




## Semiotic Analysis of Editorial Cartoons of the Philippine Artisan

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### Abstract

The editorial cartoons of the Philippine Artisan played an imperative role in identifying and stimulating the public's feelings toward current events. This study analyzes the signs and symbols used in the chosen fifteen (15) editorial cartoons of Philippine Artisan, the official student gazette of the Technological University of the Philippines, in expressing relevant social issues. This is a qualitative study anchored by a descriptive research design. Semiotic analysis was used to examine symbols, signs, and meanings within the chosen cartoons to achieve a comprehensive analysis. It was found that most of the common themes covered by the editorial cartoons were power abuse, corruption, incompetent leaders, a disorganized capitalist system, government inaction, careless solutions, and school-related problems. The publication still provided an impact by educating students about the current issues and opening their minds to what we are currently facing within the university and society. This also concludes that the cartoonists have clearly communicated their messages and their criticism of the current leadership and the call for action.

**Keywords** *Semiotic Analysis, Editorial Cartoon, Philippine Artisan, Sign, Student Publication*

### INTRODUCTION

The strokes of a cartoonist's pen profoundly shape public opinion and encapsulate the essence of societal discourse. [Shaikh et al. \(2016\)](#) believed that a cartoon is a weapon in the cartoonist's hands who can hit whatever he feels like, followed by freedom of speech. Language is inherently semiotic, but information dissemination has evolved beyond natural languages. Messages can now be encoded in non-linguistic signs/symbols, such as images and colors, which often convey as much, if not more, than words. Therefore, the choice of communicating messages through signs is studied in the domain of semiotics ([Sebeok, 2001](#)).

Since cartoons hide what cannot be said openly, conveying messages that would not be conveyed by other forms of humor, humor in cartoons serves as a mask for true feelings and beliefs. If a cartoon "repeats what is openly said, it loses its force and hence becomes ineffective" ([Raskin 2008: 28](#)). Hence, comedy allows people to voice their unfavorable opinions and sentiments about a subject. Without acknowledging the validity of their views. [Manguila \(2021\)](#) observed in her content and semiotic study that cartoonists' opinions are "packaged" so that they adhere to editorial policies and the publication or newspaper stance and that their opinions are "screened" by editorial guidelines. Furthermore, [Imperial \(2020\)](#) analyzes the different ways the author expresses his views in Philippine editorial cartoons, arguing that humor is a useful way to discuss key issues and criticize political leaders' contemptible behavior.

Semiotic analysis of print media coverage addresses a broad range of social and political issues. These included studies that examined the featured verbal texts, images, layout, color, and

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ideas used by newspaper editors in their respective publications. While there are already existing semiotic analyses that focus on editorial cartoons, there are few local studies that cover editorial cartoons. Therefore, this study focused on the editorial cartoons of a newspaper retrieved from the *Philippine Artisan*, an official student gazette of the Technological University of the Philippines. Specifically, this study aimed to analyze the signs and symbols used in the fifteen editorial cartoons of *Philippine Artisan* in expressing relevant social issues within and outside the school. The researchers also identified and assessed the types and functions of signifiers, such as symbolism and labels.

Moreover, this study aimed to significantly contribute to artists, cartoonists, and multimedia journalists by acquiring valuable insights from interpreting and understanding editorial cartoons. Researchers focusing on Philippine culture and visual communication may benefit from this analysis. Policymakers and advocacy groups can better comprehend the visual narratives shaping public opinion. Lastly, it also provides knowledge to the general public, fostering a more informed and critically engaged readership. The editorial cartoons may help set agendas and manifest a mode of argumentation and critique from the public.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Editorial cartoons, intentionally designed to convey political or social perspectives, have consistently sparked controversy. Their evolution alongside the rise of new newspapers underscores their societal impact. The interplay between semiotics and editorial cartoons is evident in the symbolic elements embedded in these visual narratives. Semiotic analysis becomes crucial in deciphering the intended messages and implications conveyed through these cartoons. Semiotics, as explored by [Aziz and Hassan \(2018\)](#), is a discipline dedicated to studying the presence and functions of signs in society. Termed "semiology" from the Greek "Semeion" (Sign), it uncovers signs and the principles governing them. This concept is particularly relevant to understanding societal communication, with editorial cartoons emerging as a significant medium for applying and comprehending semiotics.

