



A STUDY ON INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICAL ATTITUDE AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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ABSTRACT

In general, the development of social media use for political purposes has drawn academics to investigate its various facets. More ways than ever for citizens and political players to communicate and exchange information with one another present new opportunities and challenges for promoting democracy as well as new potential for consolidating democracy globally. All the parties ran for office in the Indian general elections of 2014 and 2019 utilising both traditional and digital media. This study made an effort to investigate the effects of various political media on political attitudes and political involvement. Additionally, the study attempted to investigate the connection between political engagement, political attitude, and use of social media. Additionally, the impact of social media use on political party choice was examined while taking demographic factors into account. Finally, in order to validate the communication needs, the study also examined the material shared by political parties. The study's findings will be crucial for political parties, candidates, and marketers as they decide how to best spread their messages and information based on the reach, influence, and appeal of various media among voters. Furthermore, to use social media effectively in campaigns that target a particular audience, political parties or candidates must strike a balance between traditional media and it. The findings imply that rather than establishing a presence across all social media platforms, companies should concentrate on a certain type of social media where people are involved and information spreads more quickly and effectively.

KEY WORDS: Influence, Political, social media, Political Attitude, and Political Participation

INTRODUCTION

Marketing methods have received extensive study, are expanding from several angles, and have



already begun to be used to the political sphere. (O'Shaughnessy, 1990; Newman, 1999). Numerous scholars from all around the world have attempted to examine the management principles in political scenarios and have discovered a number of variables that may affect how voters behave and cast their ballots. Voters are viewed from a marketing viewpoint as the market, which is further segmented based on factors such as age, gender, interest, and knowledge to help political party candidates better understand the wants, attitudes, and behaviours of voters. However, picking a political party or leader by a voter is similar to selecting a commodity. The concept of communication is used to exchange information, news, or facts with one another using different media to target voters in order to gain their support and political influence. Concepts of consumer behaviour and marketing management are also used to study voter's decision-making regarding party choice. Therefore, political parties and their leaders have occasionally used various media to successfully affect citizens and transmit messages, ideas, and views, etc. For instance, print media—such as newspapers, posters, magazines, and pamphlets—was heavily utilised in the 19th century, but broadcast media—such as radio and television—was heavily employed to reach vast numbers of people in the 20th century.

RECENT TRENDS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

India has overtaken the United States to take second place after China in terms of internet users, according to World Stat. India has 451 million monthly active internet users in the first quarter of 2019, with 65% of those users being between the ages of 12 and 29 and 72% of them using the internet every day, according to IAMAI (Internet and Mobile Association of India). From 2018 to 2023, it is anticipated that overall internet connectivity among Indian users would increase by 7%, or from 24% to 31%. These studies show that internet usage in India is increasing quickly and is projected to increase even more quickly. With 200 million users on WhatsApp, 7.65 million users on Twitter, 300 million users on Facebook, and 41 million users on YouTube monthly, India is also among the top ten countries in the world in terms of the number of users for the most popular social media platforms. 52% of Indian social media users use Facebook, and 18% use Twitter as a news source, according to Reuters. But unlike other social media platforms, Twitter usage is declining at a rate of 2.2% every quarter, according to Hootsuite's Digital 2019 report. According to Social bakers, Narendra Modi's official profiles on Twitter and Facebook are the most popular. Additionally, Punjab is one of the top 5 states in India in terms of internet penetration, and all political parties there are attempting to take advantage of this rise in internet users.



Youth make up over 65% of the population in India, which could explain why social media is so popular. Previous elections have shown that young people are less interested in politics, but social media use has increased their desire to learn about politics online by using social networking sites. 90% of social media users followed the state assembly elections on social media, according to the IMAI Report 2016.

Adopting new social media trends has altered political paradigms since it can reach vast audiences and form new messages in ways that conventional media cannot. From many perspectives, people switched from maintaining a certain website to creating multiple accounts on various SNS. People are using the Internet more and more, which has led to the development of a new political culture. There's a saying about social media that goes, "Traditional media acts as a watchdog, like television and newspapers, but social media acts as a watchdog over watchdogs."

