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ARGUMENTATIVE ATTITUDE: A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE IN DIALOGUE WITH PHILOSOPHY

ACTITUD ARGUMENTATIVA: UNA PERSPECTIVA PSICOLÓGICA EN DIÁLOGO CON LA FILOSOFÍA

AUTORA

MERCEDES ARCE RODRÍGUEZ
UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE LA CIUDAD DE MÉXICO (UACM)
MÉXICO

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Argumentative Attitude: A Psychological Perspective in Dialogue with Philosophy

Actitud Argumentativa: Una Perspectiva Psicológica en Diálogo con la Filosofía

Mercedes Arce Rodríguez
arcem5124@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6391-5303
Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México (UACM)
México

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RESUMEN

Este estudio examina cómo los fenómenos psicológicos y el contexto socioeconómico influyen en la construcción argumentativa de los estudiantes universitarios, abordando una dimensión a menudo ignorada en las conceptualizaciones filosóficas tradicionales de la argumentación. Basada en la Psicología Social, la investigación establece un diálogo entre la filosofía y la observación empírica al examinar el papel de las representaciones sociales (Moscovici, 1979) y las actitudes (Allport, 1935), abarcando factores cognitivos, afectivos y conativos en la formación de argumentos dentro del discurso político.Utilizando la teoría de la argumentación de Van Eemeren et al. (2022) como marco para el discurso verbal, social y racional, los hallazgos de la investigación revelan que las realidades socioeconómicas desfavorecidas y las experiencias vividas condicionan fuertemente las capacidades reflexivas y analíticas de los estudiantes. En lugar de construir argumentos estructurados y racionales, los estudiantes frecuentemente recurren a reacciones inmediatas basadas en la experiencia para interactuar con la realidad social. Este estudio en curso subraya la necesidad de integrar las representaciones sociales, las actitudes y los determinantes contextuales en el estudio y la pedagogía de la comunicación y la argumentación política.

Palabras clave: argumentación, representaciones sociales, actitudes, discurso político, psicología social

ABSTRACT

This study examines how psychological phenomena and socioeconomic context shape argumentative construction among university students, addressing a dimension often overlooked in traditional philosophical conceptualizations of argumentation. Grounded in Social Psychology, the research opens a dialogue between philosophy and empirical observation by examining the role of social representations (Moscovici, 1979) and attitudes (Allport, 1935), including cognitive, affective, and conative factors that shape argument formation in political discourse. Utilizing Van Eemeren et al. s' (2022) argumentation theory as a framework for verbal, social and rational discourse, the findings reveal that lower socioeconomic realities and lived experiences strongly condition students' reflective and analytical capacities. Rather than constructing structured, rational arguments, students frequently rely on immediate experiential reactions to engage with social reality. This study highlights the need to integrate social representations, attitudes, and contextual determinants into the study and pedagogy of political communication and argumentation.

Keywords: argumentation, social representation, attitudes, political discourse, social psychology

INTRODUCTION

This first-stage study is based on realities that I, the author, observed in the communities where the research was conducted. It is crucial to acknowledge the significant impact of the low income of the people interviewed at the end of the study.

This research aims to engage in a conversation with philosophy about the importance of certain psychological phenomena in the process of argumentative construction, which, in my view, philosophers do not consider, at least openly, in their conceptualization of argumentation.

Primarily, this study will briefly present key Social Psychology concepts to establish a dialogue with Philosophy, grounded in the concept of Argumentation and explicitly considering the role attitudes play across all their dimensions.

Social representations (Moscovici, 1979) are a key concept for understanding behavior and communication between individuals, with Attitude as a visible, factual, and motivational dimension in forming what this author called "the universe of opinion."

Social representations express common sense, whose principle is everyday communication, allowing anyone to integrate into the communicative exchange of social groups and participate in and contribute to that medium (Mora, 2002). In this context, individuals and groups use language that reflects their distinctive traits.

Attitudes, on the other hand, are conceptualized as a mental and impulsive situation, existing given experiences, which actively allows an individual to respond to all kinds of objects and situations (Allport, 1935), determine actions, sometimes not visible, but which include cognitive, affective, and conative factors that stimulate motivations and influence perceptions and thinking.

People's attitudes are an integral part of their identities, as they are learned over time and become permanent, influencing their affective responses to the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of a specific object or situation.

