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### Article Title

## Consumption of Political Information through Social Media Among University Students: A Review Study

### Abstract

College students utilize social media to access political news, which influences their perspectives and behaviors. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube allow students to learn about politics, debate it, and even protest or vote. However, social media misinformation spreads swiftly, confusing pupils and skewing their opinions. Videos, memes, and photos can spice up politics. A PRISMA-based systematic review of social media political information consumption was conducted. Inclusion-exclusion criteria choose 43 articles. The results showed that students do not always explain complex concepts effectively. Applications have varied consequences. Instagram and YouTube are for seeing, whereas Facebook and Twitter are for arguments. Many students struggle to distinguish between fake and real news, which is a significant concern. Media literacy in the classroom has been found to help kids think critically about online content. Social media can spark political consciousness, but students must learn how to use it wisely.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Political News, Fake News, University Students, Media Literacy, Online Engagement.

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## Title

# Consumption of Political Information through Social Media Among University Students: A Review Study

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## Abstract

College students utilize social media to access political news, which influences their perspectives and behaviors. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube allow students to learn about politics, debate it, and even protest or vote. However, social media misinformation spreads swiftly, confusing pupils and skewing their opinions. Videos, memes, and photos can spice up politics. A PRISMA-based systematic review of social media political information consumption was conducted. Inclusion-exclusion criteria choose 43 articles. The results showed that students do not always explain complex concepts effectively. Applications have varied consequences. Instagram and YouTube are for seeing, whereas Facebook and Twitter are for arguments. Many students struggle to distinguish between fake and real news, which is a significant concern. Media literacy in the classroom has been found to help kids think critically about online content. Social media can spark political consciousness, but students must learn how to use it wisely.

## Keywords:

[Social Media](#), [Political News](#), [Fake News](#), [University Students](#), [Media Literacy](#), [Online Engagement](#)

## Introduction

Today, social media dominates how people communicate, share information, and socialize. It lets people create and exchange material while staying in touch (Carr & Hayes, 2015). Social media is often defined by channel features like directionality or platform use, such as Facebook or Twitter (Carr & Hayes, 2015). Social media is a novel

communication tool, yet scholars are already studying its political effects (Dutta & Bhatt, 2016). Social media was essential for organizing protests and spreading information during the Arab Spring (Wilson & Dunn, 2011).

Social and political views have altered due to online media. Online political involvement is similar to traditional political participation, but it is done



online (Yang & Dehart, 2016). Online media and internet use affect young individuals, especially students, differently than older people (Mushtaq et al., 2018).

Some academics believe that social media has united people and provided them with a platform to voice their disapproval of the government (Razib & Pinky, 2023), but others argue that this has been overstated and that traditional media and political contexts also play a role. Show how social media works best in free-access political situations. However, social media continues to influence modern behavior, relationships, and public opinion.

The term "political" can encompass a wide range of issues, from administrative matters to complex power dynamics. In addition to political parties and laws, it explores how individuals and groups interpret, interact with, and affect societal structure (Oosterhoff et al., 2023).

Digital communication has transformed political communication (Aliyu, 2023). Some people are politically involved, others are not. Individuals' political knowledge and interests differ (Gerber et al., 2010). Political awareness a person's understanding of their political rights, processes, and responsibilities is shaped by media, education, and parenting. Modern digital platforms are raising awareness, particularly in Pakistan, where access to social media enables active political conversations and civic engagement (Ijaz et al., 2021). Wikis, blogs, microblogging, social networking sites, and other social media innovations have changed political communication worldwide (Razib & Pinky, 2023). Monitoring political developments and discussing political issues with others engages people in politics daily (Fitzgerald, 2012). Internet use as a source of knowledge and political activity has grown (Alami, 2016). Digital platforms have transformed political engagement in the digital age, enabling younger generations to express their thoughts and enhance their political awareness (Ashraf, 2021). Political actors utilized social media in their campaigns; therefore, young adults relied more on digital media for political information (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010). Social media influenced the political views and activities of young voters during the 2008 campaign, according to various media and political observers (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010).

## Impact of Misinformation on Political Activism

The 2016 U.S. presidential election demonstrates how social media disseminates misinformation, posing a threat to democracy (Sadia, 2024). Satire websites, false news articles, manipulated photos, propaganda, and phony press releases are all sorts of fake news. Studies have shown that social media is often used to disseminate misinformation during political campaigns. Modern fake news, misinformation, and disinformation have garnered significant attention, particularly during the 2016 U.S. presidential election (Tettey, 2022). Users may learn more about politics from politically active friends and exchanges, but they may also learn disinformation (Saba, 2024). Due to online political misinformation, critical thinking is needed. Fake political and social news spreads swiftly on social media (Khan et al., 2023). Social media misinformation is a major issue (Yulong, 2023). Many mass communication students claim to be able to spot political misinformation. Yet, they still fall for it, demonstrating that misinformation can influence the political views and decisions of young social media users (Isha, 2023). Media literacy is essential for students to understand deceitful methods in social media political debates (Hmadi, 2019).

