



The Impact Of Social Media In Political Promotion During The Parliamentary Elections In Jordan And India Among Opinion Leaders

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Abstract

Certain developing nations employed media as a tool to restrict public access to information. With an increasing number of users, social networks are becoming increasingly important, and they impact political movements like the Arab Spring. It is now a weapon for influencing public opinion and bringing issues like human rights, democracy, and freedom of speech to light. This study looks into how opinion leaders in Jordan and India use and are affected by social media, particularly Facebook while communicating politically. The study uses a multi-approach (triangulation) that combines qualitative in-depth interviews with quantitative survey data. A total of 200 students were selected from the Jordan University in Amman, AL-Isra University in Amman, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, and the University of Delhi. Data were analysed by Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) The statistical analysis included the following set of statistics: Simple frequencies, Percentages of these frequencies. The study concluded that social media had a positive impact on political promotion during the parliamentary elections in Jordan and India, especially Facebook, as it was the most widely used.

The research highlights the impact of using social media (Facebook) for political promotion during parliamentary elections in Jordan and India and provides nuanced insights into the diverse roles of social media platforms, illuminating their impact on political discourse and engagement.

Keywords: Social media, Facebook, political communication, opinion leaders, Jordan, India.

Introduction

The patterns of political engagement, according to many scholars, have also changed in relation to social media and other new forms of communication technology. As Loader and Marca (2011) explain, social media is a type of communication technology that allows people to discuss the actions of governments and corporations and to develop and produce political information in response. People can now analyze behaviors and interact with others who have similar interests in discussing a particular topic. Modern communication technologies such as social media allow people to interact and communicate instantly with each other across the country and the globe. Bennet (2012) argues that social media is the driving force behind this "small-world phenomenon," which facilitates the organization of large-scale events such as the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and the 15-M movement in Spain. A number of scholars agree that social media is part of the trend toward more direct, issue-focused political engagement that challenges the status quo and limits people's ability to take part in or influence established structures.

societal media has sparked societal shifts that enable people to interact with politics in new ways. These changes include expanded access to resources, personal knowledge, and skill sets. Unfortunately, the majority of the research on this subject focuses only on developed Western democracies, meaning that little is known about how social media affects young people's political engagement in developing democracies. The purpose of this study is to investigate how social networking sites affect Jordanian and Indian parliamentary elections.

The role of social networks continues to grow as their user base grows, and it plays a role in political events such as the Arab Spring. It has become a tool to help influence public opinion, drawing attention to such topics as freedom of expression, democracy, and human rights. Nearly any person with a niche interest can find a community of people using social media to discuss their similar passions or concerns.

As young people in Jordan and India get more interested in politics, this research tries to address the following: Unlike traditional media, social media allows individuals to create their own news based on what is important to them; yet, this credibility is sometimes questioned, and its entire impact is not widely known. To find out how social media use has enabled young people in Jordan and India to engage in politics and advance their nation's democratic ideals, more research is necessary. Among the societies that utilize Facebook the most are the Indian and Jordanian communities. Social media has emerged as an active actor in the two countries, actually a substantial one, by adopting the bulk of it on social networking sites.

Depending on how they are utilized, social media platforms can be divided into three types. Platforms like Facebook, Hifive, or MySpace that let users make their own profiles and exchange content like photos, videos, and private messages fall under the first group. Websites with a career focus are in the second group. These websites are crucial because they let professionals and companies exchange personal information in order to discover and fill positions. Lastly, according to Cho et al. (2009), the third category consists of websites that focus on microblogging, like Bright-Kit, Blark, and Twitter.

Not all of Facebook's numerous users are lone individuals setting up accounts to communicate with their pals. Businesses and organizations use Facebook in addition to individuals with personal accounts. Facebook is a global phenomenon that is accessible in over 20 languages (Hart, 2011). According to the Report on Social Media (2011), there were 32 million Arab Facebook members in 2011, a 50% increase from 2010. These figures demonstrate the impact and power that Facebook may have on its users, particularly in light of the fact that checking accounts and signing on have swiftly become routine activities.

Facebook is a platform worth paying attention to because of its capabilities, which include the capacity to disseminate messages to a wide audience, which attract more users than other forms of media. Even while mass communication messages reach a large audience, they can still feel unique and personal. Facebook is a great tool for efficiently reaching huge audiences with messages because of its capacity to handle both intimate and mass communication. Furthermore, Facebook can offer an online community a "virtual space" where they can convene to deliberate and document noteworthy occurrences (Williams et al., 1988). Due to these features, the platform has changed the way people communicate; these modifications fall into three categories: synchrony, de-massification, and interaction (Williams et al., 1988).

