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## On the Awareness and Attitudes of Filipino Youth (Generation Z) Toward Charter Change

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### ABSTRACT

Charter change is a contentious civic issue that resurfaces with every administration in Philippine politics. Despite this, limited empirical studies explored the awareness and attitudes of the Filipino youth, a growing and influential electorate, toward charter change. This study examined the awareness and attitudes on charter change among 133 Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) senior high school (SHS) Filipino students at the largest government-funded secondary school in the Eastern Visayas region to address the scarcity in understanding how Filipino youth perceive constitutional reform. The study utilized a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, employing descriptive bivariate correlational and comparative designs and proportionate stratified sampling, followed by a systematic random sampling within strata. The results revealed that students exhibited moderate awareness and neutral attitudes toward charter change. Spearman's correlation analysis further indicated a strong, positive, and significant relationship between awareness and attitudes, suggesting that higher awareness is associated with more favorable attitudes. Mann-Whitney U test found no significant differences in awareness and attitudes across demographic groups (grade level, age, sex, leadership positions, political affiliations, and community type). This study highlights the importance of promoting civic education and political literacy among Filipino youth to cultivate informed engagement in constitutional matters. Rather than signaling apathy, the Filipino youth's ambivalence reflects the intricacy of political discourse and a need for more accessible, contextualized engagement with national issues.

### INTRODUCTION

Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012), projected to dominate the electorate in a few years, has been reported to enter the political arena with distinct attitudes and behaviors that contrast with older generations (Heys, 2024). Due to the unique political socialization of this generation, their political identity and attitudes do not necessarily align with a few socializing agents like parents or grandparents. This generational shift, highlighted by progressive views (Della Volpe, 2022), has implications for political engagement and participation among this cohort, especially in the context of recent foreign elections. However, despite their potential electoral influence, disillusionment with the political system and a lack of political efficacy has led to a divergence in political attitudes and a redefinition of citizenship (Inglehart, 2018)—transforming voting from an inherent civic obligation to accountability-driven political participation (Change Research, 2022). Despite Generation Z's challenges of political disengagement, their evolving perspectives on politics and governance highlight a broader trend in how younger generations engage in political participation.

The shift in political attitudes also resonates in other contexts, much worse in the ongoing discourse surrounding charter change in the Philippines. Charter change, also locally known as Cha-Cha, refers to the political and legal processes of amending and/or revising

the Constitution (Canada-ASEAN Business Council, 2023). It specifically pertains to the proposed political and economic amendments and/or revisions of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, including but not limited to federalism, parliamentary system, and foreign ownership for economic growth. Within a particular country, charter change initiatives typically aim to respond to critical issues such as promoting peace, reconciliation, inclusion, and socioeconomic growth and development in a manner that is widely accepted and seen as legitimate (Magolowondo *et al.*, 2012). However, Ramirez (2018) noted a significant political disconnect between Generation Z students (aged 17–24) on crucial civic and political affairs.

Since ratifying the 1987 Philippine Constitution, political and economic discourse on charter change has lingered. It experienced a resurgence during the early period of the Marcos Jr. administration; however, the advocacy for this charter change has since been downplayed (Tomacruz, 2023). Political priorities are dynamic, and grassroots movements such as this often play a crucial role in shaping political discussions. This longstanding discussion in the Philippines (Atienza, 2019) emphasizes an investigation of public opinion (level of awareness and attitudes) on charter change, as the administration highlighted the need to evaluate the pulse of the citizens, which is as follows: “Moves to amend the 1987 Constitution should first have the imprimatur of the people, which can be gauged by conducting surveys on charter change” (Cayabyab, 2023,

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para. 5).

The ongoing national debate and mixed survey results on constitutional reform in the Philippines underscore the importance of research on public awareness and attitudes toward charter change, which is critical in understanding broader public opinion. Several national surveys have explored these themes among Filipinos aged 18 and above. For instance, Pulse Asia Research (2023) reported that 53% of respondents had poor awareness of charter change, while 88% opposed the proposed amendments. Similarly, an OCTA Research survey conducted in December 2023 indicated that most Filipinos do not consider charter change urgent (Mateo, 2024). Supporting these findings, the Social Weather Stations (SWS) reported that 67% of Filipinos did not favor constitutional reforms. However, Tangere survey results showed a contrasting trend, with 57% of Filipinos expressing support for economic charter change (Quismorio, 2024). While a few studies have examined awareness and attitudes toward charter change, many remain behind paywalls or lack sufficient methodological transparency, hindering scholarly access and replication. Additionally, much of the existing literature has focused on adult or voting-age populations, limiting the generalizability of findings to other age groups, particularly Generation Z senior high school (SHS) students.

