

Framing cancel culture on social media among Filipinos

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Abstract

This study employed a qualitative research design using content analysis guided by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine cancel culture on social media by exploring the recurring buzzwords, framing approaches, and comment patterns found in cancellation-related posts on Facebook and X. Specifically, it analyzed common expressions such as “cancel,” “call-out,” and “boycott,” and identified whether posts were framed through logical reasoning or ad hominem attacks. Using purposive sampling, the study selected 60 high-engagement posts based on the presence of cancellation-related language, direct references to individuals or groups, and active audience interaction through comments, reactions, or reposts. The posts were categorized into social media influencers, celebrities, and politically-related issues. Findings showed that influencer-related posts on Facebook commonly used the term “call-out,” while “boycott” and “stupid” appeared more frequently on X. Facebook posts were generally framed through logical reasoning, whereas X posts relied more on ad hominem attacks. Similar patterns emerged in celebrity-related posts, with Facebook promoting explanation-based discussions and X containing more insults, sarcasm, and personal attacks. Politically-related posts on both platforms were predominantly framed through ad hominem approaches. Comment patterns also differed, as Facebook users more often expressed logical arguments and agreement, while X users frequently engaged in ridicule, sarcasm, and insults. Facebook generally facilitates more discussion-oriented and explanation-based forms of cancellation, whereas X encourages faster, more emotional, and more personal forms of public condemnation. The study showed that cancel culture among Filipino social media users is shaped by language, framing strategies, and platform-specific dynamics.

Keywords: *boycott, cancellation-related posts, call out, social media*

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1. Introduction

The rapid development of social media has fundamentally transformed the way people communicate, express opinions, and engage with public issues. Platforms such as Facebook and X, formerly Twitter, have become integral to everyday life, enabling users to post content, comment on current events, and interact with others across geographical boundaries. While these platforms provide spaces for connection and expression, they have also given rise to new forms of online behavior, including cyberbullying, public shaming, and what has come to be known as cancel culture (Jaafar & Herna, 2024).

Cancel culture refers to the practice of publicly calling out, condemning, or withdrawing support from individuals or groups perceived to have violated moral, social, or cultural norms (Roldan et al., 2024; Adeyemi, 2025; Norris, 2021). In digital spaces, cancellation is enacted primarily through language captions, posts, hashtags, and comment exchanges that frame individuals as deserving of public disapproval (Yanti, 2024; Zembylas, 2024; Wong, 2022). Rather than occurring through formal mechanisms of accountability, cancel culture unfolds through participatory and highly visible discourse among social media users (Demsar et al., 2023; Ng, 2020; Picarella, 2024; Traversa et al., 2023).

In the Philippine context, cancel culture has become increasingly evident as Filipinos remain among the most active social media users globally. Social media platforms serve not only as spaces for entertainment and socialization but also as arenas for political discussion, moral judgment, and cultural negotiation (Exala et al., 2023). As a result, controversies involving celebrities, influencers, political figures, and even ordinary individuals are frequently subjected to public scrutiny and collective judgment online. Local experiences of cancel culture suggest that this phenomenon is not merely a replication of Western digital trends but is shaped by Filipino cultural values, social norms, and linguistic practices. Jusay et al. (2022) note that Filipino cancel culture often reflects communal forms of moral evaluation, where shame, accountability, and public opinion intersect. These dynamics highlight the importance of examining cancel culture within its specific socio-cultural context rather than treating it as a universal digital behavior.

Language plays a central role in how cancel culture is initiated and sustained (Rahman, 2024). Social media users frequently rely on recurrent buzzwords such as call-out, boycott, and cancel to signal moral disapproval and invite collective participation. These terms function as shorthand expressions that frame posts as acts of cancellation and legitimize public

condemnation (Yanti, 2024). Despite their frequent use, there remains limited scholarly work examining how these words operate discursively in actual social media content.

Beyond individual terms, the way cancel culture is framed influences how audiences interpret and respond to controversies. Framing involves emphasizing certain aspects of an issue while downplaying others, shaping moral evaluations and proposed responses (Palomares, 2022). Some cancellation posts rely on logical reasoning and contextual explanation, while others employ ad hominem attacks that focus on personal character. These framing choices affect the tone, direction, and intensity of online discourse. Comment sections further amplify cancel culture by providing spaces where users reinforce, contest, or escalate cancellation narratives. Rather than functioning as neutral responses, comments actively contribute to meaning-making by expressing agreement, ridicule, outrage, or moral alignment. Jusay et al. (2022) emphasize that the interaction between posts and comments plays a crucial role in normalizing cancel culture as a collective practice.