In this research, attitudes are presented as part of social representations in these communities, and their influence on their arguments, particularly in the field of political ideas, using the concept of argumentation theory as a verbal, social, and rational narrative that convinces others

of their viewpoints through the provision of reasons (See Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Henkemans, 2002).

Second, I will present the results of the first stage of my research, carried out as part of the work I will continue in the second semester of 2026-II.

This study is important because it considers my students' socioeconomic situation and its impact on how they construct their arguments. Some academics may see this as a simple question, but day by day we can observe students' difficulties with reflection and analysis of the causes of different issues, and their approximations when they should respond to reality. Most students cannot construct a reasonable argument; instead, their reactions stem from life experiences, not conscious analysis.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling description

Recruitment and sample:

Inclusion: All students enrolled in the 6th-semester Political Communication course at the Academy of Communication and Culture, the course I am teaching.

Type of sample: Census of available class sections.

Recruitment Procedure: Data collection took place during a scheduled class session and was framed as an optional class activity that also served as a pilot study.

Voluntary Research Participation: Participation in the research component (data contribution) was strictly voluntary. The students were informed that it would serve as an example of a class activity I would use in the research I am conducting and that it was a pilot study.

No Impact on Grades: The student's decision to participate or not affected their course grades or academic standing. The study was completely anonymous.

Informed Consent: Explicitly, the students were informed that:

- This is a class activity and a pilot research study.

- They can complete the activity or not participate and decline consent for their data to be used in the congress and article.

All the students agreed to participate in the experience. They consented to include the results in my presentation at the V Ibero-American Congress of Argumentation (ECA), celebrated in Warsaw (22,23,24 October 2025), and to write an article about the experience.

Context

The pilot study was conducted in regular class sessions with three groups of students who received classes of political communication, organizational communication, and communication planning from the applicable axis, who are students in the Academy of Communication and Culture of the Autonomous University of Mexico City (UACM), from the San Lorenzo Tezonco and Historic Center headquarters (Monday, September 4th (one group), Wednesday, September 6 (two groups)

Participants

At UACM, the average age of students in the 6th semester is higher than at other universities, owing to the university's philosophy and the profile of its students.

In this study, participants' average age is 25-27 years. 65% of the participating students have an average income of less than 5,000 Mexican pesos, which classifies them as low-income. Most of them come from the areas surrounding the headquarters, mainly from the Iztapalapa and Tláhuac boroughs, which are considered working-class.

The 6th-semester students are in the final phase of their degree program, with three more semesters to complete.

Sample Size: 26 students on Monday and 41 on Wednesday, for a total of 67.

Demographic Data: 10 males and 14 females on Monday, and 13 males and 18 females on Wednesday, for a total of 23 males and 32 females.

Data Collection Logistics

On Monday, September 4, 2025, at the end of the class, the students were informed as a whole group that they would see a video (https://www.instagram.com/reel/DNMrmf6snn9/?igsh=MTNtZjVsd3llcTZ6dA) about an article from the New York Times, commented on by a female journalist, who explains that AI is a new instrument of the world's upper class, intended to discriminate against poor people. Following, they received the information that reducing cell phone use is important and were asked whether they agree with the journalist's argument and whether they could support their answer. The group was alone in the classroom.

At the end of class on Wednesday, September 6, 2025, the students were shown a video presentation on the impact of AI without any comments and were asked only whether they agreed with the journalist's view. The professor was out of the classroom.

Questionnaire with two items, applied to both groups:

Do you agree with the arguments of the journalist commentator?

Yes___

No____

Write a summary of your opinions about the message of the video.

DEVELOPMENT

Social psychology concepts

Attitudes, characteristics

Classical theories of attitude formation are classified into two fundamental trends: classical conditioning and instrumental conditioning.

First, attitudes result from associating a conditioned stimulus with an unconditioned one. To illustrate this, authors such as Staats and Staats (1958) conducted an experimental study in which they presented a group of students with names of different nationalities, accompanied

by either positive or negative valence. The results showed that students evaluated countries considered good as having favorable characteristics. Other authors reject this explanation, arguing that it does not expand on explanations of responses related to the rest of the associations (Ubillo, Mayordomo, Páez).

Instrumental conditioning indicates that a subject's response can reinforce previous behavior. For example, Verplanck (1955) found that verbal reinforcement through distinct identification of opinions led to more exposures when they were positively reinforced.