Additionally, driven by the substantial increase of anticipated youth voters in the upcoming elections, this study focused on Filipino SHS students with a particular scope on those approaching voting age and in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand, emphasizing the critical role of the youth in shaping the country's political landscape. On top of that, engaging with this demographic can promote civic awareness and participation in democratic processes, considering that these formative years are a crucial period for political socialization as students develop their political values and beliefs (Galston, 2004; Gyasi & Torsu, 2024; Serquina, 2024). Even the Commission on Higher Education acknowledges the cruciality of the participation of Filipino students in charter change deliberations (Marquez, 2018), making it imperative to study this population, considering their perspective on this critical issue will dictate the country's future. Thus, research on student opinion regarding charter change is vital, especially in light of existing qualitative research exploring viewpoints of academicians toward charter change, suggesting that the charter change process has emanated competing perspectives (Basinillo *et al.*, 2024), which further stipulates the need to conduct quantitative research on academia.

Beyond national trends and survey statistics, the impetus for this study also draws from the principal author's observations and lived experiences as a member of Generation Z. Despite being immersed in a specialized curriculum designed to develop civic and political awareness, many members of Generation Z still exhibit limited understanding and disinterest in complex yet

consequential issues like charter change. This disconnect appears rooted in the underdevelopment of political identity during formative years—a critical stage for shaping civic consciousness. Observations on the ground suggest that political discussions among youth are often superficial, with greater attention paid to immediate socioeconomic concerns than to institutional reforms. Given the far-reaching implications of constitutional change on national governance and everyday life, this lack of engagement among the youth underscores a pressing need for deeper civic education. These firsthand insights highlight a critical gap between the importance of charter change and its perceived relevance among the very generation poised to shape the country's democratic future, thereby affirming the study's urgency and relevance.

In light of the gaps identified in existing literature, this study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on charter change by examining the awareness and attitudes of Filipino SHS students, offering insights into how this emerging generation perceives constitutional reform. The administration's ongoing discussions about economic charter change highlight the importance and urgency of this study. Thus, this inquiry addresses a fundamental reason the Constitution remains unamended: the disconnect between citizens and the Constitution (Yusingco & Navarro, 2019). This study utilizes existing research and literature to enhance understanding students' perspectives on charter change. Specifically, it aims to (1) assess the awareness and attitudes of Filipino youth regarding charter change; (2) examine the relationships between their awareness and attitudes based on demographic profiles (such as grade level, age, sex, leadership positions, political affiliations, and community type); and (3) analyze the differences in awareness and attitudes segmented by these demographic profiles.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Constitutional reform has become a recurring topic in Philippine governance, driven by political (Cureg & Matunding, 2005) and economic (Mendoza & Melchor, 2015) motivations. While constitutions are enduring significant tools in advocating and reinforcing the principles of democracy (Landau & Dixon, 2015), they are also always vulnerable to contestation from political entities (Yusingco & Navarro, 2019). Arugay *et al.* (2023) argued that revising the charter is a remarkably demanding endeavor that requires intricate and rigorous planning, as it holds long-lasting impacts on the country's growth and development and may possess both intended and unintended implications.

Nevertheless, being a constitutional democracy entails actions to amend or revise the charter. On the contrary, resisting such initiatives, once advanced by a process of rational public deliberation, is also an inherently imperative component of constitutional democracy (Yusingco *et al.*, 2023). This process became even more significant in the context of the Philippines, where

consecutive administrations, following the late President Corazon C. Aquino, have attempted to revise the 1987 Constitution and failed consecutively (Tomacruz, 2018), thus withstood unamended for over three decades now (Yusingco & Navarro, 2019), and concurrently resurfaced under the Marcos Jr. administration (Abanto, 2024), continuing a longstanding national discourse. The reform efforts have often faced substantial public protests rooted in historical mistrust and constitutional disconnect (Basinillo *et al.*, 2024; Yusingco & Navarro, 2019). It is an interestingly odd quality of the charter, as Elkins *et al.* (2009) argued that national constitutions should remain unamended or unrevised for only nineteen (19) years. However, the theory of constitutional reform also asserts that:

Even though constitutional bargains may have relative winners and relative losers, they will endure to the extent that parties believe they are better off within the current constitutional bargain than in taking a chance on, and expending resources in, negotiating a new one (Elkins *et al.*, 2009).

Moreover, the theory of political socialization (Hyman, 1959) provides a framework to grasp how individuals develop political attitudes and beliefs influenced by agents such as family, peers, education, and media. In the context of charter change, the lack of awareness among Filipinos may be linked to insufficient political education, thereby limiting their ability to form informed opinions. However, recent research has argued that traditional lifecycle models may not fully capture the political behavior of younger generations, signifying the emergence of a distinct political generation. The study of Görtz and Dahl (2021) on the relationship between political conceptualization and political participation was particularly instructive. It showed that broader political conceptualizations, such as perceiving charter change as a crucial societal issue, correlate with greater involvement in political processes, independent of traditional predictors like political interest or efficacy. Student disengagement from the charter change deliberations could be linked to its abstract framing as a distant or overly technical issue rather than a practical and impactful civic concern. Aligning charter change within their conceptual understanding as part of broader governance and societal progress could motivate greater engagement (Tukur, 2023).