POLITICAL ATTITUDE

"Psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour" is the definition of attitude. Political attitudes are important in a greater sector of attitudes and beliefs, according to one researcher who has looked into the relationship between attitude and political engagement, psychological variables to respondents' political beliefs. Positive political attitudes increase political engagement and the likelihood that someone will cast a ballot.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The goal of every political strategy is to win more votes, which is only feasible if a candidate or political party pays attention to the voter's behaviour and makes an effort to influence him or her in favour of the company's ideology. This enables the political parties and leaders to assess their chances of winning. Any action a voter chooses to perform in support or opposition of a particular political party or candidate is seen as political participation. "those actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or to support government and politics" are referred to as political participation. By taking part in elections or by carrying out support functions, citizens actively participate in influencing the political outcomes. By influencing a political leader's choice as well as their preference, it is intended to influence government policy, according to Voting, attending meetings, taking part in protests or discussions, making donations, joining political organisations, and contacting elected officials are all examples of traditional political



participation. However, modern online political participation also includes things like following politicians on social media, making donations online, taking part in online discussions, joining political organisations online, and more. In various nations, researchers have discovered a strong correlation between media use and political participation. Particularly, it has been discovered that social media significantly affects political engagement in western and Arab nations. In addition, persons who believe in politics, the government, and politicians are more likely to participate in politics.

POLITICAL PARTY CHOICE

Every party's main objective during an election is to win the vote in an atmosphere that is extremely competitive. A party is free to create its products or develop ways to market them through political campaigning in order to win the election. A party's various offerings—political candidates, manifestos, political marketing, and so forth—help voters decide whether to support or oppose them.

"The identification of a political entity's purpose and the scheme through which that purpose will be achieved" is how political marketing strategy is described. Political parties may be interested in learning more about the media consumption patterns that may further influence the voter to choose a political candidate or party of his or her choice. It is also necessary to choose the media for the marketing of product information. This will assist them in developing a more exact and accurate political marketing approach. In addition to media use, studies have found that demographic factors including gender, age, education level, marital status, income, etc. may influence a person's decision to support a specific political party or candidate. As an illustration, women have demonstrated less interest in politics than men, and elderly individuals prefer to engage in politics more than the younger generation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design is the framework that gives the research direction and systematizes it. A research design is a strategy for carrying out a study that specifies how information will be gathered, measured, and how it will be analysed. For this issue, cross-sectional research has been conducted utilising both an exploratory and a descriptive study methodology.

The current study incorporated qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, hence a



mixed-methods strategy was used. The qualitative research made use of secondary materials, including journals, books, publications, articles, etc., to build a theoretical framework. The study also employed content analysis, a qualitative research technique, to look at the official pages of political parties on different websites. A survey using a structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data for the current study, which is a quantitative one.

SAMPLE SIZE

The primary objective of the current inquiry is to examine the effects of political use of social media on political attitude, political involvement, and voters' choice of political party in Punjab. The target market for this is the electorate of Punjab. The sample size was 600 voters, as planned. The sample size of 600 voters is calculated using an online sample size calculator (www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html) based on the total number of voters, confidence level, margin of error, and the total number of votes cast. The sample size of 600 was found to be appropriate for the total number of voters (19043122) as of FNL 2016, which was made available on the website of the Chief Electoral Officer, Punjab, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. After three surveys that were found to be incomplete were excluded from the analysis, the final sample consisted of 600 voters in total.

To remove bias in sample selection, multistage quota sampling was used. Malwa, Majha, and Doaba are the three regions that make up Punjab. A total of five districts, as indicated in figure 3.2, were chosen after 25% of the districts from each area were picked in order to offer a representative sample. On the basis of district population, the Punjabi districts were classified in the second stage from highest to lowest. The best districts from each region were considered before the final five districts of Ludhiana, Patiala, Bathinda, Amritsar, and Jalandhar were selected. Even after taking into account the three regions of Punjab, the same five districts continued to rank in the top five based on district population. A sample of 100 respondents was selected from each district out of a total sample of 600 respondents from the Punjab state. The four main political parties present in Punjab are the Indian National Congress, the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Aam Aadmi Party, and the Shiromani Akali Dal. For the qualitative study, the "Indian National Congress," "Bharatiya Janata Party," and "Aam Aadmi Party" official Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube accounts were used

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study's second goal was to assess the impact of social media, including Facebook, Twitter,



YouTube, and WhatsApp, on political attitudes and involvement. The expected outcomes were attained through the use of regression analysis.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Regression analysis was utilised to generate five models in order to accomplish the goal. Political involvement, political attitude, political knowledge, political efficacy, and political interest were each kept as dependent variables for each regression model, whereas the use of particular social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube for political purposes, was regarded as an independent variable. The main presumptions of running regression analysis, such as normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, the independence of errors, and the lack of multicollinearity, were tested before applying regression analysis using a variety of methods.