However, this type of conditioning is also criticized for not explaining the processes underlying these manifestations. Authors such as Cialdini & Insko (1969, in Ubillo, Mayordomo, Páez, p. 2) suggest that the functions of verbal reinforcement include, on the one hand, indicating the interviewer's Attitude and, on the other, the relationship between the interviewee and their interviewer.

It is essential to distinguish attitudes from related concepts such as values, opinions, beliefs, and habits. Therefore, remember that attitudes are actions directly related to a specific object or situation, rather than general constructs such as values, opinions, and beliefs.

- ¿What is the importance of understanding attitudes from psychology and their relationship with argumentation?

Attitudes are vital because they serve different functions that meet people's psychological needs, which are essential for their social performance.

Different authors (Allport, Rosenberg, and Hovland; Katz; Petty and Cacioppo; Fishbein and Ajzen, among others) agree on defining five main functions of attitudes. The functions include cognitive, instrumental, ego-defensive, value-expressive, and social adaptation.

Cognitive function refers to the capacity it gives human beings to understand social order, comprehend the functioning of the world, and form an image of the complexity of the concrete reality they live in, as well as the one the world lives in.

The instrumental function enables individuals to distinguish between positive and negative outcomes, helping them aspire to goals that advance their best interests.

The ego-defensive results mechanism is crucial for controlling emotions, avoiding conflicts, maintaining high self-esteem, and thereby functioning better in the face of life's challenges.

Expression of values is a function that enables people to articulate their values, ideologies, and personal perspectives on the world around them.

Ultimately, the functions of adaptation and social adjustment are fundamental for integrating into different social sectors, coexisting with peers, and being fully integrated into the society in which they live.

Functions cannot be independent; often, one function may imply the fulfillment of another attitudinal function. It is imperative in the process of Argumentation.

In the case of violence, for example, its social consequences are well understood; an attitude of rejection toward that phenomenon implies an acceptance of that person within the groups that share that opinion. It therefore implies adaptation to the environment where those considerations prevail, it is a way of expressing important social values, and it avoids conflicts with those who share that Attitude.

Knowing the functions of attitudes also allows us to differentiate individuals; therefore, attitudes are sources that enable the evaluation of arguments in various social, political, and religious contexts. In terms of predictions, they can provide vital information to avoid conflicts between the population groups with specific attitudinal tendencies.

Structure of attitudes

Various theoretical models examine the components of attitudes, including three-dimensional, two-dimensional, and one-dimensional models.

The first considers that attitudes consist of three aspects: cognitive, affective, and conative-behavioral.

The cognitive component refers to the beliefs and opinions individuals hold about the attitude object and the information they have about it (Hollander, 1978).

The affective component refers, as its name suggests, to the positive or negative feelings perceived from the attitudinal object or situation.

The conative component refers to the behaviors, impulses, or intentions adopted toward a specific object or situation.

Different authors have questioned the three-dimensional model, arguing that including the three aspects, especially the behavioral one, implies failing to consider that Attitude at a given moment can prevent a behavior. However, from a behaviorist perspective, thinking is also a behavior.

This criticism has led to the consideration of the bidimensional model, which states that Attitudes are fundamentally composed of cognitive and affective components.

In the case of the unidimensional model, authors such as Petty and Cacioppo (1986) state that Attitude is fundamentally composed of the items related to the evaluation of the object and situations, as it expresses attraction or rejection, sympathy, or apathy —that is, a general evaluation of the object. Some authors suggest that the components are presented individually but interact with each other at specific points in time. Consider that the Attitude may reflect one component more than another, depending on the type of object and the circumstances.

Regardless of the different models, it can be stated—and my empirical experience confirms—that these three aspects reflect attitudes. It is true that, at certain moments, depending on the specific situations analyzed, people reflect that their feelings, knowledge, and behaviors are consequences of those cognitive and affective impulses.

Regarding unidimensional models, we should mention the following: the Socio-Cognitive, Reasoned Action, and Planned Action models. These models generally account for the prevalence of attitude components across situations, and their value lies in their ability to generate measurements and predictions about attitudes.

Impact of attitudes on argumentation

To address this issue, it is important to distinguish between subjective and prescriptive social norms and attitudes.