Additionally, Public Opinion Theory (Lippmann, 2017) supports the view that the media's portrayal of political issues often influences public attitudes rather than direct personal experiences. Lippmann (2017) argued that individuals form opinions based on simplified interpretations of complex political matters provided by the media. In the case of charter change, the media plays a critical role in shaping public perceptions, especially in a context where direct access to political deliberations or detailed constitutional knowledge is limited. It is also worth noting that Generation Z is dubbed the digital generation (Serquiña, 2024). In line with this, Sadri and Flammia (2014) posited the significance of predominantly new

media in shaping citizens' political attitudes and motivating political participation in a democratic government. Hence, if the media presents the charter change in a manner that simplifies or skews its implications, it could critically impact public opinion, even if substantial public knowledge on the issue is absent.

Furthermore, existing quantitative research consistently demonstrated restricted support from Filipinos for the proposed amendments. Recent nationwide surveys conducted by Pulse Asia Research (2023) corroborated this, wherein 88% of Filipinos rescinded proposed constitutional amendments or revisions. The discoveries of the recent study of OCTA Research also suggest that only one percent of Filipinos (one in every 100 Filipinos) identified charter change as an urgent national concern (Mateo, 2024). It was analogous to the results from the survey of Social Weather Stations, claiming that 67% of Filipinos opposed the proposals for charter change. Contrary to the trend of previous findings, Tangere survey results have shown an increase to 57% of Filipinos supporting economic charter change (Quismorio, 2024). This ambivalence toward charter change reinforces that its perception remains highly contested (Basinillo *et al.*, 2024), even within the research discipline.

Recent studies have also shown a fundamental issue: a lack of knowledge and awareness among Filipinos about charter change. For instance, Tejada (2019) investigated the awareness and stance of SHS students on federalism, discovering that most students were unaware of the concept and its implications for governance. This lack of apprehension extends to broader population sectors, as Yusingco and Navarro (2019) indicated a profound disparity between the citizens and the Constitution. Pulse Asia Research (2023) also substantiated this claim, stating that nearly half of adult Filipinos know little about the Constitution. This lack of knowledge is crucial in shaping public attitudes toward charter change. Furthermore, their recent study asserted that 75% of adult Filipinos (aged eighteen and above) possess little knowledge of the country's Constitution. The absence of research focusing on younger generations' attitudes toward charter change, especially in the context of education and media influence, presents a significant gap that this study aims to address. Moreover, due to the substantial increase in youth voters anticipated for the succeeding elections (Serquiña, 2024), it is critical to recognize the game-changing role of the younger population in civic issues such as charter change, further enhancing their role in the ratification of proposed constitutional amendments. Therefore, scrutinizing this age bracket under the lens of charter change is well-founded, as Galston (2004) argued that the formative years are crucial in shaping political values and beliefs. Considering the notable scarcity of literature on charter change, it accentuates the importance and relevance of research among Filipino youth in this age bracket. Most existing literature focuses on broad public opinion surveys (Pulse Asia, 2023) or specific political objectives such as federalism and economic reforms

(Cureg & Matunding, 2005; Mendoza & Melchor, 2015; Tejada, 2019).

The literature on constitutional reform in the Philippines emphasizes the crucial role of public knowledge, awareness, and attitudes in determining the success or failure of charter change initiatives. Numerous attempts to amend the 1987 Constitution have faced challenges due to public mistrust and limited understanding, significant barriers to charter change. This study aims to fill a notable gap in the existing literature by examining awareness and attitudes toward charter change among students, providing valuable insights into youth engagement with civic and political issues.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Research Design**

This study employed descriptive bivariate correlational and comparative designs to examine the relationships and differences between awareness and attitudes of Filipino secondary students, and when grouped according to demographic profiles (grade level, age, sex, leadership positions, political affiliations, and community type). This non-experimental design is ideal for identifying and describing relationships and differences between variables within the same population without manipulating variables (Curtis *et al.*, 2016). It allows for non-intrusive data collection, making it well-suited for educational and political contexts, and is particularly applicable when large sample sizes support generalizable findings. While unable to establish causation, this design is appropriate for exploring this under-researched area due to the following reasons: (1) It avoids the impracticality and ethical issues of manipulating naturally occurring traits like awareness and attitudes (Cohen *et al.*, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018); (2) it both describes the constructs and investigates their relationships and differences (Polit & Beck, 2021); (3) it aligns well with the ordinal nature of the data and non-parametric statistical tests (Boone & Boone, 2012); (4) it suits the descriptive and exploratory nature of the study given the scarcity of related research; and (5) it is more feasible within resource and logistical constraints (Bryman, 2015). Thus, this design intends to assess the strength of the association between awareness and attitudes to pioneer research for future studies exploring causality.

