

Journal of Drug Discovery and Therapeutics

Available Online at www.jddt.in

CODEN: - JDDTBP (Source: - American Chemical Society)

Volume 12, Issue 02; 2024, 114-121

Social Media Platforms Influence Political Engagement, Activism, and Voter Behavior

Muninder Kumar¹, Dr. Kasturi Yadav²

¹Research Scholar, Sunrise University, Alwar

²Professor, Sunrise University, Alwar.

Received: 14-03-2024 / Revised: 22-03-2024 / Accepted: 20-04-2024

Corresponding author: Muninder Kumar

Conflict of interest: No conflict of interest.

Abstract:

Introduction: People can hold their elected officials responsible and have a say in the way their country is governed when they participate in political processes, which is why political engagement is significant in democratic nations.

Aim of the study: The Main Aim of The Study Is to Social Media Platforms Influence Political Engagement, Activism, And Voter Behavior

Material and method: The research design is the framework that guides and organises the investigation. A research design is a detailed plan outlining how research will be conducted, including data gathering methods, measurement procedures, and data processing techniques.

Conclusion: Social media is a commonly used tool that has been studied for its influence on political engagement in Western and Arab nations, but there is limited research on its impact in India.

Keywords: Social media, Platforms, Influence, Political Engagement, Activism, And Voter Behavior, etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

People can hold their elected officials responsible and have a say in the way their country is governed when they participate in political processes, which is why political engagement is significant in democratic nations. Participating in politics has traditionally consisted of activities such as voting, joining political parties, attending political rallies, and communicating with elected officials. It is widely acknowledged that these many types of political involvement are crucial to the operation of

democratic systems. This is because they guarantee that people can participate to the process of making important choices. Traditional modes of political engagement, on the other hand, have lately seen a decline in popularity across several nations, particularly among younger generations. A variety of issues, including a lack of faith in political institutions, cynicism towards political parties, and a sense of disengagement from the political process, have been cited as possible explanations for this tendency. Within the framework of this discussion, social media (SM) has been

welcomed as a novel and forward-thinking instrument that has the potential to facilitate political engagement among young people and to mobilise them to act. Young people have been given the opportunity to contact with persons who share similar ideals and to voice their perspectives on political matters via the use of social media platforms (SMPs).

1.2 SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICS

Because of the emergence of the Internet, there has been a significant increase in the amount of attention regarding the question of whether digital platforms, such as social media, have any influence on the realm of politics. Because of this, we are now able to depend on an expanding corpus of research that examines the myriad of connections that exist between social media and politics from a variety of points of view. The methodologies that have been presented to investigate the subject matter are often distinct from one another, and they do not always interact with one another. As a result, the investigation of the topic's causes and consequences is forced to take divergent pathways, which may occasionally result in different findings. On the other hand, there is a consensus about the fact that the Internet has established new channels of communication, which have brought about a significant shift in the flow of information in comparison to the conventional media that is now in use. Using various multimedia platforms, social media play a significant role in the dissemination of news that extends beyond national boundaries and encompasses social, cultural, and political niches. This chapter examines the ways in which this state contributes to an increase in political wisdom. When seen in this light, this chapter discusses whether social media has an impact on politics and how it does so. To be more specific, we will first discuss the ways in which the networked nature of the

Internet makes it easier for people to participate in political activities, as well as the ways in which this situation has further evolved with the introduction of social media. We begin by concentrating on the role that the dissemination of information plays in both the expansion of political knowledge and, therefore, the enhancement of political involvement. Next, we discuss the ways in which social media platforms further increase this process, hence expanding the effect of digital platforms on the political atmosphere. Finally, we present evidence that social media has an impact on politics. We do this by examining the ways in which the dissemination of information plays a significant role in the political sphere across a variety of political landscapes, actors, and political practices. We pay particular attention to the ways in which social media is utilised for campaigning and for mobilising social movements.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Calosa, John Ren & Andalajao, Crystal (2023) In this day and age, it is abundantly clear that social media has become an integral component of our lives. Our nation made the transition from analog to digital, which resulted in the creation of a large space and the opening of more resources for individuals to receive, collect, and acquire information, regardless of whether it is for the sake of enjoyment or for political reasons. Particularly in the realm of social media, the rapid dissemination of both validated and unverified information has been made possible by the volume of material that can be found online as well as the recently developed methods of distribution. A descriptive-correlational research approach was applied for the study that investigated the usage of social media, social media behavior, cognitive biases, and political knowledge among one hundred student voters attending the San Pablo City

campus of Laguna State Polytechnic University. To collect the data, a survey was conducted using questions that were created by the researchers. According to the findings, the participants had varying perceptions about the use of social media, the behavior of using social media, and cognitive biases. For example, they had a good political awareness while also having a perception of never, seldom, and frequently of using social media. The result is that there is a substantial connection between the usage of social media (including social networking sites, microblogging, and social networking services), the behavior of social media users, confirmation bias, and political knowledge among student voters.

