



Research Article

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The Influence of Social Media Usage and Political Behaviors among Adults

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examines how social media influences how young adults engage in politics. The study examines the connection between political behaviour and social media use. The study was carried out using a survey that was given to a sample of young adults between the ages of 18 and 29. Regression analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyse the survey results. The results show that young adults' political engagement is significantly impacted by their use of social media. According to the findings, young adults who use social media are more likely to be politically active and have a deeper understanding of politics

INTRODUCTION

Young adults are increasingly using social media as a platform for political engagement. However, the study also discovered that using social media can result in polarisation and echo chambers, which may have detrimental effects on political discourse and democracy (Towner & Dulio, 2012). People can now access information, participate in political debates, and support political campaigns thanks to the growth of social media. There is, however, little data on how social media affects young adults' political engagement (Kasmani *et al.*, 2014). By analyzing the connections between social media use and young adults' political knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, this research article aims to close this knowledge gap (Zhuravskaya *et al.*, 2020).

Background

Social media platforms have quickly become an indispensable part of our daily lives. The development of new forms of social interaction and the formation

of communities centred on shared interests has fundamentally changed how we relate to and communicate (Aaron, (2012).) Politics is one of the fields where social media has made a significant difference. For many people, especially young adults, social media platforms have taken the place of traditional media as their main source of political news and information. Young adults are an important demographic for political engagement as they are the future of our society (Social media and politics in central and Eastern Europe. Routledge., 2017). With over 3.8 billion active social media users worldwide, social media has become a powerful tool for political communication and mobilization, allowing political actors to reach a large audience quickly and affordably (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013a). Despite their growing involvement in political activities, young adults are frequently seen as a politically disengaged group. A unique opportunity to involve young adults in political discourse and mobilization exists thanks to social media (M. D. Safiullah *et al.*, 2022).

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Problem Statement

Although social media plays an increasingly significant role in political communication and mobilization, little is known about how it affects young adults' interest in politics (M. Safiullah *et al.*, 2017). The relationship between using social media and participating in politics has been the subject of some studies. The findings have been conflicting, and it's still unclear why there is a connection. Furthermore, it's unclear to what extent young adults' use of social media influences their political awareness, viewpoints, and behavior (Biswas *et al.*, 2014).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to look at how young adults get involved in politics and how they use social media. The specific goals of this study are to:

- Explore the relationship between social media use and political behaviors among young adults.
- Look at the possible good and bad effects of young adults using social media for their political involvement.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

This study is important for a number of reasons. First off, it adds to the body of knowledge on how social media affects political participation, particularly among young adults. Second, it sheds light on the mechanisms underlying the link between political participation and social media use. Thirdly, it draws attention to social media's potential advantages and disadvantages in terms of political participation, with implications for social media companies, political actors, and policymakers. Finally, the results of this study can be used to guide media literacy programmes and initiatives that foster critical thinking in order to encourage a more informed and involved citizenry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies have shown that young adults who use social media have greater political knowledge. According to studies, using social media can increase exposure to political information, which can enhance one's understanding of politics (M. D. Safiullah *et al.*, 2022). According to other studies Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013b, using social media can exacerbate partisan division by making it easier for echo chambers and filter bubbles to form (Zhuravskaya *et al.*, 2020). Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have also been found to facilitate political discussion and information sharing. Due to the difficulty in hearing opposing viewpoints created by these echo chambers and filter bubbles, political attitudes and beliefs may become more entrenched. By making it simpler to disseminate information and calls to action, social media can increase political participation and mobilization (M. Safiullah *et al.*, 2017) have discovered that Facebook and other social media platforms are effective at enlisting people in politics, particularly young adults.

RESEARCH METHODS

A sample of young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 was given a survey to complete as part of the research. The survey asked questions about political knowledge, social media use, attitudes, and behaviors. Online distribution channels for the survey included social media and email. 300 responses in total were gathered and examined.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

Social Media Use and Political Behaviors The study's findings revealed that social media use was linked to online and offline political behaviors among young adults. People who claimed to use social media for political purposes were more likely to engage in political activities such as discussing politics and sharing political content online. However, they were not more likely to engage in traditional political activities like voting or attending political events.

The study gathered information from 300 young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 who responded to an online survey. In order to provide a summary of the sample characteristics and social media usage patterns, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents (85%) reported using social media at least once a day, with Facebook being the most popular platform (82%). 45% of those surveyed said they were politically active and used social media for campaigning (e.g. following political candidates or issues).

Bivariate Analysis

The study used bivariate analyses to examine the connections between young adults' social media use and political behaviors. According to the findings, a strong positive correlation exists between social media use and political knowledge ($r=.25$, $p.001$) and positive political attitudes ($r=.17$, $p.01$).

Multivariate Analysis

Multiple regression analyses were used in the study to examine how the use of social media and other factors affect young adults' interest in politics in their own unique ways ($r=-.13$, $p.05$). Fortunately, social media use and political compromise had a significant negative correlation. After adjusting for demographic factors (age, gender, and education), the results showed that social media use significantly predicted online political behaviors ($=.14$, $p.01$). The study also looked at potential moderating factors, such as political ideology, use of social media platforms, and how often people use social media.

The findings demonstrated that political ideology moderated ($=.13$, $p.05$) the relationship between social media use and political knowledge, with the relationship being stronger for respondents who identified as liberal. The relationship between social media use and online

political behaviors was also moderated by the social media platform used ($\beta = .16, p.01$), with the relationship being stronger for respondents who reported using Twitter. The relationship between social media use and political knowledge was finally moderated by frequency of use ($\beta = .25, p.001$), with the relationship being stronger for respondents who reported using social media more frequently.

Limitations

The study has a number of limitations that should be noted. First, a convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample, which may have limited how broadly the results can be applied to other populations. Second, the study used self-reported data, which can be subject to recall bias or social desirability bias. Finally, the study was cross-sectional in nature, which restricts our ability to draw causal conclusions about the relationships between social media use and political engagement. Despite these limitations, the study offers important insights into these relationships among young adults and highlights any potential moderating factors that may affect them.

CONCLUSION

In the end, the study's findings demonstrate that young adults who use social media tend to have more political knowledge, attitudes, and online political behaviors. However, political polarisation and limited influence on offline political behaviors may also be caused by social media use. The relationship between social media use and political engagement was moderated by political ideology, social media platform use, and frequency of use. The survey results show that young adults' use of social media significantly impacts how involved they are in politics. However, the impact of social media on political engagement may vary depending on individual and contextual factors. According to the study, social

media users among young adults are more likely to be politically active and have a deeper understanding of politics. The results of this study demonstrate that social media has both positive and negative effects on young adults' political participation. The study also discovered that using social media can result in polarisation and echo chambers, which may have detrimental effects on political discourse and democracy. Use of social media can boost political awareness and participation, but it can also create polarization and echo chambers. Teaching young adults how to use media and engage in critical thought will help them navigate social media's challenging and occasionally divisive world. Future studies should look at how social media affects political participation across a range of contexts and age groups.

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