In the run-up to the 2022 national elections in the Philippines, these cartoons have emerged as a means of portraying various political factions, including notable figures like Sara "Inday Sara" Duterte, Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., and Leni Robredo, sparking discourse. Despite the potential negativity expressed by mainstream media toward certain candidates, editorial cartoons provide a distinctive and influential perspective on the political landscape. Their ability to convey messages humorously and concisely has a significant impact on shaping public opinion, even with their relatively limited media coverage ([Mhamdi, 2017](#)). While existing studies in political semantics, such as Critical Discourse Analysis by [Nares and Montaña \(2022\)](#), delve into power dynamics within electoral discourses, there is a noticeable gap in literature regarding the portrayal of election events, such as the filing of candidacy, in the Philippines through editorial cartoons.

[Aziz and Hassan's \(2018\)](#) study establish semiotics as a lens for analyzing signs within society, with a focus on editorial cartoons. Because of their symbolic nature and purposeful construction, these cartoons serve as a rich source for semiotic exploration. [Hasanah and Hidayat \(2020\)](#) further emphasize that decoding symbols within political cartoons goes beyond intellectual exercise; it is a means of comprehending societal conversations and debates embedded in visual form. Moreover, as highlighted by [Azhar et al. \(2021\)](#), the popularity of editorial cartoons lies in their accessibility. The fusion of visuals and humor enables individuals with varying reading skills to comprehend and relate to the conveyed ideas. The strategic application of humor and satire in these visual representations not only captures the attention of the audience across different levels of political awareness but also solidifies editorial cartoons as a compelling medium for shaping

public opinion.

Ghilzai’s (2020) study delves into the realm of power politics and hegemonic struggles through a semiotic analysis of editorial cartoons. This research employs a unique approach, involving participants in the analysis process to gather diverse perspectives in decoding selected cartoons. This participatory dimension enriches the study by recognizing the subjective nature of semiotic analysis and its dependence on varied backgrounds and opinions.

Emphasizing the importance of audience engagement, Ghilzai’s (2020) research highlights the effectiveness of editorial cartoons in conveying complex issues. Findings reveal both positive and negative opinions from participants, highlighting the inherent controversy surrounding these cartoons. Despite diverse responses, this study underscores the potency of editorial cartoons in eliciting varied societal interpretations.

Collective insights from these studies reaffirm the integral role of semiotics in unraveling the layers of meaning embedded in editorial cartoons. These cartoons, with their symbolic language, play a vital role in shaping public discourse, influencing perceptions, and contributing to the nuanced understanding of societal conversations and political dynamics. The continued exploration of semiotics in the context of editorial cartoons remains a dynamic and evolving field, offering avenues for further research and deeper comprehension of the intricate relationship between signs, symbols, and societal communication.

**METHODOLOGY**

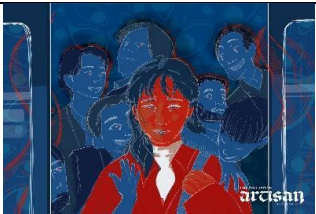
This is a qualitative study anchored by a descriptive research design. It offers a detailed and informative analysis of an editorial cartoon. This research approach focused on examining symbols, signs, and meanings within the chosen cartoons to achieve a comprehensive analysis.

Semiotic analysis was used to analyze 15 editorial cartoons of The Philippine Artisan, the official student gazette of the Technological University Philippines-Manila. The gathered editorial cartoons were retrieved through the official Facebook page of The Philippines Artisan (n.d.), which mostly features the latest issues of the country and academic-related content dated from February 2023 to October 2023. The collected data were then analyzed and interpreted through the semiotic concept of Chandler (2011), which thoroughly explained the elements within signs and their interaction with the audience.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The outcomes of this study have provided insight into social, political, and education-related editorial cartoons by conducting analyses of their words, symbols, and interpretations of cartoon panels. These cartoons were arranged by date and categorized by two themes: social/political and school/education-related.