A social norm refers to the way of thinking, feeling, or acting that people in a particular sector or social group generally agree upon and confirm as appropriate. A norm aligns with an attitude because it is a social representation. However, they are not the same: social norms refer to what

is generally accepted, while attitudes represent an individual's intention toward an object, valuing it as either positive or negative.

In argumentative processes, an accepted social norm is often invoked as a collective matter, with uniformity of perception regarding social behaviors, which a general survey can measure.

A prescriptive or subjective norm is a perception of social pressure associated with a particular behavior.

When we talk about personal Attitude, we are dealing with a positive or negative opinion about a fact or person. When faced with a disputed fact, expressing an individual opinion depends not on social norms, but on individual evaluations of the specific facts or situation. However, agreement or disagreement with these norms depends on individuals' attitudes and the biases that arise, given the specific phenomenon being analyzed.

Research by various authors has shown that Attitude is a more important predictor than subjective norm for certain behaviors. Apparently, a specific group behavior and its associated positive attitudes are more strongly associated with actual behavior than the social pressure to perform it.

In argumentative interaction processes, norms that shape social and cultural environments are more strongly influenced by specific cognitive processes, such as the false consensus effect, the Dunning-Kruger effect, and pluralistic ignorance.

False Consensus Bias

This phenomenon is related to the tendency to project one's own opinions, beliefs, and behaviors onto others. This leads us to assume that others share our viewpoints or preferences more than they do. People also feel more identified with others.

In the False Consensus Effect, those who share or hold certain attributes, opinions, and emotions tend to overestimate the extent of consensus within the group that does not share them.

Some authors point out that, for example, people who have an aggressive attitude toward minority groups, when compared to those who do not maintain that attitude, tend to consider

that the proportion of people with negative attitudes is greater. Academics such as Miller and Prentice (1996) argue that this tendency is greater among groups in minority positions.

Ubilloz, Mayordomo, and Páez (2002) highlight the factors that explain the emergence of this phenomenon in their analysis.

First, they present what they call accessibility and contact factors, defined as the tendency to overestimate the frequency of selections. This occurs because people tend to associate with individuals whose behavior is similar to theirs, and therefore find them more accessible to memory.

Another factor they mention is the so-called salience and attention focus. They write that their actions are more salient (stand out, excel) and vivid than the actions not chosen, which draws more attention to them and thus leads to an overestimation of how often they occur.

A third factor is the Attribution of Causality. The more we attribute behavior to situational or external causes, the more we believe that this behavior is characteristic or shared.

The actor-observer effect: one tends to explain one's own behavior in the context at hand.

The motivational factor is explained by the False Consensus effect, which allows individuals to defend their self-esteem by thinking that this behavior is common among the majority. In that way, people feel part of the norm. People assume others agree with their behaviors, which in turn fosters greater confidence in their judgments, actions, or lifestyles.

Notably, even when the behavior is more severe, the False Consensus remains a strong tendency. However, researchers have found no relationship between low self-esteem and this phenomenon.

For salience and attention focus factors, causality attribution, and motivation, they appear more closely linked to the False Consensus Effect regarding beliefs, opinions, and attitudes than to behaviors.

Comparative research on the False Consensus phenomenon, conducted through surveys of women and men of different ages, shows that when people engage in a particular practice, they tend to overestimate the percentage of individuals who have also done so. When comparing

levels of information, individuals tend to have greater access to information or to friends who have engaged in such practices. They also perceive that their environment reflects attitudes consistent with their own judgments, which generally align with their preferred personal stance.

The above indicates that their explanations relate to accessibility and motivational aspects. In general, they believe their attitude or general norm is greater than what they experience.

In this research, the phenomenon known as Pluralistic Ignorance is revealed in the case of those who have not had practices related to the phenomena that are the subject of the surveys, as either their attitude is less favorable, or they exhibit a neutral behavior related to the attitudes of those who have had practices related to the studied phenomenon.

Dunning-Kruger effect

A relevant bias in argumentative contexts is the Dunning-Kruger effect: individuals with less experience may overestimate their understanding, making it difficult to recognize mistakes or seek contrary evidence. Experts may underestimate the topic's complexity and associated uncertainty, which can also bias the discussion (David Dunning & Justin Kruger, 1999).

