunan. Pinakamabilis kumalat ang mga pekeng balita sa *social media* kaysa sa totoong balita at kadalasan ay mas nakakagimbal at nakakatutok ng pansin, na nagdudulot ng polarisasyon ng paniniwala (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Guess, Nyhan, & Reifler, 2020). Bukod pa dito, ang mga pekeng impormasyon ay maaaring magdulot ng pangmatagalang epekto sa mga paniniwala at pag-uugali ng mga tao, kahit na kapag naitama na ito (Bright et al., 2016). Sa konteksto ng pulitika at halalan, maaaring makaapekto ang mga pekeng impormasyon sa pagpapasya ng botante at magdulot ng polarisasyon sa paniniwala, lalo na sa mga kabataan (Buchanan, 2020). Sa nakaraang pambansang halalan sa Pilipinas, kung saan mataas ang paggamit ng *internet*, kailangan suriin ang impluwensya ng mga pekeng impormasyon sa pagpapasya ng mga kabataang botante at gabayan sila upang maiwasan ang pagkalat ng maling impormasyon at maiwasan ang pagiging biktima nito.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIRCLE: The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement

CLSU: Central Luzon State University

GIDA: Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas

SMNI: Sonshine Media Network International

UNESCO: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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