**Respondents and Sampling Procedures**

The respondents were SHS students pursuing the HUMSS strand at the largest government-funded secondary

school in the Eastern Visayas region. Focusing on this population offers a micro-level perspective to address gaps in research on political opinions in rural versus urban communities. The G\*Power Software identified a sample of 112 students for a two-tailed exact correlation test family (bivariate normal model) parametric test with an effect size ( $\rho$ ) at 0.3, error probability ( $\alpha$ ) at 0.05, and a power level ( $1 - \beta$ ) at 0.90. An additional 20% was added to the sample size as the general rule of thumb in ensuring robustness for non-parametric analysis (Lehmann & D'Abrera, 2006). Stratified sampling, followed by systematic random sampling within strata, was employed. Specifically, the sample was proportionally stratified based on the distribution of the two groups in the population. Systematic random sampling was applied for each stratum, specifically: (1) eighty-one (84) students from the 11th grade and (2) forty-eight (49) students from the 12th grade. Thereby, the choice to select SHS students from the HUMSS strand is contingent on three key justifications: (1) a presupposition that students pursuing this specialization exhibit a greater degree of proficiency due to the inclusion of specialized subjects in the curriculum (Philippine Politics and Governance); (2) they are close to the legal voting age, positioning them as an ideal demographic for studies on political awareness; and (3) there is a lack of existing research focusing on this specific population. This respondent group is uniquely positioned to contribute meaningful insights into political and civic attitudes in the region.

**Instrumentations**

Due to the lack of accessible and age-specific studies on Generation Z learners' awareness and attitudes toward charter change, the questionnaire was developed based on a review of related literature, national survey frameworks (Pulse Asia, OCTA, SWS), and research on political socialization and civic engagement (Galston, 2004; Inglehart, 2018; Della Volpe, 2022). This approach ensured relevance and grounding in the study's context—the researcher-developed instrument aimed for alignment with the study's objectives. The questionnaire included three key sections. The first section collected demographic information, such as grade level, sex, age, leadership positions, political affiliations, and community type. The second section featured a 15-item Likert scale measuring respondents' awareness of charter change, while the third section included another 15-item Likert scale assessing their attitudes toward charter change.

**Table 1:** Exploratory Factor Analysis for Awareness and Attitudes Scale

Maximum Likelihood Extraction with Promax Rotation		Model Test		Model Fit Indices	
Level of Awareness Scale	Factor Loadings/ .520 – .760	X2	149	TLI	.907
		df	90	RMSEA	.069
		p-value	< .001	<b>Internal Consistency</b>	
		KMO-MSA	.913	Cronbach's $\alpha$	.909
		Bartlett's TOS	< .001	Composite reliability	.910
		AVE	.406	Item-rest correlation	.533 – .703

Attitudes Scale	Factor Loadings/ .538 – .823	X2	179	TLI	.904
		df	90	RMSEA	.085
		p-value	< .001	<b>Internal Consistency</b>	
		KMO-MSA	.929	Cronbach’s $\alpha$	.936
		Bartlett’s TOS	< .001	Composite reliability	.938
AVE	.503	Item-rest correlation	.527 – .797		

\*KMO-MSA (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy), Bartlett’s TOS (Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity), AVE (Average Variance Extracted), TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index), and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation).

The items in both scales were based on themes and findings from previous scholarly works and national survey frameworks, ensuring content validity and relevance to the Philippine socio-political context. The initial version of the questionnaire underwent expert validation for content relevance, clarity, and alignment with the study’s objectives. Recommendations from validators were integrated into the final version of the instrument before data collection. Then, it was subjected to pilot testing from a non-sampled group of HUMSS students outside the locale to establish instrument reliability. Table 1 presents the results of the awareness and attitudes scale’s exploratory factor analysis (EFA). An excellent Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  and composite reliability (CR) and strong item-rest correlations ranging from .527 to .797 further validated the scale’s reliability (Agbo, 2010; Cheung *et al.*, 2024). Furthermore, the researcher obtained counsel and approval from experts in the field to ensure the face and content validity of the developed questionnaire.

**Ethical Considerations**

Adhering to ethical considerations is paramount in this study. Before data collection, the researchers sought approval to conduct the research and other necessary information (sections per grade level and number of students) in the locale. Upon the random selection of respondents, the researcher explained the informed consent and assent form, providing them with sufficient information, including but not limited to the purpose of the study, the benefits and risks, and the anonymity of their participation. Concurrently, the assent form was either accomplished by their class adviser or their guardian, considering there are no risks for any harm (physical and/or psychological). It ensures voluntary participation and protection against any coercion or manipulation. All rights of the respondents were carefully safeguarded, such as the right to correct information and the right to withdraw from participation. No sensitive personal information, such as names, was solicited through the

survey questionnaire to establish the anonymity of the respondents. Furthermore, the researcher abides by the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 against the unlawful processing of personal data. Therefore, to ensure data security, the collected data is kept confidential and used exclusively for archival purposes post-publication.

**Data Analysis**

The statistical analysis for this study utilized Jamovi Computer Software (Version 2.3), incorporating both descriptive and inferential methods to examine the relationships and differences among the study variables. This study employed Spearman’s rank-order correlation coefficient ( $\rho$ ), a non-parametric statistical measure that quantifies the monotonic relationship between ordinal variables (McDonald, 2014). Due to the study’s focus on political perception and socialization, its interpretation in this study followed the political science framework of Quinnipiac University (Akoglu, 2018), as presented in Table 3. Descriptive statistics analyzed the Likert-scale data representing awareness and attitudes toward charter change, integrating with standard deviations to examine variability. While the median and mode accounted for the ordinal nature of responses, they were excluded from the analysis as their values showed minimal variation from the mean, indicating no substantial discrepancies that would justify their inclusion in the interpretation of the data. While correlation cannot establish causality, the primary objective of this study was not to determine causation but to assess the strength of the monotonic relationship between the variables. Furthermore, the Mann-Whitney U Test, a non-parametric method suitable for ordinal data, was used to examine significant differences in awareness and attitudes based on demographic characteristics, ensuring a comprehensive approach to exploring patterns within the data. Therefore, this combined statistical framework enabled a holistic inquiry, providing a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between the study variables in the context of charter change.