Platform affordances also shape how cancel culture unfolds. Facebook's structure encourages extended discussion through comments and reactions, often allowing users to elaborate on justifications or disagreements. X, by contrast, prioritizes brevity and reposting, enabling emotionally charged content to spread rapidly with minimal explanation (Exala et al., 2023). These differences suggest that cancel culture may be framed and propagated differently across platforms.

Empirical research further indicates that participation in cancel culture is influenced by social norms and perceived expectations. Roldan et al. (2024) found that among Filipino Generation Z users, attitudes toward cancel culture and perceived social pressure significantly predict engagement in canceling behaviors. This finding underscores the social and collective nature of cancellation, where individuals are influenced by group dynamics rather than acting in isolation. Moral outrage has also been identified as a key emotional driver of cancel culture. Höglund (2025) argues that expressions of outrage function as moral performances that signal ethical alignment and group belonging. In online spaces, such expressions are often condensed into short textual forms, making them easily replicated and amplified across platforms.

Cancel culture becomes particularly visible when it involves public figures such as influencers, celebrities, and political actors. These individuals are often treated as symbolic representations of broader moral or political issues, intensifying public reactions and expectations of accountability (UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies [UP

CIDS], 2023). Politically related cancellations, in particular, reflect wider patterns of polarization within Philippine society.

Despite growing scholarly attention to cancel culture, existing studies in the Philippine context have largely focused on perceptions, psychological effects, or participation predictors (Jusay et al., 2022; Roldan et al., 2024). There remains a notable gap in research that systematically examines how cancel culture is constructed at the content level, particularly through the language and framing of social media posts and comments. This gap is significant because cancel culture lacks clear boundaries and fixed criteria, making it difficult to distinguish between accountability, criticism, and harmful online shaming. Rather than focusing on individual motivations or psychological explanations, there is a need to examine the underlying communication processes through which cancel culture is produced and sustained.

Grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study approaches cancel culture as a discursive practice embedded in social and digital contexts. CDA allows for an examination of how language reflects and reproduces power relations, moral authority, and social norms in online spaces (Lovitos, 2025; Rogers et al., 2005). Through this lens, cancel culture can be understood as a form of social regulation enacted through everyday digital communication.

Accordingly, this study examines cancel culture on Facebook and X by analyzing recurrent buzzwords, framing approaches, and comment-section codes used by Filipino social media users. Specifically, it seeks to identify the language used in canceling posts, examine how cancellations are framed and reinforced through comments, and determine the patterns most likely to propagate cancel culture across platforms. By focusing on actual social media content and interaction, this research contributes to communication scholarship by providing empirical insight into how cancel culture operates within the Philippine digital landscape. Understanding these patterns is essential for promoting more critical, responsible, and constructive forms of online engagement in an increasingly mediated public sphere.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on CDA as its primary theoretical framework, complemented by concepts from framing theory. CDA views language as a form of social practice through

which power relations, ideologies, and social norms are produced and reproduced (Van Dijk, 2006). This perspective is particularly relevant to the study of cancel culture, as cancellation is enacted primarily through discourse, specifically through posts, captions, and comment interactions on social media platforms. It emphasizes that discourse is never neutral. According to Van Dijk (2006), everyday language use plays a significant role in shaping shared knowledge and social control, often in subtle and normalized ways. In online environments, cancel culture operates through seemingly ordinary expressions of opinion, moral judgment, and criticism, which collectively acquire power through repetition and public visibility.

Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) further argue that discourse must be analyzed within its broader social and cultural context. Applying this view to cancel culture highlights how online shaming and moral condemnation are influenced by cultural values, platform norms, and collective expectations. In the Philippine context, these dynamics are shaped by strong communal orientations and high levels of social media engagement (Exala et al., 2023).

Framing theory strengthens CDA by explaining how particular meanings are emphasized in discourse. Entman (1993) defines framing as the selection and salience of certain aspects of reality to promote specific interpretations and evaluations. In cancel culture discourse, framing determines how an issue is presented, who is blamed, and what forms of response are encouraged. This is evident in how social media users construct narratives of wrongdoing and accountability. Studies on cancel culture highlight the importance of framing in shaping audience reactions. Palomares (2022) found that canceling posts often rely either on logical explanations of perceived wrongdoing or on personal attacks that target character rather than actions. These framing approaches influence whether discourse remains deliberative or escalates into hostility, making them central to understanding cancellation dynamics.