Mochla, Vagia & Tsourvakas, George (2023) In this day and age, when social media is playing such an important role for political parties, segmentation in political marketing seems to be a highly effective instrument that requires fresh instructions. In the realm of politics, this research applies the market segmentation theory by analyzing the actions and reasons behind the decisions of voters and those who utilize social media accounts. There are significant evidence for two categories that are substantially impacted by politicians' marketing on social media in terms of behavioral outcomes of active engagement, word of mouth, and voting objectives. These findings are based on a structural equation model. Information, entertainment, and action were shown to be good motivating factors for political involvement, according to the findings of the study. In addition, it seems that the act of actively following and voting for politicians with the intention of obtaining knowledge plays the role of a generic construct that influences the whole. Political marketing consultants are able to implement the appropriate strategy campaign via social media with the assistance of these findings,

which also provide new avenues for doing further in-depth study on this topic.

Utari, Utari & Wulandari, Yuni (2023)

The Millennial generation, which includes people who were born between the early 1980s and the middle of the 1990s, is a large demographic group that has the potential to influence the political landscape. With the goal of elucidating the complexity that either drive or impede the involvement of Millennials in the democratic process, this study explores the myriad of factors that determine the level of political participation of Millennials in general elections. In this study, the researchers investigate the elements that have a significant impact on the political behavior of Millennials by using a mixed-methods approach that includes both surveys and interviews. The outcomes of the investigation shed light on a number of significant ideas; The first thing that stands out is that education is a significant factor in the political engagement of Millennials, which highlights the significance of civic education programs in the process of cultivating political consciousness. Second, social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have taken on a transformational role, acting as powerful instruments for the spread of information, the mobilization of people, and the participatory discussion of political issues. Thirdly, economic issues, particularly student loan debt and economic insecurity, continue to be serious obstacles, which calls for the implementation of specific measures to address these concerns and stimulate political participation. In the fourth place, confidence in political institutions emerges as a driving factor, underscoring the necessity of openness and accountability in the process of increasing voter turnout among Millennials. In conclusion, it is important to emphasize the significance of increasing civic engagement since non-electoral civic activities, such as

volunteering and community service, serve as stepping stones to more extensive political participation. The implications that may be made from these results affect not just the sphere of policy, but also the world of political strategy and the realm of social empowerment. It is recommended that investments be made in civic education, that social media be used for political outreach, that economic inequities be addressed, and that civic involvement be encouraged.

Suemo, Jacob & Kusugh, Ternenge (2023) In order to analyze the ways in which ideological themes in social media political campaigns have affected voters' education and involvement in Nigeria's general elections in 2023, this study used a combination of research techniques during its investigation. The study indicated that Facebook was used for political campaigns in Nigeria more often than Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Google+, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Blogs during the most recent General Elections in 2023. This was determined via the use of research tools such as questionnaires and interviews. The results revealed that these social media platforms were more accessible to the voters; hence, they have quickly become instruments for political campaigns and have been employed primarily for the purpose of doing so. Unfortunately, as the findings indicated, the ideological themes that predominated in these platforms (social media) were negative. These platforms were largely dominated by insults, abuse of opponents, hate speeches, falsehood, blame shifting, ethnocentric and religious undertones, anxiety, and apathy, among other things. As a result, they contributed to a significant extent to the apathy that most voters displayed when it came to participating in the elections.

Ali, Shahab & Hamid, Anum & Zaman, Bakht (2023) The transition from

conventional media to digital media has occurred at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This transition has lately undergone a considerable alteration because of the creation of several social media platforms. Now, social media is the most prominent medium that allows people to purposefully express their opinions in a variety of ways, including both good and bad ones. According to the research that was quoted, an estimated 4.75 billion people utilize social media, which is equivalent to more than 70 percent of all users, see them for political reasons. The purpose of this research is to investigate the ways in which users interact with social media platforms and to ascertain the extent to which these uses influence the political parties that they choose to vote for. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan was selected as the universe for the survey population and the major source of data collection. This decision was made based on two study assumptions. According to the figures, 56.8% of the sample utilized social media to read about politics, and 78% of the changes that individuals made in their perceptions of political parties were made public on social media during that time.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 PURPOSE AND EXTENT OF THE STUDY

Modern elections have altered their campaign strategies and methods of spreading information following the victory of former President Barack Obama in the 2008 presidential elections, during which the internet was extensively utilised. The 2014 Indian General Election was acknowledged as the largest democratic election globally and was referred to as the "#twitter election." Major political parties such as AAP, BJP, and INC extensively utilised online platforms for campaigning to communicate with voters and garner

support. Social media is widely used for electoral purposes in India and is embraced by all political parties. The literature research reveals a lack of studies investigating the stated correlations outlined in this study's aims.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is the framework that guides and organises the investigation. A research design is a detailed plan outlining how research will be conducted, including data gathering methods, measurement procedures, and data processing techniques. A cross-sectional study was done for this topic, utilising both exploratory and descriptive research designs.