**Table 1.** Social and Political Editorial Cartoons

Cartoon	Words	Symbols	Interpretation
		<p><b>Woman with a red outfit represents every woman.</b></p>	<p>The image depicts a public transportation door and a terrified and wary woman because of the many eyes and males surrounding</p>

**Figure 1.** The Woman Will Go Down to the Shore of the

Gentle Journey (*Bababa ang Babae sa Baybay ng Banayad na Byahe*) (March 31, 2023)

**Eyes Behind** - refers to people who have bad intentions toward women.

**Men's Faces Behind:** The scary and weird laughing faces of men at the back refer to men who abuse and destroy the dignity of every woman.

**Glass Door:**refers to the doors of a public vehicle.

her. Based on this image, we highlight the realities of women who are assaulted and abused not only in corners and secluded regions but also on public transportation. It is terribly sad that women's dignity is still violated and consumed in public transit. This type of issue in our culture should be addressed because there are so many women who are abused in public transportation every day and their safety is at stake. Therefore, they should be given the protection they need. This just also proved that the type and style of women's attire has nothing to do with this; it is in the erroneous way of thinking and mindset of individuals who have no conscience to do this.

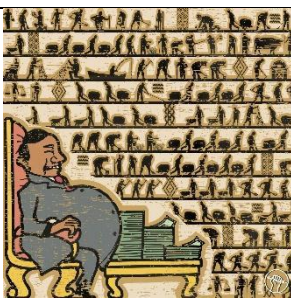


**Figure 2.** “Is it still far?”  
(*Malayo pa ba?*) (April 10, 2023)

**Red walkway** - Folks on a represents pressure, challenging violence, and journey may strength in the represent real-life journey. struggles such as poverty, displacement, or even the difficulties faced by farmers. The long walk from Bataan to San Fernando might symbolize hardship due to economic inequalities or environmental factors. The artist highlights the resilience of those facing such issues, emphasizing the collective strength needed to confront and overcome these real-life challenges.

**Sun** represents a natural force of positivity and hope.

**Mountains** - could represent towering and challenging obstacles.



**Figure 3.** The Art of Hard Work: Where Hard is to the Workers and Ease is to the Power (April 28, 2023)

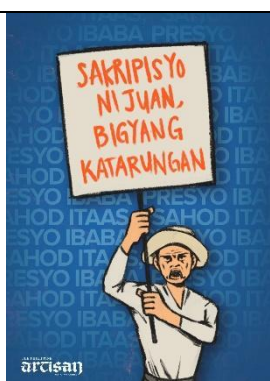
**Hieroglyph** - The image represents Filipino laborers receiving the unjust crony capitalist system, using creative illustrations such as hieroglyphics to emphasize the substantial number of Filipino laborers earning minimum wages despite their hard work. The portrayal of capitalists highlights their significant power

**A man with a bloated stomach wearing a gray lounge suit:** represents a corrupt capitalist.

**Golden Chair with red cushion** - refers to the power and

influence that the capitalist holds. and wealth, earned effortlessly while sitting. This visual narrative highlights the unbalanced and unjust relationship between laborers and capitalists, illustrating how they hinder the deserved wage increment for workers. Moreover, the image sheds light on the prevailing system in the Philippines, where capitalists accumulate considerable wealth while laborers remain confined to minimum wage conditions. It serves as a saddening commentary on the need to address these systemic inequalities.

Pile of money on the golden table - refers to the wealth possessed by a capitalist.



**Figure 4.** “Happy Labor Day!” (Maligayang Araw ng mga Manggagawa!) (May 1, 2023)

**“Give justice to Juan’s Sacrifice”** (*Sakripisyo ni Juan, Bigyang Katarungan*) - The term Juan may refer to/represent Filipino workers, and the whole phrase conveys the unfair situation that most Filipino

**Placard:** It is usually used for protest marches or local street advertising. It allows messages to be easily seen and to catch attention due to its size.

**Man holding the placard** represents Filipinos, specifically Filipino workers. The

The message was greatly emphasized by writing the words in uppercase letters. It shows the urgency of the matter and the need to be seen by the audience. The use of a vignette in the cartoon draws the eye to the center of the

workers experience in the country.