Dunning and Kruger's research initially involved selecting a group of students and evaluating their grammar, sense of humor, and logical reasoning. To do this, they created a test in which students rated themselves on a 1-10 scale based on their responses. As a result, most students gave themselves scores above the average of their test scores. What stood out in this self-assessment was that those least prepared for the test overestimated their abilities the most and gave themselves the highest grades. By contrast, more prepared students underestimated their abilities and rated themselves lower than their actual scores.

These authors considered it a metacognitive mistake, which they verified in Subsequent research comparing individuals with extensive experience in specific roles with those who had recently joined these activities.

Pluralistic Ignorance

Allport and Katz (1931) first defined this phenomenon as a cognitive bias in which individuals believe their private opinions differ from the majority's, even though everyone shares a

common, false view of reality. This attitude leads individuals to suppress their beliefs and conform their behavior to perceived social norms.

This phenomenon often has negative consequences, as it can limit open dialogue, hinder decision-making, and create environments where misconceptions prevail over truth, leading to widespread cultural deviation. It can also lead to conformity, a complex phenomenon with different nuances, understood as submission, resignation, and compliance, or as approval, harmony, and agreement.

Another related bias is the "bystander effect," or "diffusion of responsibility" (John Darley & Bibb Latané, 1968), which refers to situations in which people do not provide help because they believe others will.

This effect means that the more people witness an emergency, the less likely someone is to offer help.

In the political sphere, we observe this phenomenon when pressure to be politically correct prevails, with significant consequences for social life. Particularly, this trend involves avoiding being perceived as unfavorable on issues such as racism, sexual and gender discrimination, or being culturally insensitive.

This can lead people to present themselves publicly as politically correct, even taking concrete actions in their favor, despite privately holding doubts. Differences between public actions and private attitudes, when paired with divergent beliefs about one's own behavior and others', can lead to pluralistic ignorance.

Cognitive processes, such as reflection and analysis, help explain this phenomenon.

Internal causality toward certain events, as in the cases mentioned above, involves attitudes toward facts accepted as politically correct. This includes considering homogeneity in attitudes, perceiving false uniqueness, or feeling a lack of control. The greater the perception of control and overestimation of abilities, the greater the tendency to think that others engage in behaviors that are inconsistent with one's own attitude (Ugarte, 1998 cited by Ubilloz, Mayordomo, and Páez, 2002, p.21)

In the philosophy of argumentation analysis, cognitive biases, and particularly the Dunning-Kruger effect, are important to consider for several key reasons:

Quality of the argument: bias can lead to unjustified claims (overconfidence in one's own understanding) or to underestimating the topic's complexity, which undermines the solidity of the thesis and the evidence.

Epistemic justice: it affects how we distribute credibility. Those with less knowledge may believe they know more than they do, and experts may doubt too much, distorting the dialogue and the evaluation of evidence.

Self-deception and verification biases: The Dunning-Kruger effect can reinforce confirmation biases, as people tend to seek or interpret evidence in ways that confirm their prior confidence, making criticism and rigorous examination difficult.

Demarcation between argument and position: It helps distinguish a well-founded stance from a conviction immune to criticism, which is crucial in philosophical debates on epistemology, ethics, or philosophy of science.

Methodological practices: emphasize the need for peer review, external input, and checklists to require explicit justification, data, and arguments that can withstand criticism.

Facilitation of the anti-bias rubric: recognizing the Dunning-Kruger effect helps design pedagogical and methodological strategies to prevent inadequate confidence from prevailing, promoting a more honest and rigorous discussion.

The False Consensus Effect, the Dunning-Kruger Effect, and Pluralistic Ignorance may be more prevalent in specific cultural and political contexts, without diminishing their importance in analyzing argumentative attitudes.

Synthesizing conceptual foundations to interpret participants' expressed arguments

Argumentative attitude is the expression of a reasoned point of view, whether through a text, a statement, or a word. However, understanding Social Psychology concepts about attitudes and the phenomena that result from the cognitive processes that characterize human beings helps

us recognize that the arguments presented publicly are often not what people privately believe. Sometimes they do not reflect the existing reality.

Based on our understanding of attitudes, we can examine more closely the veracity of arguments about the existing reality, enabling us to adopt a more nuanced approach to people's needs, beliefs, and values within a social context.

Likewise, we can predict behaviors based on the environment, as research in this field helps us identify and address cognitive biases that manifest in specific contexts.