The current study utilised both qualitative and quantitative research methods,

employing a mixed-method approach. The qualitative research utilised secondary materials such journals, books, papers, and articles to establish a theoretical framework. The study examined the official pages of political parties on several online platforms through content analysis, a qualitative research method. The current study is a quantitative research that gathered primary data through a survey utilising a standardised questionnaire.

4. RESULTS

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Before proceeding with final analysis, it is essential to discuss the respondents profile using frequency distribution for better understanding of analysis and results.

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile

Demographics	Indicators	Frequency	Per cent
Gender	Male	258	51.9
	Female	239	48.1
Age	18-25	148	29.8
	26-35	132	26.6
	36-45	117	23.5
	Above 45	100	20.1
Education	Matric	116	23.3
	Senior Secondary	101	20.3
	Graduation	140	28.2
	Post-Graduation	123	24.7
	Others	17	3.4
Occupation	Student	150	30.2
	Self Employed	92	18.5
	Private Employee	86	17.3
	Govt. Employee	80	16.1
	Retired	28	5.6
	Unemployed	61	12.3
Demographics	Indicators	Frequency	Per cent
Monthly Income	0-10000	200	40.2
	10001-20000	71	14.3
	20001-30000	80	16.1

	30001-40000	74	14.9
	Above 40000	72	14.5
Marital Status	Unmarried	249	50.1
	Married	248	49.9
Area	Urban	241	48.5
	Rural	256	51.5

4.2.2 Most Used Social Media Platform

Additionally, a thorough examination of the pattern of social media activity was conducted. Participants were instructed to choose the social media platform that they have utilised the most within the previous year. The data in Table 4.2 indicates that WhatsApp is the social media platform most frequently used by nearly half of the respondents. Similarly, YouTube is the second most utilised platform, chosen by 24.5 percent of individuals. In contrast, only 9.6 percent of people selected Facebook, followed by Instagram at 9.2 percent. Nevertheless, Twitter has the lowest usage

rate, with only 0.4 percent of respondents utilising it. In addition, males tend to use YouTube, Facebook, and blogs more frequently, while females prefer Instagram and WhatsApp as their primary social media platforms compared to males. When considering age groupings, individuals under the age of 35 predominantly utilise WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram. Conversely, individuals above the age of 35 tend to favour WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook. WhatsApp and YouTube are the most widely utilised social media platforms, regardless of age.

Table 4.2: Social Media User Pattern

	Indicators	Frequency	Per cent
Social Media Platforms	Facebook	48	9.7
	Twitter	2	0.4
	YouTube	122	24.5
	Blogs	7	1.4
	WhatsApp	249	50.1
	Others	23	4.6
	Instagram	46	9.3
Frequency of Visit	0-2 times	36	7.2
	3-4 times	99	19.9
	5-9 times	126	25.4
	10-15 times	103	20.7
	More than 15 times	133	26.8

Average Time Spent	Less than 30 Minutes	98	19.7
	30 minutes -1 hour	153	30.8
	1-2 hours	106	21.3
	2-5 hours	87	17.5
	More than 5 hours	53	10.7

Moreover, the data was examined to determine the mean duration individuals spend on their primary social media platform. The data shown in Table 4.2 indicates that, on average, 30.8 percent of respondents had allocated between half an hour to one hour during their visits to the most frequently used social media platform. Among the respondents, 21.3 percent have allocated one to two hours for each visit, 19.7 percent have spent less than half an hour, 17.5 percent have spent between two and five hours, and 10.7 percent have spent more than 5 hours. Furthermore, there is little disparity in the amount of time spent per visit between males and females. Regarding age, individuals below 35 years old exhibit a higher number of visits to a specific social media platform. However, the majority of them spend less than 30 minutes on average during each visit.

5. CONCLUSION

Social media is a commonly used tool that has been studied for its influence on political engagement in Western and Arab nations, but there is limited research on its impact in India. This study examined how using social media for political purposes affects political attitudes, involvement, and party choice in Raipur, India. The results emphasised important aspects of news consumption through various media in Raipur, India, showing distinct differences in media usage, political attitudes, and engagement. The study's primary discoveries are listed below:

Participation in the political process by citizens is mostly through voting. At times,

individuals demonstrate their involvement by motivating others to vote and by discussing a political candidate, either in support or opposition, which could impact their voting choice, before accessing the candidate's profile on a social networking platform. On average, people have demonstrated limited political participation by attending political rallies or speeches, participating in demonstrations, volunteering for political parties, wearing political symbols, attending public meetings with politicians, becoming party members, and writing emails to politicians. The most minimal kind of participation involves contributing monies to a politician or political party.

Social media is the most often utilised platform for obtaining political information, followed by television. Attending political rallies, having direct contact with political candidates, and radio are the least utilised media sources for political information.

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