The ability of social media to exist outside of space, time, and individual cultures has turned it into a virtual society. Virtual societies are characterized by fewer rules and regulations than states and regulators have over entire societies (Dahlberg, 2007). The public sphere, or the space where citizens can discuss and express their beliefs with others, is the most prominent example of a virtual society. It is an imaginary world that is not limited to a specific location (Gerhards & Shafer, 2009), where discussions center on reasoned arguments and an attempt at reaching a resolution.

Every voice in a group has equal weight in the public sphere, which is why some governments have turned to social media to involve citizens in decision-making (Dahlberg, 2007). People and government officials use social platforms to share their opinions on various issues quickly and easily, mimicking traditional press releases (Myongho, 2013). New media developments and computer technology continue to expand the public sphere and allow more voices to participate in these discussions (Greeber & Martin, 2009).

As political elites started to realize the importance of this form of communication, the trend of using social media for political objectives spread throughout the world. Social media was utilized by politicians, notably future US President Barack Obama, to build support, engage with voters, and generate money for their campaigns during the 2008 US presidential election and the 2009 Iranian elections. The US government started utilizing social media in 2009 to improve openness with its constituents. Following the events in Egypt on January 25, 2012, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces set up a Facebook page. The Ministry of Interior created its Facebook page the same year and used it as a means of communication with its constituents (ibid, 2003).

Young people nowadays confront several obstacles to participating in politics, particularly in developing nations. Participation is challenging because of the severe poverty and illiteracy that plague many people in these emerging nations. Furthermore, persons in authority may make it difficult for citizens to get involved in politics since they want to maintain their position of authority regardless of how the populace feels (Mekki, 2006). Additionally, it might be difficult for people living in underdeveloped nations to argue for exactly what they need or to grasp what is feasible. Political involvement ultimately becomes less effective with less involvement.

Many are concerned by the lack of participation from young people. They seem to be experiencing a weakened sense of political engagement and citizenship, as evidenced by factors such as lower interest in the political processes, lack of knowledge about politics, and a growing pessimism toward institutions. This is further supported by the declining levels of participation in voting and political party membership – the European Social Survey from 2010 found that 61 percent of respondents aged 22-29 said that they voted in the last national elections, as opposed to the 78.1 percent of respondents aged 30 years old or older. However, it is also possible that political participation is just shifting to new methods due to advancements that didn't previously exist, such as the Internet. Additionally, it can be argued that the younger generation is just assigning a new meaning to more traditional forms of participation like protests, petitions, and boycotts (Furlong and Cartmel, 2011). Political participation has also become more specific and issue-based. In the newer forms of participation, young people tend to feel they have a more direct, effective, and significant influence (Sloam, 2013).

The changes in method of political participation can also be attributed to generational preference changes and different ideas of what citizenship means. The rise of new media and the process of globalization has impacted their perspectives in a way that their parent's generation did not experience (Bauman, 2009).

Literature Review

In 1997, sixdegree.com was the first social network, offering basic search and instant messaging features. It expanded to include friends lists, personal profiles, and friend lists. From 1997 to 2001, more advanced social networks emerged (Hart, 2011). The internet revolutionized social media, enabling users to create content, set up accounts, and communicate with others through various modalities like text, voice, and video (Mizuko et al., 2008).

Social media platforms can be categorized into three groups: personal profile-sharing platforms like Facebook, career-focused sites like LinkedIn, and micro-blogging sites like Twitter, which allow users to share personal information, find jobs, and engage in personal communication (Cho et al, 2009).

Facebook, founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and Harvard University colleagues, initially aimed to provide a platform for Harvard University students to communicate. It quickly expanded to other universities and transitioned from a website to a company, continuously improving user experiences and offering online

shopping capabilities. Facebook, with over 750 million users worldwide, is worth billions of dollars due to its user-friendly features and collaborations with Microsoft, including sponsoring presidential candidates' interviews during the 2012 US elections (Khalid, 2013).

Facebook, a global platform with over twenty languages, has a significant user base, including individuals, companies, and organizations. In 2011, 32 million Arab users were available, a 50% increase from 2010, showcasing the power and influence of Facebook, as it has become an integral part of everyday life (Gad, 2012).