**Table 2:** Interpretation of Level of Awareness and Attitudes

Mean Range	Interpretation	Estimation Degree
4.21-5.00	Strongly agree	Very high awareness/Highly positive
3.41-4.20	Agree	High awareness/Positive
2.61-3.40	Neutral	Moderate awareness/Neutral
1.81-2.60	Disagree	Low awareness/Negative
1.00-1.80	Strongly disagree	Very low awareness/Highly negative

**Table 3:** Interpretation of Spearman’s  $\rho$

Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient		Political Research (Quinnipiac University)
-1	1	Perfect
-0.7 – -0.9	0.7 – 0.9	Very Strong
-0.4 – -0.6	0.4 – 0.6	Strong
-0.3	0.3	Moderate
-0.2	0.2	Weak
-0.1	0.1	Negligible
0	0	None

Note. Adopted from the “User’s Guide to Correlation Coefficients.” Akoglu (2018).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 4 presents the demographic profile of the 133 HUMSS respondents. More than half of the respondents were in Grade 11 (63.2%), leaving a smaller proportion of Grade 12 respondents (36.8%). Most respondents were aged 15 to 17 (92.5%), while the remaining 7.5% were aged 18 and above. Additionally, female respondents dominated the sample (70.7%), whereas male respondents only comprised 29.3%. The results have also shown that in terms of leadership positions, 66.2% of the respondents did not hold any leadership roles, while 19.5% held positions at the institutional level, and the remaining 14.3% of respondents held positions in public. In addition, family political affiliations were not leading

among the respondents, wherein most students (78.2%) do not have political affiliations within the third degree of consanguinity, while 21.8% of the respondents did. Finally, 58.6% of respondents resided in urbanized communities, whereas 41.4% resided in rural communities.

#### Descriptive Analysis of Awareness and Attitudes of the Respondents

Table 5 summarizes the awareness of the HUMSS students regarding charter change, measured across fifteen indicators. The overall mean score of the scale was 3.32 (neutral), classifying respondents within the “moderate awareness” range. The standard deviation was 0.950, indicating moderate variability in responses. Among the individual statements, “Ongoing discussions on charter change” received the highest mean (mean =

**Table 4:** Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Factor		Frequency (N = 133)	Proportion
Grade Level	Grade 11	84	.632*
	Grade 12	49	.368*
Age	15–17 years old	123	.925
	18 years old and above	10	.075
Sex	Female	94	.707
	Male	39	.293
Leadership positions	None	88	.662
	School	26	.195
	Public	19	.143
Political affiliations	Yes	29	.218
	No	104	.782
Community type	Rural	55	.414
	Urban	78	.586

Note. \*Proportion based on the distribution of the population.

a. Leadership Positions: None = respondent does not hold any leadership positions; School = respondent holds a leadership position in school; Public = respondent holds a leadership position in the community.

b. Political Affiliations: Yes = respondent has a declared political affiliation; No = respondent does not have a declared political affiliation.

c. Community Type: Rural = respondent resides in a rural area; Urban = respondent resides in an urban area.

3.59, SD = 1.03), followed by “Complexities of charter change” (mean = 3.51, SD = 0.934), “Understanding the term ‘charter change’” (mean = 3.48, SD = 0.982), and

“Support for charter change efforts” (mean = 3.40, SD = 0.945), all of which fell within the “high awareness” range. Conversely, the statements “Amendments focusing

on economic provisions” (mean = 3.08, SD = 0.888), “Proposed changes in the Constitution” (mean = 3.12, SD = 0.970), and “Historical events of charter change efforts” (mean = 3.13, SD = 0.957) had lower mean scores. However, they remained within the “moderate awareness” range.

The standard deviations revealed moderate variability in the responses, with the highest variability observed for “Ongoing discussions on charter change” (SD = 1.03) and the lowest for “Process for amending the Constitution” (SD = 0.840). Most responses fell within the “moderate awareness” range, with moderate variability. It indicates

that the respondents displayed a moderate level of awareness regarding charter change.