Studying the attitudes, we present helps us understand the relationships that may exist within a country's cultural environment. It has implications for policy development across various areas, including the economy, health, education, and culture.

RESEARCH

As noted at the beginning of this article, the research we present is still in development.

The objective of the research is to demonstrate that people, depending on their economic, educational, and cultural environments, construct their arguments primarily in response to community perceptions rather than their own opinions.

The first step of our research was to conduct a pilot investigation to identify attitudes toward critically analyzing the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as an instrument of capitalism to suppress critical attitudes among poor people.

Hypothesis

We hypothesize that for students in socioeconomically sensitive contexts, the interpretation of media arguments is not solely based on content logic but is significantly mediated by pre-existing coping attitudes and lived realities (i.e., their 'living condition'). Therefore, agreement with an argument will correlate more strongly with its alignment to self-perception and behavioral justification than with objective journalistic criteria.

RESULTS

Results of the pilot study

Analysis of Question 1: Agreement with the Journalist

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1. Distribution of responses to the quantitative question

Response	Count (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	24	35.82%
No	43	64.18%
Total	67	100.00%

Source: own elaboration.

As you could see, for the first item, asking students if they agreed with the journalist commentator's arguments, most participants disagreed with 43 students (64.18%), while 24 students (35.82%) indicated agreement.

Regarding the clarity of the question, was confirmed that it is feasible, understandable and, the responses are not overwhelmingly in one category, which suggests the question is effective at discriminating opinions. This means it is a good item to keep for our main study.

Qualitative Data: Thematic Analysis

The qualitative, open-ended question, number two: "Write a summary of your opinions about the message of the video" means we need to use Thematic Analysis to make sense of the text data.

For the analysis were organized and summarized the 67 answers into a single document, and then put the information into a series of code-reading phrases, one by one.

Table 2. Distribution of students based on qualitative responsese

GROUP	***TOTAL STUDENTS (N)***	***AGREEMENT ("YES")***	***DISAGREEMENT ("NO")***
A (Intervention)	26 (38.80%)	24 (35.82%)	2 (3.04%)
B (Control)	41 (61.19%)	31(46,26%)	10 (14.92%)
Total	67 (100%)	55 (82.08%)	12 (18.26%)

Source: own elaboration.

This process permitted familiarization with the arguments of all students, both those who answered yes and those who answered no.

The following data summarize the students' main arguments.

Table 3. Distribution of students based on argumentation/intervention group and control group

GROUP A ----- INTERVENTION (24: YES)	***GROUP B ------ CONTROL (31:YES)***
The journalist's analysis is objective.	Make me pay attention to myself.
Indeed, we do not read because we spend so much time on our cellphones.	The journalist is reliable to me.
We do not have a habit of reading.	It is an important theme to discuss
Distracting activities.	Technology affects attention
Technology affects attention.	However, it does not apply to us, because we are poor.

Source: own elaboration.

Table 4. Distribution of students based on argumentation/intervention group and control group

GROUP A ----- INTERVENTION (2: NO)	***GROUP B ------ CONTROL (10:NO)***
We are poor people, so it does not apply to Mexico.	We are poor people, work a lot, and need to be distracted from our reality.
We do not read because of our mental problems.	Technology affects our attention, but we have fun with our cellphones.
If we work a lot and then go to school, it is impossible not to check our cellphones.	I do not feel discriminated for being poor, maybe for being indigenous or a guy.
We are not discriminated against in Mexico by the upper classes.	It is easy to do this kind of analysis from the United States.

Source: own elaboration.

Analyzing the 'Yes' responses for Group A (intervention) suggests the comment successfully framed the video's message for them.

For Group B (control), the tendency to answer Yes reflects maintaining a certain distance between the video's content and their individuality.

Table 5. Responses for Group A and B

THEME CATEGORY	***POTENTIAL CODES TO LOOK FOR IN THE MAIN STUDY***	***INTERPRETATION***
Self-Reflection/Awareness	"Distracting environment," "Hard to focus," "Relatable distraction," "Makes me think about my own use," "Technology affects attention."	Students acknowledge the issue in their own lives or in the classroom.
Message Connection	"Video speaks to the problem of cell use," "Relates to the distraction issue," "Important point about media saturation."	Students explicitly connect the video's message to the intervention topic.