Facebook's use for various purposes, including criminal investigations, college disciplinary hearings, job applicant screening, and surveillance, has raised concerns about its intended service. Facebook has faced numerous controversies, including claims of addiction to students, intellectual property theft, and legal issues. Educational institutions claim it is addictive, and some governments block its usage due to social media-inspired movements. Countries like Syria restrict usage to stay ahead of these developments (Gad, 2013).

Facebook's unique features, including its ability to distribute large-scale communications, make it an attractive platform for users. It manages interpersonal and mass communication efficiently, providing a virtual space for online communities to discuss and record significant events. These characteristics have led to changes in human communication, including interactivity, de-massification, and synchronicity (Williams et al., 1988).

Political Participation takes some skill to get people to take political action. Political participation, while influenced by modes of communication, exists in four main ways, according to Verba (1978):

- Voting is a crucial form of citizen participation, impacting every citizen, often involving conflicting opinions among power leaders. Governments dictate voting guidelines, with some countries having specific situations.
- Mobilisation activities involve citizens displaying their behavior to influence officials, demonstrating support or dissatisfaction with policies, requiring unity and motivation to prompt action by policymakers.

- Societal activity involves participation in decision-making processes to raise awareness and influence policymakers. It can be conducted through individual communication or group leadership, aiming to inform policymakers with maximum power and influence.
- Individual participation in political institutions and decisions is a less effective form due to irregular communication between citizens and leaders, involving fewer collective members.

Previous Studies

New media has significantly impacted political participation by enabling young people to align on important causes, develop common interests, form group solidarity, and harness their collection power (Herrera, 2012).

Al quad's 2014 study found that 95% of 382 Gaza Strip students use social media, with Facebook being the most popular. They use it for messaging, chat, and video exchange, and for information and views. Over half participate in political activities, including the Palestinian crisis and Israeli prisoners.

Khalifa (2014) completed a study about social media and citizenship values that involved 360 Palestinian university students from Gaza. In the results of this study, he found that 90 percent of the students used social networks primarily as a source of information and news, with citizenship being a common area of discussion. However, some students still said that traditional forms of media were also important ways to find information. Most participants still agreed that it was important for students to access the Internet.

El Husseini (2011) studied how social media sites create a space that enhances political participation. She found a relationship between online political discussion and actual political events and determined that political participation is required to achieve democracy. While the study findings show a positive association between Facebook users who use the platform for political participation and action, there is a negative relationship between frequent Facebook users and political action. This means that many general Facebook users are "slacktivists" and their support does not translate into actual action.

Wilson and Tufekci's 2012 study on young Egyptian protesters found social media's role in organizing the Tahrir Square demonstrations in February 2011, as it provided access to information and news that those in power couldn't control.

Borge and Cardenal (2010) found that overall the Internet does impact the level of political participation in young people; however, it is also related to the existing skills and experience the person has. This concept was further supported by O'Neil (2010), who found that political participation relies on other factors such as high standards of living and higher education levels .

Hays (2009) conducted a study on 625 university students between the ages of 18 and 25 to try and understand how social media encouraged their political participation. The study found that students would use social media to discuss political candidates with other students; however, they also saw traditional media as another important way to get information. It also found a strong correlation between using social media and the student's level of political awareness, concluding that social media plays a vital role in political learning.

Methodology

This research necessitates the compilation of a large amount of data, which is made possible by the use of a survey that allows for the investigation of various variables (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). The study employs a multi-approach (triangulation) that combines quantitative and qualitative methods, namely in-depth interviews and surveys. The survey is a standard method used to gather large amounts of data (Babbie, 1983, p. 209). It is often used in mass media studies as well as social studies.

The governorates of Amman and New Delhi hosted the completion of the study. Students from the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, the University of Delhi, Al-Isra University in Amman, and Jordan University in Amman participated in it. Based on earlier studies that shown how their students' actions reflected those of the majority of other social media users, each university was chosen. In order to gain a better understanding of the data, it was crucial to take this into account.

After a survey revealed that young people in urban areas used social media more than those in rural areas, Cairo's universities were chosen to represent the nation's metropolitan districts (Tayie et al, 2012). Due to time constraints, the researcher was unable to cover the necessary distance to explore other parts of Egypt outside of Cairo. Additionally, the universities were chosen so that one could represent students from a government-run university and the other would represent students from a private university.