Table 6 details the attitudes of HUMSS students toward charter change across fifteen other factors representing various aspects of charter change. The mean score of the scale was 3.30 (neutral), with a variability of .994. Across the different statements in the scale, “Charter change as timely and necessary” was the highest-rated item, with a mean of 3.51 (SD = .934). Similarly, the statement “Improving the political and economic system” obtained a mean score of 3.51 (SD = 1.01), falling under, along with two other statements, in the

**Table 5:** Awareness toward Charter Change of the Respondents

Statement	Mean	SD	Estimation Degree
Ongoing discussions on charter change	3.59	1.03	High awareness
Complexities of charter change	3.51	.934	High awareness
Understanding the term “charter change”	3.48	.982	High awareness
Support for charter change efforts	3.40	.945	High awareness
Media coverage of charter change efforts	3.38	.901	Moderate awareness
Opposition to charter change efforts	3.35	.922	Moderate awareness
Potential advantages of charter change	3.35	.971	Moderate awareness
Public’s role in charter change efforts	3.33	.943	Moderate awareness
Process for amending the Constitution	3.32	.840	Moderate awareness
Methods for achieving charter change	3.29	.918	Moderate awareness
Potential risks of amendments	3.28	.956	Moderate awareness
Historical events of charter change efforts	3.23	.984	Moderate awareness
Rise of petition efforts and advocacy groups	3.13	.957	Moderate awareness
Proposed changes in the Constitution	3.12	.970	Moderate awareness
Amendments focus on economic provisions	3.08	.888	Moderate awareness

Note: N=133; Grand Mean= 3.32 (Moderate Awareness); SD= 0.950

“positive” range. Contrastingly, the statements with the lowest mean scores include “Federalism in reducing regional inequalities” (mean = 3.07, SD = .923) and “Transitioning to a parliamentary system” (mean = 3.14, SD = .941), which are both within the “neutral” range. The standard deviation values varied, with the statement “Improving democracy and accountability” (SD = .889)

demonstrating the narrowest spread of responses. At the same time, “Promoting efficiency and transparency” (SD = 1.14) exhibited the highest variability in the responses. In principle, the respondents predominantly expressed neutral attitudes toward charter change, with a few leaning positive.

**Table 6:** Attitudes Toward Charter Change of the Respondents

Statement	Mean	SD	Estimation Degree
Charter change as timely and necessary	3.51	.934	Positive
Improving the political and economic system	3.50	1.01	Positive
Improving democracy and accountability	3.42	.889	Positive
Enhancing economic competitiveness	3.40	.937	Positive
Attracting foreign investments	3.37	.949	Neutral
Strengthening democratic institutions	3.37	1.01	Neutral
Addressing the needs of marginalized sectors	3.32	.909	Neutral
Economic growth via foreign ownership	3.31	.971	Neutral
Addressing governance challenges	3.26	1.10	Neutral

Ameliorating education via charter change	3.25	1.06	Neutral
Federalism for political representation	3.21	1.02	Neutral
Promoting efficiency and transparency	3.17	1.14	Neutral
Improving public utilities through foreign ownership	3.14	.993	Neutral
Transitioning to a parliamentary system	3.13	.941	Neutral
Federalism in reducing regional inequalities	3.07	.923	Neutral

Note: N=133; Grand Mean= 3.30 (Neutral Attitude); SD= 0.994

**Relationship between Awareness and Attitudes of the Respondents**

Table 7 displays Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient for awareness and attitudes toward charter change. A strong, positive, and significant relationship was observed between the two variables ( $\rho = .483$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with an achieved power of .999, implying an extremely low

probability of type II errors in the analysis. Furthermore, the strength of this correlation increased ( $\rho = .506$ ,  $p < .001$ ) when controlling for the effects of confounding factors such as grade level, age, sex, leadership positions, political affiliations, and type of community. It also suggests that the relationship remains statistically significant after adjusting for confounding variables.

**Table 7:** Relationship between Respondents’ Awareness and Attitude Levels

Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient			Interpretation (Akoglu, 2018)
Correlation	Spearman’s rho ( $\rho$ )	.483**	Strong positive correlation
	df	131	
	p-value	< .001	
	N	133	
Partial Correlation (Controlling for the demographic factors)	Spearman’s rho ( $\rho$ )	.506**	Strong positive correlation
	p-value	< .001	
	N	133	

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; N=133

**Demographic Differences and Relationships on Awareness and Attitudes of the Respondents**

Mann-Whitney U test was utilized to assess the differences of the study variables according to the demographic factors, as shown in Table 8. For the level of awareness, no statistically significant differences were observed across grade level (U = 1686,  $p = .083$ ), age (U = 541,  $p = .530$ ), sex (U = 1715,  $p = .559$ ), leadership positions

(U = 1866,  $p = .587$ ), political affiliation (U = 1342,  $p = .365$ ), or community type (U = 2059,  $p = .696$ ). Moreover, the effect sizes (rank biserial correlation) ranged from negligible (.040) for community type to small (.181) for grade level. Similarly, no significant differences were identified for attitudes among the demographic factors, with p-values exceeding the significance threshold (.05) and weak effect sizes (ranging from .004 to .108).

