Demographics, Social Media Usage, and Political Engagement in Punjab

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Abstract

Digital media has played a vital role in mobilizing voters, especially youth in Western countries. Based on a survey conducted in Punjab among different age groups, the current study focused on influence of social media usage on political engagement during the 2017 Legislative Assembly Elections in Punjab, India. Regression analysis and other descriptive analysis were deployed in order to get the results, where the current study highlighted the change in political scenario due to utilization of social media in Punjab. On analyzing the data, social media was found to be the most frequently used source to get political information in the 2017 Legislative Assembly Elections. In fact, during the same period, getting news through newspapers and television were considered as other important sources. Further, social media usage for political purposes was found to have a significant positive influence on political engagement. The results of the study provided empirical evidence of online political engagement as well as contributed to the academic literature with reference to impact of social media usage on political engagement in the Indian context, which will help practitioners, political leaders, and parties in formulation of marketing strategies.

Keywords : demographics, social media usage, political engagement

Technology revolution in the form of the Internet has changed the world to a great extent by connecting people from different corners of the world. Internet usage has shown exponential growth in India. According to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), India had 391.50 million Internet subscribers as on December 31, 2016, which is expected to reach 730 million by 2020 (NASSCOM, n.d.). Facebook users in India have crossed the 240-million mark, becoming the largest audience country for the social media giant, according to a media report. The same report found 127.19 million urban Internet users, which is approximately 51% of the total urban population ; whereas, 48% or around 78 million are daily Internet users. The social network users in India are expected to reach 258.27 million by 2019, where Facebook is projected to have approximate 319 million users in India by 2021.

This exponential growth of social networking users in India has attracted the attention of researchers and political parties to use social media as a marketing tool in elections (Kaur & Verma, 2018). In India, social media was used for the first time in General Elections, 2014 by the major political parties where Facebook, Twitter, and Google were the three major social media platforms used, apart from traditional media. Gopal and Verma (2018) highlighted the association of branding concept with political parties and their problems in implementing the branding concept in the political scenario.

The use of technology has made political participation interactive as well as cost-effective. Due to recent advances in technology, social media has become the most significant medium of political communication,

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engagement, and participation. According to Santekellur, Hosamani, and Singh (2014), earlier, political participation was dependent on demographic and psychological factors, but now, the scenario has changed to use of digital technology as a tool to woo voters in elections. The study revealed that engagement over the Internet can be one of the useful media for political communication, especially when one is targeting the Internet savvy voters. The victory of Barak Obama in 2008 and 2012 in USA and PM Narendra Modi's victory in Lok Sabha elections in India in 2014 and their extensive use of social media throughout the election campaigns have attracted the attention of many researchers.

Various researchers found increase as well as a decrease in political engagement due to use of social media, and these conflicting results have further encouraged the researchers to study the use of social media for political engagement.

Political Engagement

A large number of studies have made efforts to explain political engagement through new technology channels (Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer, & Bichard, 2009 ; Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012 ; Zúñiga, Molyneux, & Zheng, 2014). As per Skocpol and Fiorina (2004), civic engagement refers to the network of ties and groups through which people connect to one another and get drawn into community and political affairs. SNSs enable the political organizations and candidates to interact with voters, providing a platform to share their views and get involved. High degree of political interest, media use, and political knowledge results in more political engagement. Verba and Norman (1972) suggested that interest, information, efficacy, and partisan intensity provide the desire, knowledge, and self-assurance that impel people to be engaged in politics. However, time, money, and skills provide the wherewithal without which engagement is meaningless.

