

# Social Media and Politics: The Potential of Social Media for Education and Civic Engagement

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## Abstract

This paper looks at the links between educating people and getting involved in politics to show how social media can help these areas. This study looks into how online social networks make it easier for people to get involved in politics in ways other than voting. This study looks at how social media affects democratic accountability, information sharing, and public participation by using ideas from organisational studies, media studies, and political science. This study looks into how young Jordanians' use of social media affects their voting habits, their membership in political groups, and their involvement in protests. This study uses quantitative analysis of poll data to show that among Jordanian teens and young adults aged 18 to 30, there are strong links between being politically active and using social media. The results show that social media can help young people become more publicly active, informed, and involved. However, polarisation and false information can also make this harder. Because gender affects the link between political participation and social media use, it is important to use targeted strategies that aim to reduce demographic differences. According to the study, social media can have an effect on current politics. It also calls for smart use of social media to avoid any bad effects.

**Keywords:** Social media, political engagement, civic participation, youth activism, information dissemination.

## Introduction

People feel social media can help them get involved in their communities. Social media may revive non-parliamentarian political engagement, or engagement beyond liberal citizenship (such as voting), and improve democratic accountability worldwide. Citizen participation in politics is one of the biggest problems facing democracies in the Western Hemisphere. These narratives have shown new grassroots power decentralisation and self-organization potential, such as direct democracy, and direct problem-solving without mainstream media middlemen. However, opponents have noted social media's challenges for political activity beyond parliament (De Zúñiga et al., 2014). These reports have highlighted commercial interests, individuality, "clicktivism" (non-committal engagement), security, and censorship. This book scientifically investigates non-parliamentarian political activity via social media without presuming anything.

Civic participation encompasses various political activities outside of parliament. (Loader et al., 2014) noted that different civic involvement definitions affect social media's empowerment potential. Thus, we must first address fundamental questions about political engagement and its ability to move "beyond protest" before assessing civic engagement beyond protest on social media. This book addresses these issues by bridging political science, organisational and management studies, and media studies. These

studies on civic engagement's numerous facets—including its ability to go beyond protest—can inform future appraisals.

### **Civic engagement**

The US civic education system is old. People have long assumed that schools are the greatest location for students to learn about civic engagement and how to become engaged citizens, which is crucial for American democracies. Horace Mann stated in an 1842 civic address that most people were corrupt and unaware of their duties. While all nations require morality and intelligence from their leaders, he said that in the US, since everyone is a leader, these traits are required of every person. He then stressed civic education and instruction. Mann noted that formal education can give citizens the wisdom and character attributes needed to fully participate in American democracy (Sweet-Cushman, 2019).

Since the 1890s, the US has prioritised teaching civics, especially in social studies classrooms, though civic participation can be done outside of school. John Dewey believed schools were miniature societies and the greatest location for kids to learn communal work.

He believed schools should model democracy for students, and this remains true.

### **Objective**

- Examine the impact of social media on political engagement and discourse.
- Explore the potential of social media for information dissemination and classroom learning.
- This study examines how social media motivates civic engagement and democratic action.

### **Literature Review**

The paper “Social media and political communication: a social media analytics framework” by Stefan Stieglitz and Linh Dang-Xuan emphasises on social media integration into political communication has become essential, transforming public discourse and information sharing. With their enormous user populations, social media sites like Facebook and Twitter are crucial for political participation. Businesses have embraced social media analytics, but political analysis lacks organised frameworks. Social media encourages openness by facilitating direct communication between the public and officials. But there's a divide because politicians don't fully comprehend social media discussions. Scholars put forth customised frameworks for political social media analytics, providing a range of methods for monitoring and evaluating data on various platforms. The purpose of these frameworks is to help political institutions better comprehend public opinion and increase citizen participation. The body of research highlights how social media analytics are becoming increasingly significant in influencing political discourse and decision-making procedures.

The paper ‘Social Media and Politics’ by Andrea Calderaro emphasizes the vast impact that digital platforms have on political processes, communication, and citizen engagement is explored in the literature on social media and politics. Scholars investigate how social media sites like Facebook and Twitter have empowered citizens, as demonstrated by the Arab Spring, by upending conventional media narratives and democratising the sharing of information. During this time, citizen journalism became a transformative force, providing other stories and points of view. While evaluating the effects of digital technology on politics, experts warn against techno-determinist viewpoints and stress the significance of taking historical, cultural, and political factors into account. Additionally, studies show how activists use social media to get beyond restrictions and spread their message around the world. Overall, the research

highlights how intricate and varied Social Media's influence on political environments is, stressing the importance of contextual knowledge in order to fully appreciate their complicated social impacts.