**“Raise the Salary, Lower the Prices.”**

(*Sahod Itaas, Presyo Ibaba*) - This phrase proposes a solution to alleviate the financial problems of most Filipino workers.

man’s face shows dissatisfaction and includes details such as forehead lines emphasizing hard work and exhaustion.

image. Many people may say that the key to financial stability is pure hard work and dedication, but this phrase doesn’t apply to everyone. Many Filipino workers dedicate themselves to hard labor but receive low wages. In addition, they also have to deal with high prices due to inflation. Hence, just increasing wages while the costs continue to rise is not enough. There should be two actions, increasing wages and lowering prices, to solve the crisis of many Filipino workers.



**Figure 5.** COLOSSAL: Renthrone the Kings (June 10, 2023)

**E-Jeepney -**

represents the modern jeepney vehicle.

This opens a discussion about the modernization of Jeepneys in the Philippines, emphasizing the vital role of these vehicles in the country’s economy and highlighting environmental and safety concerns associated with older Jeepneys. While supporting modernization, this critiques government

**Old Jeep -** represents the old Jeep that was issued in the phaseout.

**Driver -** represents the people who are struggling.

spending priorities, calling for a collective effort involving all stakeholders. The message reflects a global discourse on sustainable transportation, addressing the balance between progress and the well-being of individuals impacted by change, and emphasizes the role of responsible governance in navigating such transitions.



**Figure 6.** INFLATION: Hitting the Bottom of the Pan (June 24, 2023)

**INFLATION:** Hitting the Bottom of the Pan suggests a negative impact or consequence, possibly indicating that inflation has reached a critical or undesirable level. This expression combines economic terminology with a metaphorical description to convey a particular perspective or commentary on inflation.

**Merchandise/Goods** - refers to items or products sold, typically in a retail or market setting.

**Bull market (arrow):** refers to when the value or prices in a market increase.

**Skinny man with salakot hat** - it represents the Filipino people.

**Broken tableware:** Dishes, utensils, and other items typically

This vividly illustrates the impact of inflation on everyday items and depicts a bull market, typically associated with a sudden and substantial rise, which interprets inflation and the subsequent increase in the prices of goods. Striking the tableware and causing it to shatter becomes a poignant representation of the financial strain imposed by rising prices, which leaves the man



used for serving or eating food at a table. visibly shaken. The symbolism of his physique communicates the tangible impact of inflation on individuals, emphasizing how economic challenges can lead to physical consequences. The "salakot" hat provides a cultural context, identifying the man as Filipino.



**Figure 7.** For your information: A solution or another breach waiting to happen (July 22, 2023)

A Solution or Another Breach Waiting to Happen - refers to the possible outcome of sim registration implementation. It could either solve the nation's cybersecurity problem or endanger the private information of the citizens who registered their sim cards.

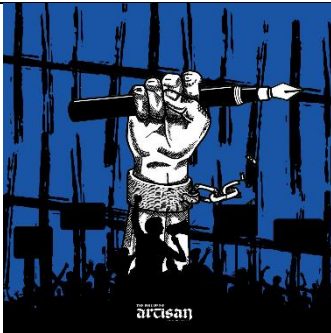
**Wi-Fi Bar** - refers to the weak connectivity of the deprived Filipinos to the internet.

**Man with spoiled clothes and a straw hat** - a representation of economically exploited Filipino citizens.

**Closed Door:** symbolizes the lack of access to the implemented sim registration.

The illustration illustrates how difficult it is for the marginalized sector to access the newly implemented sim registration. Imposing this act could enhance the cybersecurity and emergency response of the country. However, it is a challenge for Filipinos, especially those who lack devices and internet connection because it hinders access to online sim registration. It strongly depicts the hardship of the deprived people who persist in attempting to enter the

registration website despite their inability to do so.



**Figure 8.** No Genuine Press Freedom Until Attacks (August 30, 2023)

**Calligraphy pen** symbolizes freedom of expression.

**Unshackled Handcuffs:** represents liberation from oppression and censorship.

This visual representation powerfully mirrors the collective call to defend press freedom. The prevailing climate of surveillance, arrests, and intimidation underscores the urgent need for a genuine democracy that safeguards the rights of the press. It serves as a rallying cry, illustrating the resilience and determination of journalists to uphold the truth and defend their fundamental right to report without fear.