**Table 8:** Differences in Awareness and Attitudes according to Demographic Factors

Mann-Whitney U Test		Grade Level	Age	Sex	Leadership positions	Political affiliation	Community type
Level of Awareness	Statistic	1686	541	1715	1866	1342	2059
	p-value	.083	.530	.559	.587	.365	.696
	Mean difference	3.000	2.000	1.000	1.000	2.000	1.000
	Effect size (RBC)	.181	.120	.065	.058	.110	.040
	1- $\beta$ err prob	.182	.085	.065	.062	.084	.056
Attitudes	Statistic	2050	529	1664	1779	1345	2004
	p-value	.927	.465	.404	.340	.374	.519
	Mean difference	0	3.000	2.000	-2.000	-2.000	-1.000
	Effect size (RBC)	.004	.140	.092	.102	.108	.067
	1- $\beta$ err prob	.050	.097	.079	.089	0.083	.068

\*RBC (rank biserial correlation)

Spearman’s rank correlation analysis further substantiated the relationships between awareness, attitudes, and demographic factors. As presented in Table 9, no significant relationship was identified between the level of awareness and the demographic profile,

exhibiting negligible to weak correlations and p-values significantly exceeding the acceptable threshold ( $p < .05$ ). Comparably, attitudes toward charter change also showed no statistically significant relationship with the demographic factors.

**Table 9:** Relationships between Awareness and Attitudes according to Demographic Factors

Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient		Grade Level	Age	Sex	Leadership positions	Political affiliation	Community type
Level of Awareness	Spearman’s rho ( $\rho$ )	.151	-.055	.051	-.047	-.079	-.034
	df	131	131	131	131	131	131
	p-value	.082	.529	.560	.589	.366	.696
	1- $\beta$ err prob	.413	.096	.090	.084	.148	.067
Attitudes	Spearman’s rho ( $\rho$ )	-.003	-.064	-.073	.083	.078	.056
	df	131	131	131	131	131	131
	p-value	.970	.464	.405	.340	.374	.520
	1- $\beta$ err prob	.050	.113	.133	.158	.145	.099

Although grade level ( $\rho = .151$ ,  $p = .082$ ) showed a trend toward significance in both analyses, no other demographic factor exhibited a significant relationship or a strong effect size with either awareness or attitudes. Thus, these results suggest no significant relationships or differences between the students’ awareness and attitudes and the demographic variables analyzed.

**Discussion**

The results of this study revealed that students in the HUMSS strand possess moderate overall awareness regarding charter change, emphasizing the partial yet insufficient understanding among Filipino youth. It posits the evident exposure to ongoing public discourse, as displayed in their relatively high awareness of topics regarding ongoing discussions on charter change, its complexities, its definition, and the coverage of media on charter change efforts, implying that public deliberations and media platforms are likely key drivers of awareness. This result affirms the study by Muzaffar *et al.* (2019), who assert that the media significantly contributes to political awareness.

Furthermore, this study’s results align with the significance of Political Socialization Theory (Hyman, 1959) and Public Opinion Theory (Lippmann, 2017), which postulate that institutions such as the media (Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2006) and educational systems (Dassonneville *et al.*, 2012) significantly shape political consciousness. However, despite the media’s influence, the quality of the information disseminated may limit its impact, as significant gaps remain in the Filipino youth’s knowledge of technical and procedural aspects of charter change, including the focus on economic amendments, proposed constitutional changes, and the historical context of charter change. Furthermore, awareness of the potential risks, processes, methods, and the role of the public related to charter change also fell under the moderate awareness range, highlighting an area of

concern. These gaps echo the findings of Tejada (2019), which reported that 69% of students lacked awareness of federalism. Such results imply the inherent complexity of charter change as a civic and political issue, often inadequately addressed in mainstream discourse.

In addition to their awareness, the study found Filipino HUMSS students exhibiting generally neutral attitudes toward charter change. However, a significant proportion of favorable attitudes was evident, suggesting an ambivalent public opinion. For instance, students showed positive attitudes toward the timeliness of charter change, its capability to improve the political and economic system of the country, as well as the democracy and accountability of the government, indicating broad acknowledgment of the need for reform in the country’s government system. While students may support general reforms, there is an apparent lack of decisiveness regarding the implications of charter change, as evident from this study’s strong consensus toward neutrality in most statements. The neutrality of the youth conflicts with the polarized perspectives of adult Filipinos, as reported by various research organizations in the Philippines, reflecting deep historical skepticism toward constitutional reforms (Basinillo *et al.*, 2024; Yusingco & Navarro, 2019). Likewise, other studies (Heys, 2024; Phillips, 2022) corroborate this generational difference, which could be partially due to the youth’s changing value structures.

The preference for economic reforms over political reforms was emergent. For instance, relatively higher mean scores were evident in economic competitiveness, attracting foreign investments, and economic growth via foreign ownership. This economic eminence may reflect students’ experiences, where immediate concerns about employment, income generation, and economic growth take precedence over more abstract political issues. This study’s result also aligns with the notion that Generation Z youth possess progressive views aimed at social and

economic reforms (Latifi, 2022; Pew Research Center, 2018). In contrast, attitudes toward political reforms, such as federalism for political representation and transitioning to a parliamentary system, show significantly lower mean scores, signifying a more neutral or uncertain attitude. The proposal for federalism to reduce regional inequalities received the lowest rating, suggesting that HUMMS students are less convinced that political restructuring would effectively address issues they may perceive as localized or less urgent than economic matters.