The paper 'The Role of (Social) media in political polarization: a systematic review' by Emily Kubin and Christian von Sikorski's comprehensive review investigates the relationship between political polarisation and social media. They discover a rise in interest in content analysis, exposure to divisive material, and the effects of media consumption, especially in the US. By using a methodical approach and examining 94 articles, they highlight the role that social media plays in creating divisive debate and the need of using precise terminology. The review's conclusions offer methods for scholars, media, and legislators to advance media literacy and lessen the detrimental impacts of polarisation on society. All things considered, it offers insightful information about the intricate connection between political polarisation and social media, opening the door for more study and remedies.

The paper 'Social media and citizen engagement: A meta analytic review' by Marko M Skoric and Qinfeng Zhu investigates the impact of new digital media, particularly social media, on citizen engagement is examined in the literature review. Early studies on the frequency and duration of internet use found that while socio-recreational internet use had a negative effect on social capital generation, informative internet use had a favourable association. Expanded online access to public affairs content is associated with improved political awareness, interest, and knowledge. Improved political expression and discourse are linked to informative internet use, which promotes social and civic engagement. Internet use and engagement have a favourable correlation, according to a 2009 meta-analysis research. In summary, the review highlights the significance of comprehending how various forms of internet and social media use impact citizen involvement, emphasising their potential to support community building, political expression, and information distribution.

The literature study of 'Can media literacy education increase digital engagement in politics?' which draws from studies by Joseph Kahne and Benjamin Bowyer, looks at how media literacy instruction can improve young people's digital participation in politics. It highlights how crucial it is for people to acquire digital literacy in a democratic society, including the ability to access, evaluate, and create digital content. The study emphasises how young people's political engagement—including their consumption of news and involvement in political activities—is influenced by online settings, especially social media. Youth participation in participatory politics is positively correlated with educational initiatives that support digital engagement literacy. The assessment does, however, agree that more research is necessary to improve our understanding and suggests looking into how extracurricular activities affect digital involvement. In general, it is believed that teaching media literacy is essential to equipping young people to actively engage in civic engagement and political discourse in the digital age.

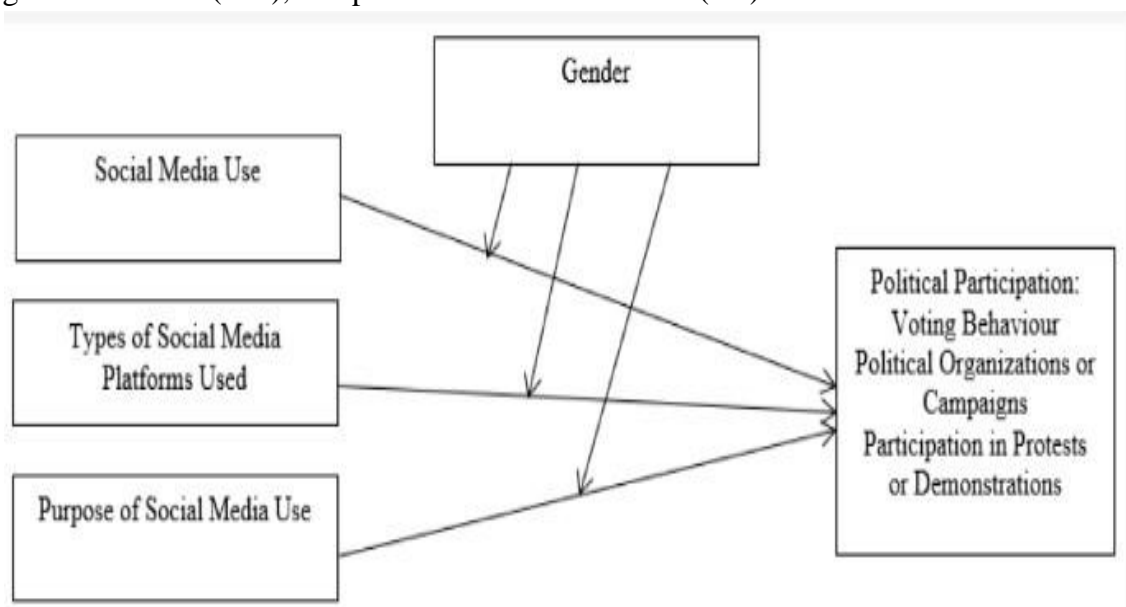
The study of 'New Media And Youth's Online Civic Engagement In Nigerian Politics: Potentials And Challenges' Using pre existing literature and analytical frameworks, Chinwe Elizabeth Uzochukwu and Uche Patricia Ekwugha's paper investigates how new media affects Nigerian youths' online civic engagement. In order to comprehend the influence of new media on civic involvement, they examine the writings of numerous academics, highlighting the function of social media sites like Twitter in enabling direct connection between the public and political actors. The research also looks at actual events to show how new media may be revolutionary in influencing policy through online activism, such as the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the Arab Spring. In general, the research conducted by Uzochukwu and Ekwugha advances our knowledge of the workings of digital democracy and the changing ways that technology is influencing political participation and governance in developing nations such as Nigeria.