Zúñiga, Veenstra, Vraga, and Shah (2010) and Vitak, Zube, Smock, Carr, Ellison, and Lampe (2011) believed that online social networking behaviour had a positive association with political participation during the U.S. Presidential Election in 2008. Facebook was used to support the political candidates, share political attitudes, and do political discussions with others. It means larger the network, higher the probability to engage (Trehan & Gupta 2015). On the other hand, Robertsona, Vatrapub, and Medinaa (2010) and Zúñiga et al. (2012) claimed marginal association with magnitude of usage for getting information and political engagement. Earlier, in India, people engaged themselves on social media by giving likes to posts, tweets, videos, etc., but rarely liked to update a status. Use of social media for political engagement by Indians was limited as they felt no direct interaction with political leaders. Karnamaharajan and Rupa (2015) suggested that an effective communication strategy by government, political leaders, and political parties can be used to engage urban voters in political activity.

Political efficacy is defined as a person's conviction that his or her actions can affect political processes. Political efficacy is categorized into two forms, that is, internal and external efficacy where internal efficacy is a person's conviction about his/her own ability to comprehend and to take an interest effectively in governmental issues, and outer political efficacy is a person's conviction about the reaction of legislative powers and governmental establishments (Tang & Lee, 2015 ; Zhang et al., 2009). Levy (2011) claimed that when an individual has more political efficacy, whether internal or external, the expectation to vote or establish contact with governmental authorities regarding political issues would be high. Holcomb (2013) examined the relationship between social media and internal political efficacy in young voters. He found that youth participated through posting on social media in U.S. General Elections and the frequency of political posts/shares and the degree to which respondents felt they affected others were highly correlated. Generally speaking, people who were interested in obtaining news were more likely to get news from multiple sources, including online sources, but with this increased choice of sources comes a correlated increase in the segmentation of the electorate.

From the literature review, it is concluded that cognitive engagement, political voice, and political participation are the different dimensions of political engagement (Scholzman, Verba, & Brady, 2010 ; Smith, Scholzman,

Verba, & Brady, 2009 ; Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, & Carpini, 2006). These dimensions may have varied impact, level of commitment, and efforts, but these are considered as important indicators for political engagement (Zukin et al., 2006).

Based on the literature review, the current study attempts to study the demographic attributes, social media usage, political information practices, and their influence on political engagement and voting related actions.

Research Objective

To study the influence of social media usage for political activity on political engagement of citizens.

Research Methodology

A cross-sectional study was conducted using descriptive research design. As a quantitative study, the current study is based on primary data collected from voters of Punjab district of India using the survey based method (using a structured questionnaire). Respondents who were eligible voters of Punjab, that is, above 18 years of age and were using social media were asked to fill the questionnaire using an online survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/). After accessing the reliability and validity, the final instrument was administered to prospective respondents through an online survey mode. A total of 451 usable questionnaires were obtained, constituting 279 through online survey and 172 through in person survey.
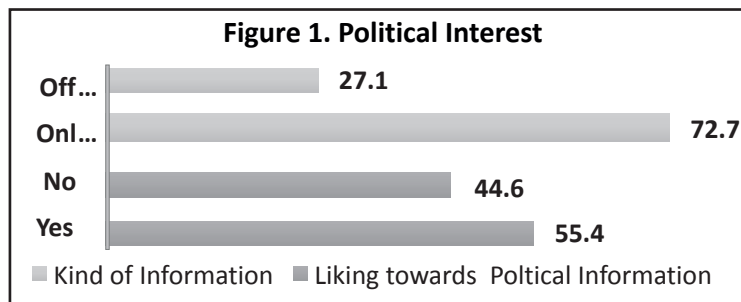
The total voters considered for calculating the sample were 19207230 voters as on January 6, 2014 as available on the website of Election Commission of India. Out of these voters, male voters were 10112873 and female voters were 9094357 (www.eci.nic.in). The initial sample of 400 was divided among districts by arranging all the 22 districts of Punjab in ascending order according to the total number of voters in the district and then selecting the top 11 districts, making sure that they covered the three regions of Punjab, that is, Majha, Malwa, and Doaba. This criterion was fulfilled by selecting 50% of the total districts in each region. The data were collected before Punjab Assembly Elections 2017.

Data Analysis and Results

Different analysis techniques such as descriptive analysis, correlation, regression analysis, etc. were deployed to achieve the desired results. Descriptive statistics are presented before the discussion on data analysis conducted to fulfil the objective.