**Figure 9.** "How confident are you with the confidential funds?" (*Gaano ka ka*

"Why does it seem like it's my fault?" (*Bakit parang kasalanan ko?*)- refers to the state of Senator Risa Hontiveros during and after the hearing, whereas the Vice President seems to make her the enemy with the

**The caricature of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.** refers to the image of the president and how he takes the vice president's side with her holding the money at the back of her hand.

The editorial cartoon implies a hearing that happened because of the OVP's request for 650million of confidential funds. It was questioned by the senate; however, she couldnot provide sufficient feasible projects to justify

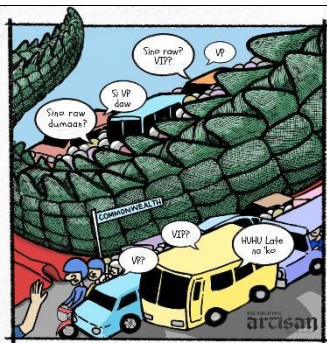
*confident sa confidential funds*) (September 13, 2023)

release of the statement: Anyone who attacks or undermines funds allocated for peace and order is naturally assumed to have insidious motivations. Such actions go against the protection and well-being of the citizens. (Duterte, 2023)

**Caricature of Vice President Sara Duterte-** Shows how she, Vice President of the Philippines, took advantage of the President's Grace by relying on him to take her side.

**Caricature of Senator Riza Hontiveros-** represents the image of a being who is turned into an enemy by the Vice President just by questioning the huge funds and assuring where they will be allocated.

the allotted 650M budget. Due to constant questioning, she responded and labeled them an attack on peace. The image also suggests that the Vice president can go behind the president's back as her protector against the backlash that she encounters. It may be logical for Senator Risa to question the integrity and transparency of the government, but the VP counters this by viewing Senator Risa as an enemy just by questioning her allocation of funds.



**Figure 10.** "Three billion, you are the only VIP." (*Tatlong Bilyon ikaw lamang ang pinata VIP*) (October 11, 2023)

Vp and Vip - Text inside the bubble interchanging the vp and her as a vip  
**HUHU I'm late (HUHU late na ko)** symbolizes the distress caused and interruption created by her crossing the road

**Tail of the crocodile** Symbolizes corruption, an individual who preys on the population's taxes, and abusing power for personal interest. Using the tail of the crocodile also suggests motion, as it sweeps into a crowded road.

**Vehicles** represent commuters and

The enormous size of the crocodile shows how much it has become a hindrance to commuters and people who will travel to their destinations. This situation caused interruptions to people traveling to their respective jobs and destinations during the time. This resulted in a bunch of late

<p>that caused traffic and road closure.</p> <p><b>Commonwealth-</b> refers to the signage of the street indicating the location where the VP caused such hindrance and interruption.</p> <p><b>"Who supposedly passed by?"</b> (<i>Sino raw dumaan?</i>)</p> <p>pertains to the number of people unadvised about who caused such interruption and traffic. The people who were left in shock as to why the VP would cross such a road. These may be the people at the end of the traffic line.</p>	<p>private owners.</p> <p><b>Red</b> symbolizes exclusivity grandeur</p>	<p>vehicle</p> <p><b>carpet</b> and</p>	<p>workers and students. It may seem as if the cost of the comfort of people with power is the hardship of ordinary people. It also shows that even if people complain, they simply cannot do anything despite the unfair treatment and the distress it has caused them.</p>
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The results of the analyzed data in Table 1 suggest that there are many unresolved issues within the country. Most of the cartoons represented Filipinos that are unheard of and how they always suffer from the crisis in the country.

Figure 3 illustrates the unjust capitalist system and how laborers often do not get the wage that they deserve for their labor. Inflation was also discussed in Figure 6, where the man in the cartoon represents the Filipinos suffering from the consequences of inflation and yet cannot do anything but carry the burden. The editorial cartoon in Figure 4 also shared similar messages while showing the words "raise wages, lower prices." ("*Sahod Itaas, Presyo Ibaba*"), which says that the problem would not be solved if only either of the two is given as the solution. The situation does not get easier if wages increase, but inflation continuously rises as well. Meanwhile, Figure 5 focus on the sentiments of the jeepney drivers. It also showed how ordinary citizens suffer from modernization in society. Figure 7 shows how the solutions proposed by the government werenot well thought of, since other situations such as possible breaches or leaks of sim card holders' information werenot considered before implementing the plan. Figures 9 and 10 were used to criticize those in power, especially Vice President Sara Duterte. These cartoons shown how incompetent and abusive the VP was of power. Aside from criticizing the VP, it also shows the

current situation of our government: how it is unfair to the people instead of enabling the Filipino people to see them as competent, fair, and caring.