The study 'Social Media, Porous Boundaries, And The Development Of Online Political Engagement Among Young Citizens' by Ekström & Shehata, 2018 found a positive association between Jordanian youth education and political involvement. Young Jordanians' political participation also depends on their gender. Women participate less in politics than males. Men are more politically engaged than women among Jordanian youth (Kim et al., 2013). SM is a prominent role in Jordan's young political activism. (Gleason & Von Gillern, 2018) found that young Jordanians who use SM are more politically engaged. Teen social media users were more likely to get involved in politics than non-users, according to the poll. According to the authors, social media is a terrific forum for young people to discuss politics. However, social media use does not necessarily increase political participation.

The study of 'E-electoral engagement: How governments use social media to engage voters. *Australian Journal of Political Science*' by Macnamara, J., Sakinofsky, P., & Beattie, found that young people's social media use affects their political engagement, but the exact relationship is unclear. How much young people participate in politics online is also debatable. The question is whether and how social media can inspire young people to get involved in politics. It has also been explored how socioeconomic issues affect Jordanian youth political engagement. According to (Weinstein, 2014), Jordan's youth's political engagement is heavily influenced by money and other factors. This study found that rich youth participated more in politics. People who felt socially secure were more likely to get active in politics, according to the study. Finally, social position, gender, education, and political opinions influence Jordanian youth political engagement. In Jordan, young people use SM extensively, highlighting its role in increasing political participation. But social media alone can't mobilise Jordanian youth for politics. Socioeconomic issues may affect Jordanian youth political engagement.

**Model**

An influence sequence diagram of research structures is used in this article to explain the research framework (Figure 1). The three components of social media use are kind, frequency, and aim. Political participation (PP) is assessed in the third component. This includes voting behaviour (VB), organisation or campaign involvement (IPC), and protests or demonstrations (PD).



**Figure 1 Model**

**Methodology**

This paper focuses a lot on the impact of social media on youth political engagement. It also looks for the main variables influencing this connection. Quantitative and correlational methodologies were employed in the investigation. A questionnaire was used in the collection of the primary data. There was cross-sectional research. Jordanians between the ages of 18 and 30 provided the data. Convenience sampling was used to choose research subjects. Through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, participants were gathered. A three-part online questionnaire was utilized to collect information from 334 participants. First, demographic information is gathered; second, online social activity is assessed; and third, political participation is assessed. A score of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was assigned to each signal. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling, or SmartPLS 4, is the tool that the researchers used to examine the data. Latent variable relationships are made easier to understand using PLS-SEM, a powerful multivariate statistical analysis method. PLS-SEM examines associations in small samples.

**Results and Discussion**

334 valid answers to the study questionnaire were utilised in the analysis that follows. The findings were corroborated by the investigation using a structural equation model. When a respondent skips answering at least one survey question, missing data happens. For every measurement objective, frequency and missing value analyses were carried out to guarantee data completeness. There was minimal data missing, and each assessment item's median variable solutions filled in the blanks.

Observations having very high variable values are known as outliers. Using box plots, histograms, and standardised (z) values, we looked at each variable and identified any outliers. A standard score of  $\pm 4.0$  or above was assigned to an outlier case, as stated by Hair et al. (2016). An abnormal Z-score was defined as one that was more than or equal to 4.