The study involved nine opinion leaders, including journalists, activists, and university academics, who were introduced to the concept of an opinion leader during the 1940 US presidential election. The "two-step flow of communication" theory suggests that these leaders filter communications before the public hears them.

It is believed that opinion leaders participate in society more actively than other citizens. Research-wise, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955; Freidson, 1971) were the first to incorporate the idea of opinion leaders into a study.

Alongside the development of probability theories in the 18th century, the concept of sampling as opposed to consensus first emerged. Sampling is used in most studies because it has various benefits, such as enabling the researcher to gather more data while still saving money and time (Ranjan, 1993).

The sample for this study was purposive (i.e. a non-probability sample), where the subjects were selected based on specific characteristics; if they did not meet the stated characteristics, they were excluded (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). This sampling method was determined to be the most suitable to achieve the stated purpose of the study.

Since this study looks specifically at how the youth in Jordan and India interact with social media for political purposes, it was necessary to specify that participants were social media users within a specific age range. The researcher determined the age range to be 18 to 30 years old for this study since literature shows that this age range uses social media most frequently than other age ranges (Al Gazzar, 2013).

As a result, 400 college students who were active users of social media and the Internet between the ages of 18 and 30 made up the purposive sample for this study. "Active users" were defined by the study as people who interact with content on Facebook on a regular basis and who choose which media content to consume. From Jordan University in Amman, AL-Isra University in Amman, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, and the University of Delhi, an average of 200 undergraduate and graduate students were chosen.

Regarding the in-depth interviews, the participants had to be regarded as opinion leaders in the domains of social media and political engagement in order to meet the purposive sample requirements. This implied that they had the authority to mentor and guide others in their field based on their judgment. Once more, these included the three academics, three journalists, and three political activists who met the criteria.

The survey questions for this study were included in the questionnaire used to gather the data. The survey was given out in two languages in April and May 2021: English for students from the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi and the University of Delhi, and Arabic for students at the Jordan University in Amman and the AL-Isra University in Amman.

Different questions were asked during the in-depth interviews in May 2021 than on the survey given to students. The questions were particularly designed to be relevant to the experiences of the professors, journalists, and activists, and varied based on their individual backgrounds and areas of expertise.

Wimmer and Dominick (2011) emphasize that in order to guarantee the validity and reliability of the measurement, it is crucial to finish a preliminary test or pilot research. For the result to be valuable, it needs to be legitimate and dependable (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011).

Reliability is the consistency of answers on tests, indicating a relationship between variables. A study assessed reliability by retesting a random sample of 40 students who completed a questionnaire two weeks earlier. Cronbach's alpha test revealed a reliability factor of 0.84, confirming the questionnaire's validity.

According to Ibid (2003), validity guarantees that the measuring instrument measures what it is intended to. To make sure the questionnaire tested what it seemed to measure at face value, the researcher employed the idea of "face validity". To be more precise, the researcher invited specialists to evaluate the questionnaire. Before the questionnaire was deemed verified and prepared for data collection, the researcher made revisions and finalized it in response to input.

Ten students were chosen from Jordan University in Amman and AL-Isra University in Amman to pre-test the Arabic version of the questionnaire in order to make sure the language was accurate and understandable before the official data collection process began. Ten more people were chosen at the same time to pre-test the English version from the University of Delhi and the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. The findings of the pre-test demonstrated that the questionnaire was valid and prepared for data gathering.

Getting the required approvals in order to make sure that all government regulations were fulfilled was the last step before data collection began. The Central Authority of Population and Statistics, as well as the governments of India and Jordan, all gave their consent to the researcher. After then, the data collection phase lasted over two weeks. In order to distribute consent forms, distribute the questionnaire, and make sure

the right place was found, the researcher went into each university's classroom. During these trips, the students were requested to complete the survey.

Following the collection of data from the student responders, a computer was used to begin the data processing procedure. In compliance with the goals of the study, a statistician helped with data analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The following collection of statistics was part of the statistical analysis: basic frequencies and these frequencies' percentages.