CDA also focuses on power relations embedded in discourse. Jusay et al. (2022) demonstrate that cancel culture can disproportionately affect individuals with limited social capital, as public condemnation often leads to social exclusion and emotional distress. This supports the CDA view that discourse can reinforce inequality, even when framed as collective accountability. The concept of *ad hominem* discourse is particularly relevant to this study. Walton (1998) explains that *ad hominem* arguments shift attention from issues to personal character, functioning as a powerful tool for delegitimization. In cancel culture, *ad hominem*

framing often dominates comment sections, intensifying moral judgment and accelerating the spread of cancellation narratives.

Everyday reasoning further explains how cancel culture discourse operates. Bronkhorst et al. (2020) distinguish everyday reasoning from formal logic, noting that online discourse frequently relies on emotional appeal and simplification. This form of reasoning aligns with the rapid, reactive nature of social media interactions, where emotionally framed content gains more engagement than carefully reasoned arguments.

Cancel culture is also shaped by collective norms and shared moral expectations. Roldan et al. (2024) found that participation in cancel culture among Filipino users is influenced by perceived social pressure and moral alignment. This supports the CDA view that discourse contributes to the formation of collective consciousness and guides acceptable behavior within digital communities.

2.2. Overview of Cancel Culture

Cancel culture has gained prominence as a contemporary social phenomenon characterized by the public withdrawal of support from individuals or groups perceived to have violated moral, social, or cultural norms. Scholars describe cancel culture as a collective response enacted primarily through public criticism, shaming, and social exclusion, often facilitated by digital communication platforms (Yanti, 2024). Unlike formal mechanisms of accountability, cancel culture is informal, decentralized, and largely driven by public opinion expressed through everyday language.

The concept of cancel culture is closely related to call-out culture, online shaming, and cyberbullying. Palomares (2022) explains that call-out culture involves publicly identifying and condemning perceived wrongdoing, with the intention of holding individuals accountable. However, as these practices gain visibility and momentum online, they may shift from critique to punishment, raising concerns about fairness, proportionality, and due process.

Recent studies emphasize that cancel culture should not be understood solely as an outcome of individual behavior but as a socially embedded practice shaped by group norms and shared values (Demsar et al., 2023; Traversa et al., 2023). Yanti (2024) argues that cancellation is sustained through collective participation, where users align themselves with dominant moral frames. This collective dimension distinguishes cancel culture from isolated acts of online aggression and positions it as a form of social regulation.

In the Philippine context, cancel culture reflects local cultural values related to community, reputation, and moral judgment. Jusay et al. (2022) note that Filipino users often experience cancellation as deeply personal and socially consequential, affecting not only online presence but also offline relationships. Cancel culture intersects with cultural expectations of accountability and social harmony (Exala et al., 2023; Picarella, 2024).

2.3. Cancel Culture in Digital Environments

Digital environments play a crucial role in enabling and intensifying cancel culture. Social media platforms provide users with tools to create, share, and amplify content, which allows cancellation narratives to reach large audiences rapidly. Exala et al. (2023) highlight that Facebook and X are among the most widely used platforms in the Philippines, making them central spaces for public discourse and moral evaluation.

Platform affordances significantly influence how cancel culture is expressed. Facebook encourages extended interaction through comments and reactions to allow users to elaborate on arguments or express agreement and dissent. X, on the other hand, emphasizes brevity and reposting, which facilitates the rapid spread of emotionally charged content (Exala et al., 2023). These structural differences shape how cancellation discourse is framed and sustained. Language is also a key mechanism through which cancel culture operates in digital spaces. Recurrent buzzwords such as call-out, boycott, and cancel function as linguistic markers that frame posts as acts of moral judgment (Yanti, 2024). The repeated use of these terms enables users to quickly recognize cancellation narratives and participate in them, contributing to their visibility and spread.

Comment sections further amplify cancel culture by serving as interactive sites where meaning is negotiated and reinforced. Jusay et al. (2022) emphasize that comments are not merely reactions but active discursive contributions that reproduce dominant frames through agreement, ridicule, or condemnation. The interaction between original posts and comments transforms cancellation into a collective communicative process.