More politically informed people are more likely to indulge in political processes, so getting political information in daily life is considered as an important element of it. The respondents were asked whether they liked to get political information or not and which medium they preferred to access political information. It can be inferred from the Figure 1 that 55.4% of the respondents preferred to have political information about the happenings in the political environment in Punjab ; whereas, three quarter of the respondents preferred to get information through online media such as social media, websites, news sites, etc., and the remaining respondents preferred offline media such as television, newspapers, and so on.

The Table 1 depicts that women above the age of 26 years were more likely to seek political information ; whereas, no such variation among the age categories is visible in case of men. Approximately 60 - 70% men from all age groups were likely to seek political information. Likewise, men in the age groups of 18 - 25 years and above 45 years of age were more interested in getting information as compared to men in the middle age group of 26 - 45 years. It is also observed that as the age increased, females shifted towards the offline medium from online medium to get political information, and the same is the case with men, but men preferred using online media more in comparison to women.

Figure 1. Political Interest

- Off… 27.1
- Onl… 72.7
- No 44.6
- Yes 55.4

■ Kind of Information ■ Liking towards Poltical Information

Table 1. Getting Political Information

	Age	Political Information		Access to Political Information	
		Yes	No	Offline	Online
Female	18-25	27.0	73.0	27.8	72.2
	26-35	74.3	25.7	34.3	65.7
	36-45	63.2	36.8	47.4	47.4
	Above 45	100.0	0.0	75.0	25.0
Male	18-25	68.0	32.0	20.5	79.5
	26-35	59.6	40.4	28.1	71.9
	36-45	60.9	39.1	17.4	82.6
	Above 45	70.8	29.2	62.5	37.5

Thus, approximately 55% of the people were found to be interested in getting political information. The data shows that social media (30.6%) was the most frequently used media by citizens to get political information among all the media followed by television (27.8%), newspapers (26.3%), and online news sites (22.8%) as displayed in the Figure 2. Other traditional media like radio (6%), leaflets (3.3%), posters (3.8%), political rallies (5%), hoardings (3.8%), and direct contact with politicians (3%) were being less used by majority of the individuals. People who were associated with political parties generally liked to attend political rallies and maintained direct contact with the political candidates.

In addition to this, the Table 2 demonstrates the analysis of different mediums used as political information sources on the basis of gender, where online news was used by 27.1% of the respondents occasionally, out of which

Figure 2 . Medium Used for Getting Political Information

■ Never ■ Rarely ■ Sometimes ■ Often ■ Frequently
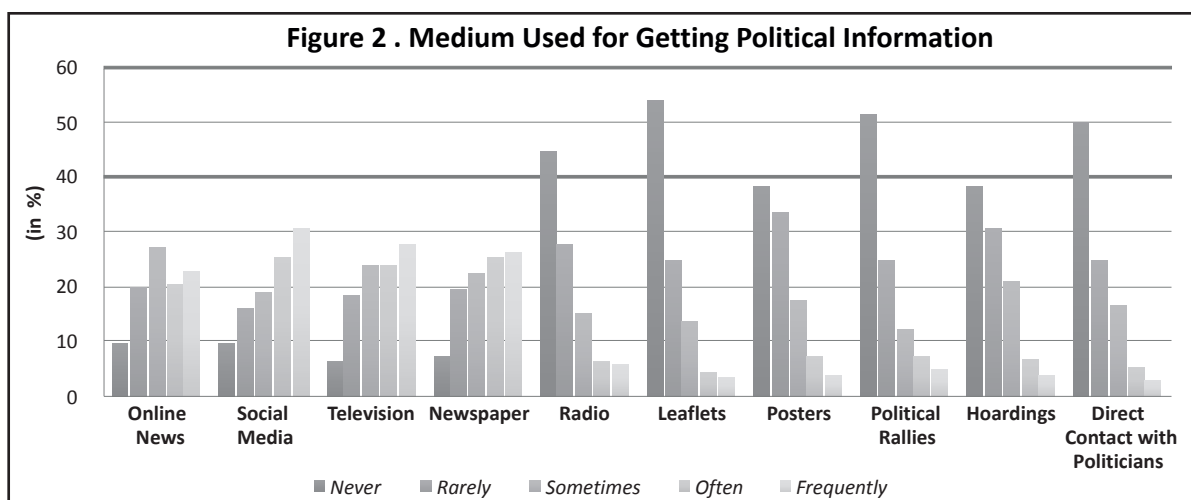
men (15.8%) used online news as source of political information, which is higher as compared to the usage by women (11.3%). Similarly, television was used more frequently by approximately 28% of the respondents, out of which 12.3% were women and 15.5% were men. Same is the case with newspapers, but women used television more than newspapers as compared to the usage of the same by men. As already mentioned, social media was being used frequently by 30% of the respondents for getting political information, which was the most frequently used among all the mediums.