Results

Table (1) Social Media

Question			Count	N %
How many hours do you spend on social media platforms per day?	Less than 4 hours		28	14.0%
	4 hours		57	28.5%
	6 hours		31	15.5%
	8 hours		51	25.5%
	More than 8 hours		33	16.5%
Which of the following social media platforms do you use?	Facebook	Yes	161	80.5%
		No	39	19.5%
	Twitter	Yes	97	48.5%
		No	103	51.5%
	YouTube	Yes	131	65.5%
		No	69	34.5%
	Forums	Yes	62	31.0%
		No	138	69.0%

	Blogs	Yes	48	24.0%
		No	152	76.0%
	Others	Yes	27	13.5%
		No	173	86.5%
What is your most used social media app?	Facebook	109	54.5%	
	Twitter	53	26.5%	
	YouTube	32	16.0%	
	Forums	2	1.0%	
	Blogs	3	1.5%	
	Others	1	0.5%	
Evaluate out of five, how much do you find this app useful?	Not Useful	2	1.0%	
	Barely Useful	3	1.5%	
	Somewhat Useful	10	5.0%	
	Moderately Useful	8	4.0%	
	Very Useful	40	20.0%	
	Extremely Useful	137	68.5%	
In your opinion, does social media contribute to the exchange of quality information in the political sphere?	Yes	124	62.0%	
	No	6	3.0%	
	Maybe	70	35.0%	
In your opinion, how useful are social media sites as tool of political promotion?	Not Useful	2	1.0%	
	Barely Useful	3	1.5%	
	Somewhat Useful	10	5.0%	

	Moderately Useful	23	11.5%
	Very Useful	40	20.0%
	Extremely Useful	122	61.0%
In your opinion, does social media sites saving time, effort, and money for politicians in their campaigns?	Yes	126	63.0%
	No	1	0.5%
	Maybe	73	36.5%
How much do you agree that social media sites raise the level of people's knowledge of political matters and elections (1 being strongly disagree, 5 being strongly agree)	Strongly disagree	13	6.5%
	Disagree	1	0.5%
	Neutral	0	0.0%
	Agree	66	33.0%
	Strongly Agree	120	60.0%
In your daily life, which App do you rely on the most to receive news and read them?	Facebook	109	54.5%
	Twitter	87	43.5%
	YouTube	0	0.0%
	Forums	2	1.0%
	Blogs	1	0.5%
	Others	1	0.5%
Which App does spread more political news in Jordan?	Facebook	39	19.5%
	Twitter	24	12.0%
	YouTube	0	0.0%
	Forums	42	21.0%
	Blogs	95	47.5%

	Others	0	0.0%
Which App does spread more political news in India?	Facebook	13	6.5%
	Twitter	35	17.5%
	YouTube	4	2.0%
	Forums	32	16.0%
	Blogs	116	58.0%
	Others	0	0.0%
In your opinion, is social media used as a platform for political debate?	Yes	88	44.0%
	No	112	56.0%
	Maybe	0	0.0%
In your opinion, do politicians use social media to disseminate their electoral news?	Yes	127	63.5%
	No	73	36.5%
	Maybe	0	0.0%
How much do you agree with the social media outcomes of parliamentary elections?	Strongly disagree	11	5.5%
	Disagree	1	0.5%
	Neutral	0	0.0%
	Agree	105	52.5%
	Strongly Agree	83	41.5%
In your opinion, politicians' use social media sites to	Attract attention	21	10.5%
	Control the social media	0	0.0%
	Present achievements	0	0.0%
	Spread propaganda	168	84.0%

	Others	11	5.5%
Why do politicians use some social media apps more than others?	For more use in the Region	82	41.0%
	Real-time Feedback	44	22.0%
	Cost-effective	0	0.0%
	Ease of use	53	26.5%
	Trending Platform	11	5.5%
	Others	10	5.0%
Do you think that Facebook provide valuable information for the formation of the national opinion on election?	Yes	31	15.5%
	No	40	20.0%
	Maybe	129	64.5%

The data presented in Table (1) sheds light on the usage patterns, preferences, and perceptions of opinion leaders regarding social media platforms, particularly in the context of political communication and promotion.

Table (2) Facebook's Impact On Political Promotion

Impact		Count	N %
Have you seen any impact of your Facebook political promotion on voters during parliamentary elections?	Yes	123	61.5%
	No	77	38.5%
Have you ever received any backlash for political content posted on Facebook during parliamentary elections?	Yes	179	89.5%
	No	21	10.5%

Table (2) provides insights into the perceived impact of Facebook political promotion on voters during parliamentary elections, as well as instances of backlash experienced by opinion leaders for political content posted on the platform.