	Coefficients	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	p Values
FSU -> PP	0.441	0.059	7.477	0.000
PSU -> PP	0.142	0.057	2.51	0.012
TPSU -> PP	0.401	0.057	6.999	0.000
Gender x FSU -> PP	0.234	0.105	2.234	0.026
Gender x TPSU -> PP	-0.100	0.089	1.128	0.260
Gender x PSU -> PP	-0.187	0.095	1.974	0.048

**Measurements Model**

The composite reliability values were used in internal consistency tests for dependability. Every composite variable had dependability values greater than 0.7. If an indication's composite reliability and AVE were ready for measurement and its reliability (squaring of external loadings) was less than 0.7, it was retained

as a clarification indicator. We performed our assessments using the Fornell-Larcker test for discriminant validity and AVE values larger than '0.5' for convergent validity. Each latent variable's square root of the AVE must be bigger than its correlation in order for it to be discriminant valid. The variables had a high degree of discriminant validity. Discriminant validity issues were discovered when the average HTMT score exceeded 0.90. Discriminant validity was unaffected because all HTMT values in this sample were less than 0.90.

### **Common Method Bias**

CMB happens when survey results are impacted by a common factor unrelated to the variables under investigation. Data for CMB were examined in this study. CMB was found using CLF analyses and Harman's single factor analysis. Every survey item is reduced to a single factor in Harman's single-factor analysis, and its explanatory power is evaluated. CMB may exist if one component explains the majority of the variation. A low CMB risk indicates that no single factor dominates the data, if the first ingredient can only account for 50% of the variance. According to Harman's single-factor test, the first component explained 45.37% of the variation, indicating the absence of CMB. A latent variable is used in CLF analysis to account for CMB. The CLF analysis demonstrated that adding the latent variable had no discernible impact on the researchers' several attempts to find CMB in their data. This helps people draw stronger conclusions and increases their confidence in their findings.

### **The Results of the Structural Model Analysis**

For PLS analysis, normally distributed data is not required, however t-values that are inflated or deflated may result in type 1 errors. In order to circumvent this issue, Wong (2013) recommends the use of bootstrapping. Using 5,000 replacement subsamples from the original sample, bootstrap standard errors are computed to determine the structural route's relevance. Forecasting approximate t-values is the aim. Table 1 indicates that social media use and political engagement are related in Jordan, indicating that the FSU has a significant and favourable impact on political participation. The table most likely displays a statistical analysis that demonstrates a strong association between the elements. The fact that political participation increases in direct proportion to the number of FSUs is positive. Social media has the potential to be an excellent forum for political discourse and cause mobilisation. Social media users are more likely to express their ideas, get involved in politics, and cast ballots. By encouraging political participation and a diversity of viewpoints, SM suggests this relationship.

Two other advantages of SM are the spread of political information and the creation of online communities brought together by common political beliefs. Given its size, the relationship between FSU and political involvement is most likely causative. To assess whether the relationship is significant, the statistical analysis most likely employed a significance threshold of 0.05. Random data changes are unlikely to explain social media use and political involvement (less than 5% chance). This proves that the partnership is sincere. The findings suggest that increased social media use might lead to a rise in political activism among Jordanians. Politicians may be able to gain support, engage a larger audience, and inspire more people to take part in the democratic process by using social media. TSPU also increases political engagement in Jordan. Here, it is clear that Jordanians' usage of social media and political engagement are related. There's a good chance the table presents statistical proof of a strong relationship between the two variables. A positive link appears to exist between TSPU and political participation. This suggests that people who use a lot of SMPs are more likely to come across political material and conversation, which

may increase their interest in politics. The encouraging outcome also raises the possibility that a number of SMPs might assist political organisations and individuals in making more contacts and raising political awareness. The PSU also improves political participation in Jordan. The results indicate a relationship between active involvement in Jordanian politics and the PSU.

There is most likely a strong correlation between these two table variables, as shown by statistical research. The more politically engaged the PSU gets, the more people should get involved in politics. These findings imply that social media might lead to more political organisation and participation in Jordan. Political activists in Jordan who use social media for political reasons are more likely to cast votes, attend political events, and engage in online political discourse since PSU has a positive and statistically significant influence on these kinds of actions. The findings show that social media has the ability to promote political participation in Jordan when used appropriately. Politicians and decision-makers in Jordan may find these lessons helpful in their efforts to include the people and promote democracy.