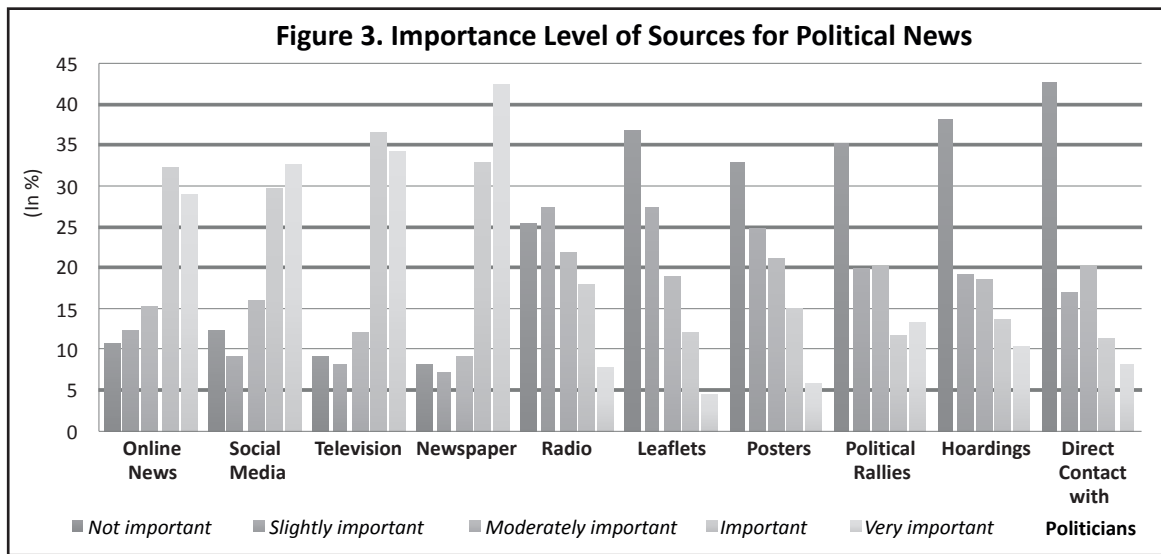**Table 2. Gender Wise Classification of Political Information Sources**

	Radio			Social Media			Newspaper			Televison			Online News		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Never	27.6	17.3	44.9	48	5.0	9.8	5.0	2.3	7.3	3.8	2.5	6.3	5.8	3.8	9.5
Rarely	15.8	12.0	27.8	10.3	5.5	15.8	11.3	8.0	19.3	11.8	6.8	18.5	12.0	8.0	20.1
Sometimes	7.8	7.3	15.0	9.0	9.8	18.8	10.5	11.5	22.1	13.3	10.5	23.8	15.8	11.3	27.1
Always	3.3	3.0	6.3	14.8	10.3	25.1	14.3	10.8	25.1	12.3	11.3	23.6	10.0	10.2	20.6
Frequently	2.3	3.8	6.0	17.8	12.8	30.6	15.5	10.8	26.3	15.5	12.3	27.8	13.0	9.8	22.8
	56.6	43.4	100	56.6	43.4	100	56.6	43.4	100	56.6	43.4	100	56.6	43.4	100