Source: own elaboration.

Related to Video Critique (General Academic/Journalistic Themes), the following themes are likely to appear in both groups; comparing their frequencies will be insightful.

Table 6. Distribution of students based on video

THEME CATEGORY	***POTENTIAL CODES TO LOOK FOR***	***INTERPRETATION***
Journalistic Quality	"Biased reporting," "Emotional language," "Lacks objectivity," "Good source cited," "Professional presentation."	Focusing on the technique, not the content.
Contextual Demand	"Missing historical facts," "Needed more financial data," "Only one side presented," "Argument lacked depth."	Common among critical communication students (your sample).

Source: own elaboration.

Some reflections about the pilot study

When examining the students' arguments, two terms stand out: discrimination and poverty. It is important to Re-signify Poverty and Discrimination. The central finding is the acceptance of poverty as a condition and the rejection of the label of discrimination.

Table 7. Conceptualization of poverty

THEMATIC CATEGORY	***IN VIVO/ANALYTICAL CODES***	***INTERPRETATION AND CONNECTION TO THE STUDY***
Poverty as a Condition	“Being poor is a condition", “Being poor is a condition", "It is what we have to deal with," "The reality we live in," "A condition of life."	Poverty is seen as an existential or structural fact, not as a source of active victimization.
Rejection of Discrimination	"We do not feel discriminated against," "It does not affect me," "It is not against me," "That is just how we are."	Students resist the external narrative that labels them as victims of discrimination.
Agency and Resilience	"We have other things to do." "We focus on what we can control."	It implies that their energy is focused on survival or the future, not on conflict with the upper classes

Source: own elaboration.

The key finding is the rejection of seeing the cell phone as a tool for manipulation by "upper classes"; instead, they see it as a tool for managing their reality.

Table 8. Cell as a tool. Manipulation Vs Reality

THEMATIC CATEGORY	***IN VIVO / ANALYTICAL CODES -***	***INTERPRETATION AND CONNECTION TO THE STUDIO***
Evasive mechanism	"Entertainment to escape harsh reality," "Necessary distraction," "A way to disconnect," "Escape from reality."	The cell phone has a vital psychological function: it is an escape valve against stress and "harsh reality."
Manipulation rejection	"I do not think they are manipulating us," "I decide to use it," "It is not something only the upper classes do."	It reinforces a sense of personal agency over technology and rejects the hypodermic needle theory (direct manipulation).
Opportunities and access	"It's the only thing we have to learn," "It connects us to the world," "It's our access to..."	It highlights the practical value of the cell phone, not only for leisure, but as a vital resource

Source: own elaboration.

Regarding the analysis of total answers about the differences or agreements with the video shown, it is possible to ensure that:

If they disagreed with the video: This may be because the video used language that victimizes the poor (labeling them as discriminated against and manipulated), which they actively reject.

If they agreed with the video (82.8%): This explains that their agreement is not due to manipulation, but because the video may have validated the need to avoid or use cell phones as a survival/resistance mechanism in the face of their reality.

DISCUSSION

Final interpretations of pilot study

The findings of this pilot study suggest a significant interaction between instructional framing and pre-existing student identity in interpreting media messages. Quantitatively, the intervention increased agreement with the journalist's argument in Intervention Group A (92.3%) compared with Control Group B (75.6%). The qualitative analysis, however, suggests this increased agreement likely stemmed from a re-signification of the video's core message rather than a simple change in opinion.

Interpreting the Effect of the Intervention (Group A)

The high agreement rate (92.3%) in the Intervention Group A must be viewed through the lens of the emergent theme: The cell Phone as a necessary tool for evasion and coping. The hypothesis is that the pre-exposure comment regarding the importance of stopping cell phone use served as a framing device. Students in Group A likely interpreted the video not as a critique of their behavior or a warning about manipulation, but as external validation of their own stress-coping mechanism. Their "Yes" vote, therefore, signifies: "I agree, because the need to escape and use entertainment to cope with my reality is valid and necessary." The intervention successfully shifted the content's meaning to align with their lived experience of evasion.