Meanwhile, Figures 1 and 2 focus more on social issues than on political issues. Figure 1 illustrates the common experiences of women in public transportation. This problem has often been overlooked, but it is still a social issue that must be addressed.

**Table 2.** School and Education-related Editorial Cartoons

Cartoon	Words	Symbols	Interpretation
	<p><b>Mandatory ROTC for students:</b> This depicts how they are hardly pushing this bill on students without taking their opinions into account.</p>	<p><b>Student in silence:</b> This represents how students are not heard regarding their opinion about the bill.</p> <p><b>Policeman:</b> It represents higher authorities, particularly those who want to implement the mandatory ROTC program.</p>	<p>This cartoon editorial's visual representation shows the Philippines' current situation regarding the mandatory ROTC bill. This shows that the mandatory ROTC bill is not in the best interests of students or the country but rather a tool for the government to impose its agenda and silence opposition.</p>
		<p><b>Press Conference Microphones:</b> The way that the microphones are only positioned on the policeman shows how the press only listens to the policeman leaving the student silent, even if they are both at the table.</p>	

**Figure 11.** "You're getting on my nerves" (*Nakakabato na kayo!*) (February 1, 2023)



**Figure 12.** "Investigation of Solutions in the Record of Non-Concrete Responses." (*Ang Pagsiyasat ng Kalutasan sa Talaan ng 'di konkretong tugon*) (May 12, 2023)

**Lady with a mole on her face wearing a blue lounge suit** represents Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the house senior deputy speaker.

**K+10+2** - refers to the proposed education curriculum "K+10+2", the program aims to enhance the overall quality of education by implementing additional years of post-secondary or pre-university education before entering college or university, replacing the 2 years in senior high school.

The illustration clearly depicts the controversial proposal of House Senior Deputy Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo regarding the education curriculum, suggesting "K+10+2" as a new program replacing the current "K-12" system. The portrayal accurately shows Arroyo attempting to distinguish "K-12" by expanding the title to "K+10+2," while maintaining the same duration of attainment years. This proposal faced opposition from many Filipino parents due to concerns about the extended duration of schooling, the potential financial burden, and the delayed entry of their children into the workforce. Many perceive Arroyo's new proposal as essentially similar to K-12, with the only difference being the arrangement of educational stages. Moreover, this proposal became controversial as some questioned the effectiveness of the proposed changes in improving the overall quality of education.



**Figure 13.** Not FARE Enough: How Long Shall we have Hours of Grace Period (July 15, 2023)

**Student:** represents everyone experiencing hardships as a commuter.

**Raindrops** - refers to the hardship and the struggles that the experience.

**Shadow of People** represents commuters.

Based on the picture, it wants to convey to us that it is not only workers who are experiencing the country's terrible transportation system but also the students who are chasing and are troubled by the congestion and traffic that they experience just to get to their classes early. Perhaps there are modern forms of transportation that can be convenient whenever students are in a hurry, but not everyone can afford the cost. The traffic problem has been a problem for commuters for a long time, so it should not be overlooked but should be given a proper solution and system to encourage a better experience for commuters.

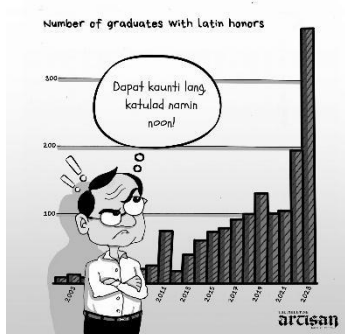


**Figure 14.** It's been raining in Manila, aren't you shivering? (*It's been raining in Manila, hindi ka ba nilalamig*) (July 25, 2023)

**Numbers-** represents the range of grades of the students.

**The boy with a raincoat** represents the students of TUP.

The image shows a boy going through the rain. The rain represents the low grades that the professors give to their students. Since it kept raining, the students had no choice but to adapt and use a raincoat to persevere despite the challenges.