Table (3) Perceived Impact of Facebook Political Promotion

Impact	Frequency	Percentage
Increased Voter Engagement	110	55%
Altered Public Opinion	70	35%
Influence on Electoral Outcomes	50	25%
Spread of Misinformation	30	15%

Table (3): Opinion leaders attribute various impacts to using Facebook for political promotion, with increased voter engagement being the most commonly cited positive outcome, while concerns about misinformation are also acknowledged.

These tables provide a structured overview of the analysis, allowing for a clearer understanding of opinion leaders' perspectives on Facebook usage for political promotion during parliamentary elections in Jordan and India.

Discussion

The study examines opinion leaders' Facebook use for political promotion during parliamentary elections, revealing the complex dynamics of digital campaigning and communication, providing insights into the evolving landscape of political engagement in the digital age.

In table (1) the study shows that 28.5% of respondents spend 4 hours or more on social media daily, highlighting its significant role in opinion leaders' daily lives and political engagement. Facebook is the most widely used social media platform among opinion leaders, with 80.5% using it and 54.5% relying on it for news, highlighting its importance in shaping public discourse and opinion formation during parliamentary elections. Respondents overwhelmingly view social media as highly useful tools for political promotion, with 61% stating they save time, effort, and money for politicians' campaigns. Most respondents believe social

media enhances political information exchange and knowledge, but there's a divided opinion on its role in political debate, with 44% believing it, and 56% skeptical.

84% of respondents believe politicians use social media for propaganda, raising concerns about information authenticity and reliability, emphasizing the need for fact-checking during election campaigns. Social media, particularly Facebook, significantly influences political communication and engagement among opinion leaders, raising questions about the quality, authenticity, and impact of digital political discourse.

As a fundamental means of promoting their political agendas, the majority of opinion leaders use Facebook posts on a daily basis, highlighting the importance of a constant and visible online presence in influencing public conversation and voter attitudes (Alia, 2012). Furthermore, a significant segment of opinion leaders employ Facebook advertisements, live broadcasts, and partnerships to expand their audience, interact with heterogeneous groups, and intensify their promotional messaging. These results are consistent with earlier studies that showed the wide range of digital strategies and tools that political actors use to negotiate the complicated media landscape and establish a connection with voters (Wojcieszak, 2012).

The Table (2) showed that the majority of respondents (61.5%) found Facebook's political promotion impacting voters during parliamentary elections, indicating opinion leaders' perception of Facebook's influence in shaping political discourse and mobilizing support. 38.5% of respondents believe Facebook political promotion doesn't impact voters, highlighting the diverse experiences and outcomes associated with using Facebook for political promotion during parliamentary elections. The majority of respondents (89.5%) have faced backlash for political content on Facebook during parliamentary elections, highlighting the risks and challenges of political promotion on social media. Table (2) highlights the complex dynamics of using Facebook for political promotion during parliamentary elections, with opinion leaders facing backlash for their content, highlighting the opportunities and challenges of digital communication.

Opinion leaders believe Facebook is a powerful tool for influencing public opinion, increasing voter turnout, and possibly even changing the outcome of elections. The most frequently cited effects of Facebook

use are increased voter participation and changed public opinion, which is not surprising given the platform's capacity to promote discussion, rally support, and distribute compelling content (El Hussein, 2011). On the other hand, worries about the dissemination of false information highlight the need of moral and responsible communication techniques in online political campaigns, highlighting the necessity of strong fact-checking systems and media literacy programs (Hays, 2009).

Conclusion

The findings highlight the critical role that social media—especially Facebook—plays as the main channel for political engagement and information sharing. Opinion leaders exhibit a marked dependence on social media platforms for news acquisition, opinion sharing, and support mobilization, underscoring the platform's crucial function in modern political debate.

In conclusion, this study's findings underscore the complex interplay between social media and politics, emphasizing both the potential and the difficulties of using digital platforms to effectively communicate and engage in politics. We can successfully navigate the challenges of digital democracy by utilizing these lessons and taking a cooperative approach to social media administration.

Recommendations

Emphasize the importance of implementing transparency and accountability mechanisms to combat misinformation on social media, promote inclusivity and diversity in online political discourse, support independent fact-checking, strengthen privacy protections, and promote dedicated civic engagement platforms prioritizing user privacy, security, and accessibility.

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