	Director Contact			Hoardings			Political Rallies			Posters			Leaflets		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Never	28.6	21.6	50.1	23.1	15.3	38.3	26.1	25.3	51.4	22.3	16.3	38.6	28.8	25.1	53.9
Rarely	14.0	10.8	24.8	16.3	14.0	30.3	15.0	9.5	24.6	17.8	15.5	33.3	15.5	9.3	24.8
Sometimes	9.0	7.5	16.5	11.0	9.8	20.8	8.0	4.0	12.0	10.8	6.5	17.3	7.8	5.8	13.5
Always	3.0	2.5	5.5	4.0	2.8	6.8	4.0	3.0	7.0	4.0	3.0	7.0	2.5	2.0	4.5
Frequently	2.0	1.0	3.0	2.3	1.5	3.8	3.5	1.5	5.0	1.8	2.0	3.8	2.0	1.3	3.3
	56.6	43.4	100	56.6	43.4	100	56.6	43.4	100	56.6	43.4	100	56.6	43.4	100

Note. M = Male, F = Female, T = Total

Other traditional mediums are also taken into consideration such as leaflets, posters, hoardings, etc., where usage of leaflets for political knowledge was found to be very less, only 2% men and 1.3% women used the same frequently. Similarly, hoardings were used frequently by only 3.8% of the users, out of which 2.3% were men and 1.5% were women. The frequent usage of posters (3.8%) was also found to be very less, but women used this medium a little bit more than men did. Majority of the respondents had not attended any political rally (51.4%) or made any direct contact with politicians (50.1%). Only 5% of the respondents had attended political party rallies, which shows participation of 1.5% women and 3.5% men using this medium for getting political information. Radio as a medium for gaining political information shows different results as compared to other media as it was being used by women more than men. On the other hand, it is not found as a very popular medium as 17.3% women and 27.6% men did not use radio at all as a source of political information (Table 2).

Further, this study also intends to figure out the most important source to get political information. As depicted in the Figure 3, the respondents found newspapers (42.4%) to be a very important source of information followed by television (34.3%), social media (32.6%), and online news sites (29.1%). On the other hand, direct contact with politicians had no importance as a source of political news for 42.6% people followed by hoardings (38.1%) and leaflets (36.8%). Radio is observed to have slight to moderate importance.

To study the general results of social media usage for political purposes, four prominent social media were considered, namely, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube. Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube were considered because they were widely used by political candidates in General Elections 2014 to convince the

Figure 3. Importance Level of Sources for Political News

Legend: ■ Not important ■ Slightly important ■ Moderately important ■ Important ■ Very important

citizens, and on the other hand, WhatsApp was considered as it was the second most used social media after Facebook in 2016. So, these four components of social media are taken into consideration to assess the political engagement of the respondents.

(1) Political Activity on Facebook : Facebook enables a person to do two-way interaction and regenerate the content by performing different activities such as likes, wall comment, status update, befriend a political candidate, sending or receiving messages, etc., which results into more engagement - whether it is civic or political.

Out of the different political activities which a person can perform via Facebook, posting or sharing a photo/video/link was reported as the most common activity by 20.6% of the respondents followed by liking the fan page of a political party or candidate (17.8 %), and updating status regarding politics (16.5%). Sending a direct message to a political party/politician was reported as the least used form of political activity followed by receiving a direct message from a political party or political leader. On summarizing the mean values on the 5 - point scale of 12 different political activities, posting or sharing a photo/video/link with a mean value 2.32, clicking "like" on a political party or politician's fan page with a mean value 2.25, wall comment with a mean value 2.17, and status update with a mean value 2.14 were the most common activities undertaken on Facebook with respect to political activities.