2.4. Critical Discourse Analysis and Power Relations in Online Shaming

The CDA provides a theoretical framework for examining cancel culture as a discursive practice embedded in power relations. It views language as a form of social action that both reflects and shapes social structures, making it particularly suited to analyzing online shaming

and moral judgment. Through CDA, cancel culture can be understood as a process through which power, authority, and legitimacy are negotiated in digital spaces.

Studies applying discourse-oriented approaches emphasize that language used in cancellation often constructs binaries of right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable. For example, Palomares (2022) observed that cancellation posts frequently rely on framing strategies that either justify condemnation through logical reasoning or delegitimize targets through ad hominem attacks. These strategies influence how audiences perceive responsibility and guilt. Lovitos (2025) demonstrates the relevance of CDA in the Philippine context by analyzing political hashtags and their ideological implications. His findings show how repeated language patterns shape public perception and reinforce dominant narratives. This approach is applicable to cancel culture, where repeated buzzwords and framing devices function similarly to hashtags in constructing collective meaning.

CDA also highlights how cancel culture can reproduce unequal power relations. Although cancellation is often framed as a democratic form of accountability, Jusay et al. (2022) argue that it may disproportionately harm individuals with less social capital, while those with greater visibility or resources may better withstand or redirect public condemnation. This raises ethical questions about who holds power in digital moral judgment.

2.5. Cancel Culture, Public Figures, and Platform-Specific Dynamics

Cancel culture is particularly visible when it involves public figures such as influencers, celebrities, and political actors. These individuals often serve as symbolic representations of broader social or moral issues, and the frequent targets of public scrutiny. The UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (2023) notes that cancellations involving public figures tend to escalate quickly due to their visibility and perceived influence. Influencers and celebrities occupy ambiguous positions between private individuals and public personas. Their actions are often interpreted as reflections of cultural norms or values, which intensifies public reactions when controversies arise. Palomares (2022) highlights that cancellations targeting public figures often involve direct naming and personal critique, reinforcing their symbolic role in public discourse.

Politically related cancel culture reflects broader patterns of polarization within Philippine society. According to UP CIDS (2023), online callouts and cancellations intersect with political identity and voter behavior, potentially reinforcing divisions rather than

encouraging constructive dialogue. In such contexts, cancel culture functions as a tool for ideological positioning and exclusion. Platform-specific dynamics further shape how cancellations involving public figures propagate. Facebook tends to facilitate extended discussion and debate through comment sections, while X enables rapid amplification through reposting and trending mechanisms (Exala et al., 2023). These differences suggest that cancel culture spreads most effectively when emotionally charged framing aligns with platform affordances that favor visibility.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The study employed a descriptive qualitative research design using qualitative content analysis. This design was deemed appropriate as the research aimed to explore patterns of language use, framing strategies, and engagement practices in social media discourse rather than to test causal relationships or measure variables quantitatively. Anchored in CDA, the study examined how cancel culture is constructed through language and interaction within specific social and digital contexts. This approach allowed for an in-depth examination of captions and comment sections to identify recurring buzzwords, framing approaches, and discursive patterns that contribute to the propagation of cancel culture.

3.2. Data Corpus

The corpus of the study consisted of public social media posts and comments made by Filipino users on Facebook and X. Rather than individual respondents, the unit of analysis was the social media content itself, including posts and their most engaging comments. A purposive sampling technique was used to select posts that explicitly involved the act of canceling an individual or group.

A total of 60 posts were analyzed, categorized into three groups: social media influencers, celebrities, and politically related cancellations. For each category, 20 posts were selected, consisting of 10 Facebook posts and 10 X posts. All selected posts were publicly accessible, created by Filipino users, and involved Filipino individuals as the subjects of cancellation. The sample size was considered appropriate for qualitative analysis, as it allowed for detailed examination of discourse patterns across platforms and categories.

3.3. Instrumentation and Data Gathering Process

The primary instrument used in the study was a researcher-developed content analysis guide. This guide was used to systematically record and analyze key elements of each post, including: the topic or caption of the post, the year posted, recurrent buzzwords used, whether the post directly or indirectly named the individual being canceled, the framing approach employed (logical reasoning, ad hominem, or mixed), engagement indicators (reactions, comments, shares, or reposts), and the dominant codes present in the most engaging comment.