Moreover, the results of this study align with those of Quismorio (2024), who reported growing support for economic charter change, and Tejada (2019), who highlighted opposition to federalism due to concerns about heightened corruption risks. Subsequently, students are less inclined to support these constitutional amendments in Philippine politics, likely because of limited understanding or uncertainty regarding their potential impact on governance. Basinillo *et al.* (2024) noted that this uncertainty is rooted in the public mistrust of the government's commitment to charter change, with concerns for potential abuse to extend term limits. Divergent perspectives stressed ambivalence on the potential of charter change to enhance government efficiency and transparency, which received a relatively low rating and exhibited the highest variability, suggesting considerable uncertainty and inconsistency of views among the students.

The intersection between awareness and attitudes is significant to understanding how knowledge, or the lack thereof, might influence attitudes to charter change. In examining their relationship using Spearman's rank-order correlation through Quinnipiac University's political research framework, the analysis has shown a strong, positive, and significant relationship between the HUMSS students' level of awareness and attitudes toward charter change. The result implies that Filipino youth with a sharper grasp of charter change tend to exhibit more optimistic attitudes. This relationship slightly strengthened when controlling for the confounding demographic factors. Although Spearman's correlation is non-parametric, outliers may have dampened the observed relationship, warranting further investigation.

Further, this study's results suggest that awareness is a key factor influencing attitudes, independent of confounding variables such as grade level, age, and leadership positions. The result of this study underscores the importance of addressing information challenges and knowledge gaps regarding charter change. Therefore, formal civic education and active learning initiatives could sway perspectives (Dassonneville *et al.*, 2012) by nurturing a comprehensive understanding of the implications of charter change and emphasizing the role of education in promoting political participation among secondary students (Ibardeola *et al.*, 2021).

Analyzing students' awareness and attitudes by demographic factors revealed statistically insignificant relationships and differences, indicating that grade level,

age, sex, leadership positions, political affiliation, and community type did not significantly influence awareness and attitudes toward charter change. Recent studies (Heys, 2024; Della Volpe, 2020; Fisher, 2018, 2020; Rouse & Ross, 2018; Smets, 2016; Stoker, 2014; Yusingco *et al.*, 2023) highlighted the emergence of a unique political generation whose attitudes and behaviors diverge from traditional political socialization. This generation may be less influenced by socializing agents (family, community, and peers) compared to older cohorts. The results of this study call for collaboration among policymakers, academic institutions, media, and civic organizations to better equip the next generation to make informed political decisions, promoting a youth electorate prepared to support or reject constitutional amendments and revisions—an essential component of constitutional democracy.

This study, while contributing valuable insights into the awareness and attitudes of HUMSS students toward charter change in the Philippines, is not without its limitations. First, the sample size of 133 students may be insufficient to detect statistically significant results, particularly for extremely low effect sizes when accounting for various demographic factors. Second, the design is limited to expounding relationships, which do not establish causal links. Third, the exclusive focus on HUMSS students raises concerns about the generalizability of the results to other SHS strands and Filipino youth in general. Lastly, this study may have overlooked external confounding factors (socioeconomic status, sources of information, and levels of civic exposure), which could influence students' perceptions and attitudes. The limitations identified in this study do not diminish its overall merit or significance; instead, it can stand as a stepping stone for further exploration in the perception of charter change among the Filipino youth in the Philippines.

Contingent upon the results and the limitations unaddressed, future studies are encouraged to explore several key domains: participant demographics, study locale, research design, and research instrument. Most political research on youth in the Philippines predominantly involves HUMSS students. Therefore, subsequent studies should aim to expand the participant pool, enhancing both generalizability and understanding of how diverse educational backgrounds shape perceptions of charter change. Rather than simply comparing perceptions between rural and urban students, future studies may investigate educational institutions in both settings to capture the impact of these environments on awareness and attitudes. When designed appropriately, the researchers call for (1) experimental designs to detect causal relationships between awareness and attitudes, and (2) qualitative methods may be employed alongside quantitative methods to delve into the breadth of the motivations and contextual factors that influence students' perceptions. Integrating additional confounding factors into future studies would further elucidate this complex issue. Hence, improving research instruments

could detect these variables with more robust results. Collectively venturing into these salient disciplines, future studies can significantly advance knowledge on the youth perception of charter change and further inform effective educational interventions in the Philippines.

## CONCLUSIONS

The ongoing discourse on charter change in the Philippines is emblematic of a broader struggle encompassing political, economic, and social aspects of civic engagement. Without civically informed citizens, the risks of negative implications of charter change could significantly rise, thereby thickening the barriers to its achievement. This study revealed two main results: as the complexity of charter change deepens, students' awareness tends to diminish, and a discernible predilection to economic reforms emerged that overshadowed proposed political changes. Despite their advantageous background, the perception of HUMSS students has displayed uncertainty in grasping both the abstract and practical aspects of constitutional reform, signifying a shortcoming of the socializing agents' capacity to yield adequate political consciousness. A keener awareness of constitutional reform is closely associated with more positive perspectives; concisely, bridging knowledge gaps could bring charter change closer to its realization. However, these perceptions (awareness and attitude) are not linear and, therefore, are affected by various confounding factors that this study could not fully encapsulate. In essence, awareness is a fundamental element shaping perspectives on charter change initiatives, ergo accentuating adequate awareness among this growing electorate.

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