Gender modifies the FSU's impact on Jordanian politics in both qualitative and quantitative ways. According to the findings, gender significantly modifies the association between FSU and political activity. Gender differences exist in the relationship between FSU and political participation. This relationship is significantly and positively impacted by gender. These results imply that certain girls have a stronger correlation between FSU and political activity than others. To find the reasons of this phenomena, additional investigation is required. A study found that social media use and political involvement in Jordan are influenced by gender and other variables. In Jordan, the association between FSU and political activity varies between men and women.

The correlation between political participation and SM consumption is higher for some genders than for others, indicating that gender has a significant impact on this connection. The statement suggests that social media use and political involvement in Jordan may be influenced by demographic factors. Gender has a substantial correlation with social media usage and political activity, underscoring the significance of demographic considerations. Research on the gender differences in social media use and political activity is necessary. This study may aid in identifying the factors influencing SM's participation in political debate.

The statement goes on to say that when examining the intricate connection between the use of social media and political engagement, demographic traits like gender are essential. The results indicate that in Jordan, the association between PSU and political activity is mediated by gender. PSU has varying gender-specific correlations with political involvement. The information indicates that there is a statistically significant and unfavourable impact of gender on the relationship between PSU and political involvement. To find the reasons of this phenomena, additional investigation is required. These results suggest that SM goals and gender are just two of the many variables influencing SM use and political engagement in Jordan. When creating interventions to promote political involvement on social media, researchers and politicians need to take these challenges into account.

## Conclusions

The findings demonstrate that political activity in Jordan is raised by the FSU, TSPU, and PSU. In other research, the association between social media use and political engagement was modified by gender. The results demonstrate that SM draws in and keeps young Jordanians. This confirms earlier research that showed SM was successful in getting young people interested in politics. It also confirms earlier research showing SM promotes civic engagement. The study discovered that political engagement and social media

use are moderated by gender. The findings point to a stronger correlation between FSU and political engagement in certain females. One of the elements that influences political behaviour through SM is gender. The results of this study should be taken into account by scholars, activists, and legislators who want to get young people involved in politics. SM isn't always a viable tool for getting young people involved in politics because its usefulness relies on a number of characteristics, including gender. Politicians and decision-makers ought to take social media into account. Politicians should think about how to target different groups based on gender and the frequency and purpose of social media in order to prevent a new generation of activists from becoming mobilised by it. The findings have important ramifications for further studies on social media use and political participation. We were able to comprehend the intricate connection between SM use, gender, and political participation thanks to PLS-SEM. Future studies on SM usage, gender, and political involvement should make use of state-of-the-art statistical methodologies. It seems that social media use, gender, and political participation are related; more research should look at this relationship. How does gender factor into political activity at FSU? Do men and women use social media differently or have different interpretations of the same content? Does the relationship involve any additional economic, social, or cultural factors? Our study adds to the body of knowledge about the use of social media by youth in developing countries to engage in political activism. Studying SM and its nuanced gender interaction is essential for politicians, activists, and academics who wish to promote youth political engagement.

### Limitations and Future Research

Despite its limitations, this work is significant. The single-country origin and short sample size are disadvantages. As a result, the findings cannot be extrapolated to other countries or a broader population. Second, only Jordanian youth political participation is covered by the study. There is a great deal of room for this research to grow to include more age groups and look at the cross-generational effects of SM on political participation. Thirdly, the study did not evaluate socioeconomic position, educational attainment, or political efficacy; rather, it solely evaluated the impact of SM usage on political engagement. It may be investigated further how these factors mediate or modify the association between SM usage and political engagement. Fourth, concerns concerning accuracy and social desirability bias in the study are brought up by self-reported measurements. To get over this obstacle, future studies could monitor individuals' internet usage or make use of other objective SM markers. This work opens up a lot of new research directions. These kinds of studies might shed light on the ways in which SM affects political engagement. Thirdly, more research might look at how gender influences political engagement and social media use. The differences between genders in political ideology and online conduct could be used to investigate this. Fourth, more research should look at how social media could elevate controversial ideas and spread false information, which could discourage people from being involved in politics. Policymakers may find these findings useful in lessening these adverse consequences. Lastly, studies might look at how these platforms mobilise and involve users in politics or suggest new features that social media companies should use to promote political engagement.

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