

POLITICALLY APATHETIC IN A POLITICALLY CHARGED SOCIETY

by:

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Truth told; my parents kept on reminding me to think twice before I shade the names of the candidates. They even gave me a list of who they thought was eligible for public office. Of course, I had to still follow my gut and consult my values, not merely my parent's influence.

In more than two years, the country will again elect a new President. As expected, the number of younger voters will slowly thrive. This led me to wonder whether the Generation Z, or persons aged 17-24 years old, is ready to vote and most especially to engage in debates on pressing socio-political issues or not.

A study by Far Eastern University Public Policy Center proved otherwise. Generation Z youth are "politically apathetic" despite being surrounded by millions of data published on the Internet. Economist JC Punongbayan argues that they [Gen Z] do not bother to evaluate the material they read on social media and have a tendency to just accept whatever they think is true.

For me, the apathy of students regarding social issues is a matter of their attitude towards them. They may not be as gullible as their folks and the generations before them, but they seem to avoid any form of argumentation because it is stressful for them. This is why most of them would dance and post something on TikTok, rather than spend time commenting on the recent talk of the town.

While suffrage remains a constitutional right, I feel like it is also equally important for us, young expected voters in 2022, to also remain critical and to share our sentiments

or opinion on a certain issue which primarily concerns the country and its citizens. It is necessary for us to realize our own voices and use them wisely.

Dr. Rizal labelled the youth as hope of the nation for nothing. The national hero himself bravely discussed the injustices of the Spaniards in his writings. What makes us any different? It is seriously not the phone and the lot of distractions. We can access any specific information with just a tap of the finger. While it is true that neutrality always sides with the oppressor, apathy and neutrality are often confused to be of similar essence. But it also comes with no question that apathy comes with a disinterest to talk or not having a care about. If one does not talk about something and refuses to listen to other's opinions, that person is more likely not to choose any side of a certain issue.

How Gen Z teens and young adults are hyped when a "tea" about a beauty guru trends on Twitter but at the same time remain silent about blatant injustices in their surroundings, remains a mystery.

So, why should you care? Because you are a Filipino and these pressing social issues are directly affecting your fellow men and women. You have a voice. Use it wisely.

References:

Malasig, J. (2019, February 8). Filipino Gen Z as emerging voters: Apathetic, uncritical, social media dependent. Interaksyon. <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/trends-spotlights/2019/02/08/139419/filipino-youth-generation-z-socio-political-issues-social-media/>