First, to check the model fit, the F values for Models 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 are, respectively, 35.165, 22.518, 25.341, 19.387, and 78.359. This indicates that the models are suitable for regression analysis with a P-value of less than 0.05. Second, the average residual across all models is 0.00, demonstrating the residuals' normality. The absence of outliers in the data collection is a further presumption for analysis. Regression analysis is particularly sensitive to outliers, which can be identified using Mahalanobi's Distance value, and an outlier is defined as having extreme values or an abnormal combination of scores that may upset the data. In order to verify that the data set does not contain any outliers, Mahalanobi's Distance value was evaluated and determined to be below the standard values, which was further tested using a boxplot. The data in the Q-Q plot and scatter plot are close to normal, as shown by the normality curve of the dependent variables in each model.

Furthermore, the dataset for regression analysis should not contain any multicollinearity, and the Pearson correlation value should be less than 0.08. The link between political interest and several social media platforms, including Facebook ($r = 0.252$, P-value 0.05), Twitter ($r = 0.178$, P-value 0.05), WhatsApp ($r = 0.373$, P-value 0.05), and YouTube ($r = 0.332$, P-value 0.05), is shown in Table 4.12. Similar correlations have been found between political knowledge and YouTube ($r = 0.302$, P-value 0.05), Twitter ($r = 0.228$, P-value 0.05), WhatsApp ($r = 0.285$, P-value 0.05), Facebook ($r = 0.291$, P-value 0.05), and Social Media ($r = 0.228$, P-value 0.05). Facebook ($r = 0.291$, P-value 0.05), Twitter ($r = 0.228$, P-value 0.05), WhatsApp ($r = 0.285$, P-



value 0.05), YouTube ($r = 0.302$, P-value 0.05), and Social Media ($r = 0.228$, P-value 0.05) all showed a positive correlation with political effectiveness. Facebook ($r = 0.291$, P-value 0.05), Twitter ($r = 0.228$, P-value 0.05), WhatsApp ($r = 0.285$, P-value 0.05), YouTube ($r = 0.302$, P-value 0.05), and Social Media ($r = 0.228$, P-value 0.05) all showed a correlation with political attitudes. There is a substantial moderate linear link between political participation and Facebook ($r = 0.291$, P-value 0.05), Twitter ($r = 0.228$, P-value 0.05), WhatsApp ($r = 0.285$, P-value 0.05), YouTube ($r = 0.302$, P-value 0.05), and Social Media ($r = 0.228$, P-value 0.05). Additionally, all independent variables have correlations that are less than the industry standard ($r = 0.8$). All of the regression analysis's presumptions were thus reasonably met.

TABLE 1: CORRELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA, POLITICAL INTEREST, POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE, POLITICAL EFFICACY, POLITICAL ATTITUDE, POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	WhatsApp
Facebook	1			
Twitter	0.685*	1		
YouTube	0.643*	0.629*	1	
WhatsApp	0.523*	0.430*	0.678*	1
Political Interest	0.252*	0.178*	0.332*	0.373*
Political Knowledge	0.354*	0.305*	0.367*	0.342*
Political Efficacy	0.284*	0.202*	0.326*	0.330*
Political Attitude	0.351*	0.264*	0.415*	0.432*
Political Participation	0.512*	0.441*	0.561*	0.536*

*Pvalue \leq 0.01

Additionally, it was found that a closer look revealed that Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and WhatsApp to have a stronger association with political engagement than political attitude, interest, efficacy, and knowledge. Additionally, while comparing various social media platforms, WhatsApp has the highest connection of YouTube with political activity, followed



by Facebook and Twitter. Different social media platforms with political mindset and political efficacy have shown a similar pattern. For political knowledge, there is a little deviation in the pattern, with YouTube having a stronger correlation than Facebook, followed by WhatsApp and Twitter. Furthermore, a very distinct pattern has been seen for the correlation of political interest with other social media, with WhatsApp being found to be more significant than YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Thus, whereas Twitter has the least positive correlation with these factors, YouTube has a greater association with political engagement, attitude, efficacy, and knowledge.

POLITICAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL ATTITUDE

The study then moved on to look at the influence of particular social media on political attitude after looking at the association. In order to quantify the relative influence of social media on political attitude, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp were included as independent variables in the first block of the provided regression model 5 in Table 2. Values in Table 2 showed that predictors for political attitude account for 21.6% of the total variance and 18.1% of it. Three social media platforms, WhatsApp ($\beta = -0.59$, $t = 4.688$, P value 0.05), YouTube ($\beta = 0.325$, $t = 2.985$, P value 0.05), and Facebook ($\beta = 0.128$, $t = 2.272$, P value 0.05), are found to have positive influence among the multiple variables in the respective model, while Twitter ($\beta = -0.147$, $t = -1.039$, $P > 0.05$) has a statistically insignificant negative effect on political attitude. WhatsApp, however, has been found to be a more effective positive influencer than Facebook and YouTube. Additionally, the overall impact of social media is discovered to be statistically significant favourable for political attitude ($\beta = 0.101$, $t = 10.540$, $p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected (H_0 (3)).