(2) Political Activity on Twitter : Twitter allows a user to post 140 character messages, which consists of text and hyperlinks, commonly known as tweets. Likewise, it can be used in an indirect manner with re-tweets and mentions, where users regenerate the content, and can address people by mentioning their names, which may lead to more engagement as well as participation in the political process. This sort of social media platform creates a two way interaction with the general public and political leaders.

Among the respondents of this study, very few individuals reported the usage of Twitter in Punjab ; 5.8% respondents reported re-tweeting the political content (5.8%) followed by following a political candidate (5.6%), posting a tweet (5.3%), sending a direct message to a politician (5.1%), replying to a tweet (5.0%), and joining a political debate (5.0%). All the nine activities performed on Twitter having political content, whether it is posting a tweet, mentioning a politician, replying to a tweet, joining political discussion or debate, and sending or receiving political messages about politics have a mean value of less than 1.51. Thus, in general, it can be said that the respondents performed activities rarely on Twitter. Most of the politicians have their accounts on Twitter, and use it

for sharing information about politics, but in Punjab, it is observed that the usage on the part of the general public was very low.

(3) Political Activity on YouTube : In digital mediated communication, when information is not available for general public on any source, YouTube is referred to as a significant source of information in the form of videos, text via comments, real time communication, etc. The results clearly depict that the most common practices on YouTube were sharing political videos (12.8%) followed by subscribing to a political channel (12.3%) and commenting on videos posted by politicians or political parties (11.8%). These political activities were analyzed, and the average value for each activity is below 1.93, which indicates that very few individuals indulged in political activities on YouTube. Majority of the individuals rarely uploaded a video, but there were chances that they may share and comment on the posts shared by political candidates or parties.

(4) Political Activity on WhatsApp : For the people who are interested in politics, WhatsApp provides various opportunities to discuss politics or join a political debate without any intervention. WhatsApp has gained its popularity in the last few years, and now, it has become the most used messaging application to interact with each other individually or in a group. Four political activities via WhatsApp namely, joining a group of any political party/leader, sharing a message/photo with a friend, sharing a political message/photo in a group, updating status in support or against politics were considered for this study. Out of these, sharing a message or a photo in a group (21.8%) and sharing a message or a photo with a friend (21.1%) were found to be the most common practices undertaken by citizens for political purposes in Punjab. However, the political activity via WhatsApp occupied a rare space in daily routine as most of the activities, whether sharing a photo or message, uploading a status regarding politics, or joining a group for discussing politics have an average value below 2.32. It is observed that people used WhatsApp more frequently than YouTube for political purposes.

(5) Political Engagement : Many researchers have concluded that social media has become a popular media to spread information as well as for engaging people. In this study, political engagement is analyzed using 16 statements, which consisted of dimensions of political knowledge, political efficacy, and political information, etc. on a 5 - point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

The data shows that 47.6% of the respondents showed interest in political processes ($M = 3.24$), 47.6% of the respondents followed what was going on in politics ($M = 3.26$), 45.6% of the respondents agreed that they had friends who knew where to find reliable political information ($M = 3.27$), 43.1% of the respondents felt that they had enough information to influence their friends' decisions to vote for a particular political party ($M = 3.11$), 39.1% of the respondents had seen their friends while searching for political information, a neutral response was observed on search for alternative sources when they were not able to find all information from one source ($M = 2.98$), and opinion about happenings of the government activities ($M = 2.87$). On the other hand, a majority of the respondents showed *disagreement* with the statements like their family and friends influenced their decision to get political information and only 32.1% of the respondents considered themselves to be well qualified to participate in politics ($M = 2.95$).

(6) Influence of Social Media Usage with Respect to Political Activities on Political Engagement of Citizens : To study the influence of social media's use for political purposes on political engagement, regression analysis was used. Firstly, the overall significance of the model to predict the dependent variable is analyzed and the findings are presented in the Table 4. In the regression analysis, where F - values for Models 1, 2, and 3 are 27.426, 82.120, and 8.977, respectively at significance value 0.000 (less than 0.05), this means that the models are appropriate for the regression analysis. In other words, political activity on WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube significantly predict the political engagement. Social media's use for political purposes is also a significant predictor of political

engagement of citizens and socioeconomic variables are also predictors of political engagement.