Data were gathered from Facebook and X posts dated between 2017 and 2024. Posts were selected based on visibility and engagement, with the criterion that the most engaging comment must have at least 50 reactions or replies. For each post, the comment with the highest level of engagement was identified and analyzed. All data were manually collected and organized into analytical tables for systematic interpretation.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative content analysis, informed by principles of CDA. The researchers examined captions and comments to identify recurring buzzwords, framing approaches, and interactional codes. Posts were coded based on whether they employed logical reasoning or ad hominem framing, and whether the naming of individuals was direct or indirect. Patterns were then compared across platforms and categories to determine similarities and differences in how cancel culture is framed and propagated. The analysis focused on how language choices, engagement practices, and platform affordances interact to amplify cancellation discourse. Through iterative reading and comparison, dominant patterns were identified and interpreted in relation to the study's objectives.

3.5. Research Ethics

This study utilized publicly accessible social media content from Facebook and X. As the data analyzed were publicly available, obtaining informed consent from individual users was not feasible. Nevertheless, ethical standards in social research were upheld. All identifying information, including usernames, profile pictures, and direct links, was removed or anonymized to protect user privacy.

The data were presented in a manner that prevents the identification of individuals involved in the posts and comments. The study focused solely on discourse patterns rather than on evaluating or targeting specific individuals, ensuring that the research did not contribute to further harm or stigmatization.

4. Findings

This section presents the findings of the study according to the three categories analyzed: social media influencers, celebrities, and politically related cancellations. For each category, a table summarizes platform-based differences in buzzwords, framing approaches, comment codes, and engagement patterns, followed by a discussion of the results.

Table 1

Cancel culture discourse patterns in social media influencer related posts

Category	Facebook	X
Most Recurrent Buzzwords	Call-out	Boycott; Stupid
Logical Reasoning (Direct Naming)	6	1
Ad Hominem (Direct Naming)	4	9
Dominant Framing Approach in Posts	Logical reasoning; Direct naming	Ad hominem; Direct naming
Dominant Codes in Most Engaging Comments	Logical attacks; Agreement	Verbal ridicule
Primary Mode of Engagement	Commenting	Reposting

Note: Values under logical reasoning and ad hominem indicate the number of posts (out of 10 per platform) using each framing approach.

Table 1 shows a clear platform-based divergence in how influencer-related cancel culture is framed. On Facebook, logical reasoning with direct naming dominates, with 6 out of 10 posts employing this approach. This suggests that Filipino users on Facebook tend to justify influencer cancellations through explanation, moral reasoning, or contextual arguments. The dominance of logical attacks and expressions of agreement in the comment sections further indicates deliberative participation, where users reinforce or expand the original rationale. In contrast, X displays an inverse pattern. Ad hominem framing with direct naming is used in 9 out of 10 tweets, while logical reasoning appears only once. This numerical imbalance highlights X's preference for emotionally charged and confrontational discourse. The

prevalence of verbal ridicule in the most engaging comments, combined with reposting as the primary mode of engagement, indicates that influencer-related cancellations on X propagate mainly through amplification rather than discussion.

Table 2

Cancel culture discourse patterns in celebrity related posts

Category	Facebook	X
Most Recurrent Buzzwords	Call-out	Call-out
Logical Reasoning (Direct Naming)	9	4
Ad Hominem (Direct Naming)	1	6
Dominant Framing Approach in Posts	Logical reasoning; Direct naming	Ad hominem; Direct naming
Dominant Codes in Most Engaging Comments	Logical attacks	Insults; Sarcasm
Primary Mode of Engagement	Commenting	Reposting

Note: Values represent the frequency of framing approaches observed per platform within the celebrity category.

As shown in Table 2, celebrity-related cancellations demonstrate greater use of logical reasoning on Facebook, with 9 out of 10 posts framed through explanation and justification. This indicates that Facebook users tend to present celebrity cancellations as accountability-driven issues that require rational evaluation. Comment sections support this framing by favoring logical critiques rather than overt hostility. On X, however, the framing becomes more polarized. While 4 tweets employ logical reasoning, 6 tweets rely on ad hominem framing. This shift reflects a stronger tendency toward emotional expression and personal attacks when discussing celebrities on X. The dominance of insults and sarcasm in comments, coupled with reposting as the primary engagement mode, suggests that cancellation narratives involving celebrities are more performative and rapidly disseminated on X.