TABLE 2: REGRESSION ANALYSIS (MODEL 6)

Model 6: Political Attitude	β	t
Facebook	0.128*	2.272*
Twitter	-0.147	-1.039
YouTube	0.325*	2.985*
WhatsApp	0.591*	4.688*



Adjusted R ²	0.227	
F Value	35.176*	
Social Media	0.101*	10.540*
Adjusted R ²	0.192	
F Value	111.075*	

*Confidence level 95 per cent

CONCLUSION

The study provides insight into how using social media for political information may affect political involvement, efficacy, knowledge, and interest. First, this study looked at how social media use—specifically, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp—relates to political interest, effectiveness, knowledge, attitude, and engagement. The findings show a favourable relationship between social media use and political interest, effectiveness, knowledge, attitude, and involvement. Results also show that compared to other social media platforms, WhatsApp is more prominent in its political activity. More importantly, the findings show that social media use as a whole has a greater impact on all dependent variables, particularly political engagement and political attitude. Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp have all had good influence. Twitter's effect on political interest, effectiveness, knowledge, attitude, and participation, however, is shown to be negligible.

There have been very few studies conducted in India, despite the fact that social media is a frequently used phenomena. Many academics have sought to study the impact of social media usage for political engagement, notably in western and Arab nations, from various angles. This study examined how social media use for political purposes affected Punjab, India's political attitudes, involvement, and party choice decisions. Thus, with evident distinctions in media use, political attitude, and engagement, the results emphasised certain crucial features of news consumption through various media in Punjab state of India. The following is a list of the study's main conclusions:

Voting by citizens is typically the sole way for them to participate in politics. However, there are occasions when people express their support for a politician by pushing others to vote,



participating in debates about the candidate that may affect their vote, and then going to the candidate's profile on a social media website. People rarely engage in politics on a regular basis, but when they do, it usually takes the form of attending political events or speeches, taking part in protests, volunteering for political parties, wearing party colours in public, meeting with elected officials in person, or sending an email to them. Giving money (funds) to a politician or political party is the least active kind of participation.

Television and social media are determined to be the most popular and often utilised media for political information gathering, while radio, political rallies, and direct contact with candidates are found to be the least popular.

Media consumption unquestionably has a big impact on voters' interest in politics. However, because different media have varying effects on relationships and significance, media selection and impact should be carefully considered if you want to get voters interested in politics. The usage of new media by political actors and voters has increased significantly in recent years, particularly since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's victory in the 2014 general election, making it the most effective medium for generating positive engagement.

The development of political attitude is significantly influenced by media use. Almost all media, with the exception of radio and television, were shown to contribute favourably to political efficacy. The level of influence varies, though, with social media having a bigger impact than other media outlets when it comes to spreading political news than the newspaper. Even while social media has changed the political landscape, conventional media still matter, and newspapers in particular still have a significant impact. Traditional media cannot, therefore, be disregarded.

The use of media is discovered to have a substantial impact on political understanding. Nevertheless, each media outlet has a different impact on political knowledge; some have a considerable or negligible beneficial impact, while others have a negative impact. Political gatherings, newspapers, and social media are all therefore favourably related to political knowledge.

Social media and political interest, effectiveness, knowledge, attitude, and participation are positively correlated. Particularly, WhatsApp is the most popular social media channel for political activities.



Political participation and political attitude are shown to be the two areas where social media use as a whole has the greatest impact. Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp have all had good influence. Twitter's effect on political interest, effectiveness, knowledge, attitude, and participation, however, is shown to be negligible.

Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp are the platforms with the most influence in terms of political awareness, effectiveness, and involvement. The only platforms proven to significantly increase political interest are WhatsApp and YouTube.

Social media and political preference are positively correlated, according to a study. Individually, it has been discovered that using Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and YouTube has a beneficial influence on choosing a particular party. Facebook users are more likely to support the BJP, followed by AAP and INC, in elections. On the other hand, AAP has a greater propensity to win over voters who use Twitter or YouTube more frequently. Similarly, using WhatsApp for political purposes may influence users to support INC.

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