The models are found fit for regression analysis as the mean of residuals for all models is 0.00, which depicts the normality of the residuals. For parametric test, the sample size should be more than 30, and in this study, the sample size was 451 respondents, and out of the total, data of 399 respondents were found to be usable after removal of outliers. An outlier is having extreme values or abnormal combination of scores that may disturb the data, and regression analysis is highly sensitive to outliers. To meet the assumption of outliers, Mahalanobis's distance values are 3.99, 0.997, and 8.977, which are under the standard value, which indicates that there is no outlier in the data set, which is also proven by boxplot and is clean to be used for regression analysis. The QQ plot and scattered plot depict that normality curve of dependent variable, that is, political engagement shows that the data is close to normal.

The correlation metrics (Table 3) show that the Pearson's correlation values of political engagement with political activity on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp and social media usage for political purposes are below 0.8 with significance value less than 0.05, which indicates that there exists a significant linear relationship between them. It also means there is no problem of multicollinearity.

Table 3. Correlation Between Political Activity on Social Media & Political Engagement

	PE	PAF	PAT	PAY	PAW	PASM
	r	r	r	r	r	r
PE	1.000					0.414*
PAF	0.346*	1.000				
PAT	0.242*	0.457*	1.000			
PAY	0.321*	0.509*	0.552*	1.000		
PAW	0.437*	0.480*	0.380*	0.538*	1.000	

* p - value <0.05, PE = Political engagement, PAF = Political activity of Facebook, PAT = Political activity on Twitter, PAY = Political activity on YouTube, PAW = Political activity on WhatsApp, PASM = Political activity on social media.

Apart from examination of high correlation, multicollinearity can also be proved by VIF and tolerance values. Many researchers are of the opinion that VIF of more than 10 and the tolerance value less than 0.1 indicates that there is high multicollinearity. In the Table 4, VIF and tolerance value for political activity on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp ; political activity on social media ; and socioeconomic variables are under the standard values, which proves that there is no issue of multicollinearity in the models.

On running a regression analysis, adjusted R - square value is found to be 0.210 (Table 4), which indicates that 21% variability in political engagement is explained by the predictor - political activity on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp ; approximately 17% variability is due to social media usage for political purposes ; and 15% variability is explained by socioeconomic variables.

Furthermore, unstandardized coefficients for political activity on Facebook and WhatsApp are 0.223 and 1.136, respectively, which means a one unit increase in Facebook's as well as WhatsApp's usage for political activity will increase political engagement by 0.223 and 1.136, respectively and the t - values are 2.750 and 5.887, respectively with p - value less than 0.05, which implies that political activity on Facebook and WhatsApp is a statistically significant predictor of political engagement. On the other hand, unstandardized coefficient values for Twitter and YouTube are 0.033 and 0.221, with t - values 0.286 and 0.994, respectively having a p - value of more than 0.05, which indicates Twitter and YouTube to be statically insignificant predictors of political engagement. It can be said that WhatsApp's usage for political purposes has a great influence on political engagement followed by political activity on Facebook.

For the Model 2, the unstandardized coefficient for political activity on social media is 0.303 and the t - value is

Table 4. Regression Analysis

	B	T	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	31.466	17.264*		
Political Activity on Facebook	0.223	2.750*	0.648	1.544
Political Activity on Twitter	0.033	0.286	0.651	1.535
Political Activity on YouTube	0.221	0.994	0.541	1.849
Political Activity on WhatsApp	1.136	5.887*	0.651	1.536
F - value = 27.426*				
Adjusted R Square = 0.210				
(Constant)	32.440	17.551*		
Political Activity on Social Media	0.303	9.062*	1.000	1.000
F - value = 82.120*				
Adjusted R Square= 0.169				
(Constant)	49.604	9.817*		
Age	0.336	0.393	0.633	1.579
Gender	3.921	2.949*	0.915	1.093
Residential Area	-1.567	-1.208	0.976	1.024
Marital Status	1.254	0.840	0.676	1.479
Educational Level	1.976	3.061*	0.941	1.063
Occupation	-0.125	-0.299	0.812	1.232
Monthly Income	0.402	0.845	0.776	1.289
F - value = 8.977*				
Adjusted R Square = 0 .153				