Explaining the Baseline and Dissent (Group B)

Without the intervention's specific framing, a larger portion of the Control Group (Group B) activated a different, more resistant interpretive schema: Rejection of the Victim Narrative and Poverty as an Existential Condition. Students in this group, particularly the 10 who disagreed, likely reacted to a perceived subtext of victimization in the video message (e.g., being manipulated or discriminated against). For students who actively define poverty as an accepted structural condition, any message suggesting they are passive victims of external forces (like "high-class manipulation") is critically rejected, leading to a higher rate of disagreement than in the Intervention Group.

Pilot Implications and Future Research

This pilot's study successfully demonstrated that:

Feasibility: The quasi-experimental design and the mixed-methods approach are feasible for a larger study.

Instrument Utility: The open-ended question provided essential contextual data that contradicted initial assumptions about student motivations.

Impact of Framing: A minimal instructional intervention can significantly influence the interpretive lens through which students from specific socioeconomic contexts engage with academic and media content.

For the main study, future research should operationalize the themes of Evasion and Rejection of Victimization into quantifiable survey items to test this interpretive mechanism more rigorously.

The primary limitation of this pilot is its small sample size and non-randomized design, which the subsequent main study will address.

That is a powerful and sophisticated point that elevates the pilot study from a simple methodological test to a substantive academic finding. To include this idea—that attitudes and living conditions shape arguments— we need to link the three key components in the discussion explicitly:

- Quantitative Difference (Group A vs. Group B agreement).
- Qualitative Themes (Poverty as Condition, Evasion as Coping).
- Theoretical Framework (Attitudes and Lived Experience).

Table 9. Results pilot study

COMPONENT	***YOUR DATA/THEME***	***HOW TO PHRASE THE LINK***
Lived condition	Poverty as an Existential Condition	The students' acceptance of poverty as an accepted, structural reality (a lived condition) establishes a fundamental attitude of resilience and agency
Attitude	Rejection of the Victim Narrative	This attitude of agency makes students fundamentally resistant to arguments (like those potentially implied in the video) that frame them as passive victims of "high class manipulation".
Argument Acceptance (Group B)	Lower Agreement (75.6%)	The lower agreement in the control group is therefore interpreted as evidence of attitude-driven resistance to arguments that clash with their self-defined identity and lived condition.
Attitude (intervention)	Evasion as a coping mechanism	The attitude that the use of mobile phones is a necessary coping tool (a form of managing their reality) justifies its use.
Argument acceptance (Group A)	Higher Agreement (92.3%)	The higher agreement in the intervention group suggests that the subtle framing allowed them to interpret the argument as validating their coping behavior, thus aligning the message with their attitude and leading to argument acceptance.

Source: own elaboration.

CONCLUSIONS

Integrating results and theory

The findings strongly support the theoretical notion that argument acceptance is primarily mediated by pre-existing attitudes formed through lived experience. The observed difference in agreement between the Intervention and Control groups cannot be explained solely by the video's content; rather, it is best understood through the qualitative themes identified and the psychological functions of attitudes.

The students' "lived condition"—specifically, their structural reality and their rejection of the victim narrative—created a foundational attitude of resistance in the Control Group toward

external arguments perceived as condescending or detached from their context. Conversely, agreement in the Intervention Group is attributed to the framing comment, which prompted students to view the video's message through the lens of their self-defined "coping attitude" (i.e., utilizing digital distraction as a necessary evasion of daily pressures).

This demonstrates a tendency among our students to accept arguments only when they are successfully re-signified to align with participants' defensive and adaptive self-perceptions, providing preliminary evidence that socioeconomic attitudes and cognitive biases (such as the false consensus effect and pluralistic ignorance) strongly influence argument reception in this cultural context.

Ultimately, these results confirm that the pilot data provide robust preliminary evidence for the theory linking living conditions to argument acceptance. The arguments students put forward are deeply rooted in their experiences and life particularities—such as naturalizing poverty as an existential condition while rejecting the label of discrimination—rather than solely on a neutral or logical exposition of the media message. Accounting for these attitudinal filters will be essential for future phases of this research and for designing more contextualized educational strategies.

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DECLARATION OF AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

During the preparation of this work, I, the author, used [Google Gemini/Grammarly] solely to translate the original manuscript—drafted entirely by me, the author, in Spanish—into English, as well as for basic grammatical proofreading. After utilizing this tool, I, the author, thoroughly reviewed, edited, and restructured the content to ensure it accurately reflected my original research, arguments, and voice. I, the author takes full and sole responsibility for the entire content of this publication.

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