Table 3 reveals that politically related cancellations exhibit the highest level of discursive intensity among all categories. On both Facebook and X, 9 out of 10 posts rely on ad hominem framing with direct naming, while logical reasoning is nearly absent. This pattern indicates that political cancel culture among Filipino users is highly polarized and emotionally driven, with little emphasis on deliberative argumentation. Although Facebook allows for more varied comment codes, including a mix of sarcasm, insults, and occasional logical attacks, X discourse remains more uniform, dominated by verbal ridicule. The consistent reliance on

reposting on X facilitates rapid diffusion of politically charged cancellation narratives, reinforcing polarization and collective condemnation.

Table 3

Cancel culture discourse patterns in politically related posts

Category	Facebook	X
Most Recurrent Buzzwords	Boycott	Cancel
Logical Reasoning (Direct Naming)	1	1
Ad Hominem (Direct Naming)	9	9
Dominant Framing Approach in Posts	Ad hominem; Direct naming	Ad hominem; Direct naming
Dominant Codes in Most Engaging Comments	Sarcasm; Insults; Logical attacks	Verbal ridicule
Primary Mode of Engagement	Commenting	Reposting

Note: Political cancellation posts show the strongest dominance of ad hominem framing across both platforms.

The results demonstrate that logical reasoning is more prevalent on Facebook in non-political cancellations, while ad hominem framing dominates X across all categories. Political cancellations, however, override platform differences, exhibiting emotionally charged framing regardless of platform. These findings underscore how platform affordances and topic sensitivity interact to shape the propagation of cancel culture among Filipino social media users.

5. Discussion

5.1. Recurrent Buzzwords Used in Canceling Posts on Facebook and X

The findings indicate that cancel culture among Filipino social media users is strongly signaled through the repeated use of specific buzzwords in posts and captions. On Facebook, terms such as boycott and related moralizing expressions were found to recur frequently, while X posts more commonly employed the term cancel and its variants. These buzzwords function as discursive markers that immediately frame a post as an act of cancellation and invite collective participation.

This pattern supports Yanti's (2024) assertion that cancel culture operates through recognizable linguistic cues that allow users to quickly interpret the intent of a message. The repetition of buzzwords simplifies complex issues into morally charged labels, enabling rapid

alignment or opposition. In this sense, buzzwords serve not only as descriptive terms but as mobilizing tools that activate collective judgment.

The platform-specific differences observed in the findings may be attributed to structural affordances. Facebook's longer post format allows for elaboration and justification, making boycott a suitable term that implies sustained collective action. X's character limit and reposting mechanisms, on the other hand, favor concise and emotionally charged expressions such as cancel, which can be easily replicated and amplified (Exala et al., 2023).

Consistent with the findings of Jusay et al. (2022), the use of buzzwords contributes to the normalization of cancel culture by making moral condemnation routine and easily recognizable. Over time, repeated exposure to such terms may desensitize users to the gravity of public shaming, reinforcing cancel culture as a default response to controversy rather than a deliberative process.

5.2. Framing Approaches and Comment Codes in Facebook and X

The analysis of framing approaches reveals that cancel culture posts predominantly rely on direct naming combined with either logical reasoning or ad hominem framing, with notable differences across platforms. Facebook posts more frequently employed logical reasoning alongside direct naming, while X posts were more inclined toward ad hominem framing with minimal contextual explanation. This finding aligns with Palomares (2022), who observed that cancellation discourse often oscillates between rational justification and character-based attacks. Logical reasoning frames cancellation as justified and principled, while ad hominem framing delegitimizes targets by focusing on personal traits rather than actions. The prevalence of ad hominem framing on X suggests that speed and virality may favor emotionally charged discourse over careful argumentation.

The comment sections further reinforce these framing strategies. On Facebook, the dominant codes in the most engaging comments included logical attacks and expressions of agreement, indicating a continuation of the rational framing initiated in the original post. In contrast, X comments were dominated by verbal ridicule and sarcastic remarks, which intensified moral condemnation while discouraging counter-discourse.

From a CDA perspective, these patterns illustrate how power is enacted through language. As Van Dijk (2006) argues, discourse shapes who is granted legitimacy and who is silenced. Ad hominem comments function as mechanisms of exclusion, positioning targets as

morally unworthy of defense. Meanwhile, agreement-based comments consolidate group consensus, transforming individual judgments into collective moral authority. Lovitos' (2025) analysis of political hashtags in the Philippines further supports this interpretation, demonstrating how repeated linguistic patterns reinforce dominant narratives. In cancel culture discourse, similar repetition occurs through comment codes that validate the framing of the original post, thereby sustaining cancellation narratives across interactions.