Note. Dependent Variable = Political Engagement, *p - value < 0.05*

9.062 with significance value less than 0.05, which means that the overall use of social media for political purposes has a strong and significant influence on political engagement of citizens.

Another model shows that gender and occupation have unstandardized beta values of 3.921 and 1.976, respectively with *t* - values 2.949 and 3.061, respectively having *p* - value less than 0.05, which indicates that gender and occupation have a significant influence on political engagement. On the other hand, marital status and monthly income have an insignificant positive influence ; whereas, residential area and marital status are insignificant negative predictors of political engagement.

Major Findings

 Frequently Used Sources of Political Information : The past studies observed that young people are declining users of traditional media (e.g., Este, Warren, Connor, Brown, Pollard, & O' Connor, 2008), but the current study reveals that newspapers and television are the most significantly used sources of gaining political information after social media. The study observes that social media, newspapers, and television were the three most frequently used sources to get political information ; online news sites were used occasionally ; and leaflets, political rallies, and direct contact with political leaders or parties are found to be the least used sources. Furthermore, men were frequent users of social media, television, newspapers, etc., as compared to women and vice versa for posters and radio.

↪ **Important Sources of Political Information :** Newspapers, television, social media, and online news sites are found to be the prominent sources to get political news. Even if social media was the most used medium by majority of the people to get political information, but still, newspapers and television were considered as important sources to get political information and news.

↪ **Social Media Usage for Political Purposes :** Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Twitter are found to be the most frequently used forms of social media for political purposes. On Facebook, posting or sharing a photo/video/link, clicking "like" on a political party or politician's page/post, wall comment, and status are found to be the common activities performed by social media users. Similar results were obtained by Dumitrica (2016) and Vitak et al. (2011).

The increasing use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter by political candidates leads to higher political engagement (Dumitrica, 2016 ; Vaccari, Valeriani, Barberá, Bonneau, Jost, Nagler, & Tucker, 2015), but Twitter is found to be the least used form of social media among the residents of Punjab.

The results of the study reveal that majority of the individuals rarely uploaded a video, but there were chances that they may share and comment on the post shared by a political candidate or party.

↪ **Influence of Political Activities Carried out on Social Media on Political Engagement :** Thus, on considering the different political activities, it is observed that political activity via WhatsApp had more influence on political engagement than Facebook ; whereas, overall, social media usage for political purposes is reported to have a significant positive influence on political engagement. Similar results were obtained by Zúñiga et al. (2012) ; Zúñiga et al. (2014) ; and Skoric, Zhu, Goh, and Pang (2016).

Conclusion and Managerial Implications

The relationship between online communication and political engagement has been studied by many researchers in past years. In addition to the existing studies, the current study has tried to understand the changing scenario in the political sphere with the use of social media. In a nutshell, this study highlights the changes in the political scenario due to utilization of social media, especially Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp with respect to Punjab Legislative Assembly Elections. This study sought to show the changing pattern of engagement using new media alone or if it is used with the traditional media which will help the political parties to communicate their ideas through different media. The results of the study show that social media is the most used media, but still, newspapers and television have their significant importance. It can be concluded that concurrent use of social media and traditional media will lead to greater political engagement and participation.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

Firstly, the study is based on cross-sectional data ; future studies can be done on longitudinal data, which will give a more accurate picture. Secondly, since the study talks about online engagement, qualitative research can be done on data gathered from social media using some machine learning languages. Finally, the extent of social media use is increasing drastically in different regions or societies, and hence, it is important to inspect social media in different societies to get more generalized outcomes.

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