**Figure 15.** Being cum laude is just normal nowadays (“*Normal na lang daman ang cum laude sa panahon ngayon eh*”) (August 2, 2023)

**Should be just a few, like us before** (*Dapat kaunti lang, katulad namin noon!*) - This text refers to the common saying of older people who are not used to the substantial change in the number of graduates with Latin honors from previous years.

**Old Man:** symbolizes the older generation criticizing the number of graduates with Latin honors. The head is slightly tilted, with a wrinkled forehead and raised eyebrows to express doubt and disapproval.

**Bar graph:** used to easily portray and emphasize the sudden rise of numbers or statistics.

This image suggests the desire of some people, including teachers, to remain conventional in the education system. Increasing numbers of graduates with Latin honors may indicate improvement in student learning. However, some people feel that the current curriculum is not challenging enough for students, which is why there is an increasing number of them with Latin honors. To their perception, having a higher number of graduates with Latin honors decreases the value of obtaining them.

School and education-related issues were also discussed in the editorial cartoons, as shown in Table 2. Figures 11 and 12 criticize the governments proposed solutions concerning the students. Figure 11 shows how the authorities proposed the Mandatory ROTC bill to establish order and discipline among youth. Some think that this is a good solution; however, the students' insights were never considered. Meanwhile, Figure 12 questions the purpose of the proposed proposal regarding K-12 and whether it really helps improve the quality of education.

In addition, Figures 13–15 discuss the problems and criticism that students experience. Figure 13 shows how students were overlooked as those who also suffered from the disorganized transportation system. Figure 14 shows how students experience low grades in college. It portrayed how normal it is to experience lower grades when students start to study in college and how they have already adapted to the situation. Lastly, Figure 15 discusses the criticism that students receive from older people as more of the graduates receive a latin honor. To other people, the value and exclusivity of latin honors have decreased over time, which is why many graduates receive them. Other factors or reasons, such as improvement in the quality of education and students' hard work, are dismissed from their perception.

## CONCLUSION

The cartoonists did not fail to understand the current issues and serve as the voice of many individuals. The cartoons of The Philippine Artisan did not have a large audience and were mostly visible to students and people related to the university. They still provided a great impact by educating students about current issues and opening their minds to what we are currently facing



within the university and society. In this paper, the researchers conclude that the cartoonists have clearly communicated their messages, their criticism of the current leadership, and their call for action.

The editorial cartoons of the Philippine Artisan played important roles in identifying and stimulating the public's feelings about current events. These cartoons served as political statements that assessed and commented on political developments in the country. The use of simpler symbols and words made the message easier to understand. It showed that it was not necessary to use complex words and long explanations to convey the current issues and sentiments faced by the people.

Following the analysis, it was concluded that the most common themes covered by the editorial cartoons were power abuse, corruption, incompetent leaders, a disorganized capitalist system, government inaction, careless solutions, and school-related problems. For the cartoons to capture the audience's attention, it is important to relate with the audience. As a school publication, they needed to relate to the students of the TUP. Hence, it is a good decision to make cartoons that can relate to the students' experiences and problems that should also be addressed.

Studying editorial cartoons through semiotic analysis enhances media literacy. It empowers individuals to critically assess visual messages in the media, recognize persuasive techniques, and understand how symbols and metaphors contribute to meaning. Citizens who lack the ability to interpret the symbols and visuals of cartoons may find it beneficial as it directly translates these symbols into meanings. By decoding the symbols in editorial cartoons, analysts can gain insights into the prevailing public opinion. Cartoons often reflect and respond to public sentiments, providing a visual representation of how certain issues are perceived by society.

#### **LIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

This paper used semiotic analysis to investigate the editorial cartoons retrieved through the official Facebook page of The Philippines Artisan, the official student gazette of the Technological University Philippines-Manila. This analysis is limited to fifteen (15) editorial cartoons from the publication dated February 2023 to October 2023. The findings of this study may not be generalizable to other contexts of editorial cartoon analysis.

Further research could expand on this study by using a textual analysis of the printed version of the student publication in other school papers. Future research could also explore the semiotic analysis of editorial cartoons of big newspaper publishers in the Philippines. Hence, future researchers could use a mixed-method approach to analyze editorial cartoons, including those from student and professional publications.

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