5.3. Patterns That Most Likely Propagate Cancel Culture on Facebook and X

The findings showed that cancel culture is most likely to propagate when direct naming, emotionally charged framing, and platform-aligned engagement modes converge. On Facebook, cancellation spreads through extensive commenting and discussion, while on X, reposting and amplification drive visibility. These patterns indicate that propagation is not solely dependent on the content of the post but on how discourse aligns with platform affordances.

Roldan et al. (2024) found that participation in cancel culture among Filipino users is influenced by perceived social norms and expectations. The present findings extend this insight by showing how engagement patterns, such as agreement-heavy comment threads or mass reposting, signal social approval and encourage further participation. As users observe high engagement, they may perceive cancellation as socially endorsed, increasing the likelihood of joining the discourse.

The dominance of ad hominem framing in rapidly propagating cancellations highlights the role of emotional appeal. Bronkhorst et al. (2020) argue that everyday reasoning, which prioritizes emotion and simplification over formal logic, is more persuasive in informal contexts. Social media platforms, particularly X, create conditions where emotionally charged content gains disproportionate attention, accelerating cancel culture dynamics.

From a CDA standpoint, these propagation patterns reveal how cancel culture operates as a form of social control. While framed as collective accountability, cancellation often privileges dominant voices and marginalizes alternative perspectives (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). Individuals with greater visibility or social capital may survive cancellation, whereas less powerful users experience more lasting consequences (Jusay et al., 2022).

Cancel culture among Filipino social media users is not random or spontaneous. Instead, it follows identifiable discursive patterns shaped by buzzwords, framing strategies,

comment codes, and platform affordances. These patterns explain how cancellation gains momentum and become normalized within digital communities.

5. Conclusion

This study examined how cancel culture is articulated and sustained on Facebook and X by Filipino social media users, focusing on recurrent language, framing strategies, and engagement patterns. By analyzing captions and comment sections through a critical discourse lens, the research shows that cancel culture in the Philippine context is not a spontaneous or isolated reaction but a patterned communicative practice shaped by language choices and platform norms.

One of the clearest findings of the study is the consistent use of shared buzzwords such as call-out, boycott, and cancel. These terms function as immediate signals of moral judgment and play a key role in mobilizing collective participation. Their repeated use across categories suggests that Filipino users draw from a common discursive repertoire when engaging in cancellation, allowing posts to be quickly recognized and amplified within social media spaces.

The study also found notable differences in how cancel culture is framed across platforms. Facebook posts, particularly those involving influencers and celebrities, more frequently relied on logical reasoning with direct naming, indicating an effort to justify cancellation through explanation and moral argument. X, on the other hand, showed a stronger tendency toward ad hominem framing with direct naming across all categories. This contrast highlights how platform affordances shape discourse, with Facebook enabling extended discussion and X encouraging more immediate, emotionally driven expressions of condemnation.

Among the findings, the dominance of ad hominem framing in politically related cancellations is particularly striking. In these cases, both platforms exhibited a strong reliance on personal attacks and emotionally charged language, with limited use of rational argumentation. This pattern reflects the highly polarized nature of political discourse in the Philippines, where cancel culture often functions less as a space for deliberation and more as a means of asserting group identity and moral positioning.

The study further demonstrates that cancel culture is most likely to propagate when ad hominem framing aligns with engagement practices that favor amplification. On X, reposting allows cancellation narratives to spread rapidly with minimal commentary, while on Facebook,

comment sections serve as spaces where cancellation frames are reinforced and intensified. These patterns suggest that the spread of cancel culture depends not only on what is said, but also on how platform-specific interaction mechanisms facilitate repetition and visibility.

This study has several limitations. The analysis was limited to publicly accessible posts on Facebook and X and focused on selected categories within a specific period. The qualitative approach and sample size limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research may build on this work by including other platforms such as TikTok or Instagram, expanding the dataset, or combining discourse analysis with audience-based methods to better understand how users interpret and respond to cancel culture.

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AI Declaration

The authors declare the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing this paper. In particular, the author used ChatGPT in translating into English and phrasing the introduction, literature review, discussion of results, and conclusions, which were drafted using a mix of English and Tagalog, and compiling bibliography into APA 7 format. The authors take full responsibility in ensuring proper review and editing of contents generated using AI.

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