## Social Platforms Usage (Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter)

Social media is the most essential and accessible form of communication in today's globalized culture (Salman & Salleh, 2020). Internet use, political knowledge, and participation are linked. This trend is affecting elections, especially in developing nations like Pakistan. Social media and the Internet are becoming increasingly important sources of political information (Subair, 2012). Following Barack Obama's record-setting victory in the 2008 U.S. presidential election, several countries and political leaders leveraged social media to encourage political participation (Shehzad et al., 2021). Facebook has a large user base in Pakistan and elsewhere (Sadia, 2024). University students are increasingly using Facebook for political purposes, which aligns with their offline behavior. Political figures utilize Twitter to engage with their followers and shape public opinion (Saba, 2024).

Famous preachers and influencers utilize YouTube to expand their online presence (Wei, 2024). Isha (2023) highlights Instagram as a new social network. However, the sources do not provide as much detail as Facebook and Twitter about how Instagram affects college students' political awareness or engagement. Students use many social media platforms, suggesting that they utilize more than just Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (Subair, 2012). Yang and Dehart (2016) found that 66% of social media users "liked" or shared content about politics or social issues to encourage voting, shared personal thoughts or comments, reposted political and social content, urged others to act, or shared political news or stories.

### **Increase in Political Awareness and Engagement**

Social media has become an important source of political information due to the digital revolution (Mansoor, 2022). Growing political participation does not benefit young people's excessive use of social media (Garcia et al., 2019). New methods of election and public affairs participation have emerged as Internet use has grown among citizens (Zuniga et al., 2012). Social media plays a crucial role in political education, particularly among young people (Ahmed, 2024). Political discourse and media, especially social media, shape political interests and awareness (Ali et al., 2013).

Social media has a significant influence on Pakistani students' political consciousness, and they frequently discuss politics on new media platforms (Muzafar, 2019). Social media use, especially in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan, increases political awareness and engagement (Sadia, 2024). University students utilize Internet media significantly, which may enhance their political efficacy and involvement in religious and political matters (Muzafar, 2019). Online, offline, and political awareness are substantially associated among rural Pakistani university students (Ahmad, 2023). Social media connects college students with political leaders, facilitating the spread of political ideas and communication (Saba, 2024).

### **Visual Content Influence on Students' Awareness and Understanding**

Among the several kinds of content that can be posted on social media platforms are images and

videos (Ahmed, 2023). On these platforms, visual elements such as photographs, videos, and memes are commonly used in political discourse (Farooz, 2023). It has been demonstrated that political memes increase youth interest in politics, which could lead to an increase in offline political engagement (Saba, 2024). It has also been observed, though, that if news published on social media does not relate to students' interests, they might merely give it a passing glance (Wei, 2024). This suggests that while visual content may attract attention, a deeper understanding may require personal relevance.

### **Problem Statement**

The digital revolution has made social media a major political information source (Mansoor, 2022). Growing political participation does not help youth social media addiction (Garcia et al., 2019). Citizens' Internet use has led to new election and public affairs involvement approaches (Zuniga et al., 2012). Social media is vital to political education, especially for youth (Ahmed, 2024). Political discourse and media, especially social media, shape political awareness and interests (Ali et al., 2013). Pakistani students discuss politics on social media (Muzafar, 2019). In Pakistan and other developing nations, social media raises political awareness and engagement (Sadia, 2024). Internet use by university students may increase their political efficacy and religious and political involvement (Muzafar, 2019). Rural Pakistani university students are politically informed online, offline, and online (Ahmad, 2023). Political ideas and communication spread through social media between college students and political officials (Saba, 2024).

### **Research Objectives**

1. To analyze how fake news on social media shapes university students' political choices and views.
2. To examine if social media use for politics leads students to real-world actions like voting or protests.
3. To compare how different platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) influence students' political engagement.
4. To assess whether visual content (memes & videos) impacts political understanding

differently than text-based news among students.

## Research Questions

R<sub>1</sub>: How does fake news on social media affect the political narrative and decisions of university students?

R<sub>2</sub>: How does using social media for politics lead to real-life political actions, like voting or protests?

R<sub>4</sub>: How do different social media platforms (like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) affect students' political interests?

R<sub>5</sub>: Does viewing political memes and videos change students' understanding of politics compared to reading news?

## Methodology

This study's foundation is a methodical approach to literature review. Since they closely observe the complexity and ongoing changes in the topic being studied, review-based research constitutes a sizable portion of the existing literature (Obaidat et al., 2025). Furthermore, to close the gap and conduct a thorough examination of the other facets of the same issue, the pertinent research also emphasizes the key findings.

## Assumptions and Justifications

Social media has become an important source of political information due to the digital revolution (Mansoor, 2022). Growing political participation does not benefit young people's excessive use of social media (Garcia et al., 2019). New methods of election and public affairs participation have emerged as Internet use has grown among citizens (Zuniga et al., 2012). Social media plays a crucial role in political education, particularly among young people (Ahmed, 2024). Political discourse and media, especially social media, shape political interests and awareness (Ali et al., 2013).

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## Evaluation of assumptions

Social media has become an important source of political information due to the digital revolution (Mansoor, 2022). Growing political participation does not benefit young people's excessive use of social media (Garcia et al., 2019). New methods of election and public affairs participation have emerged as Internet use has grown among citizens (Zuniga et al., 2012). Social media plays a crucial role in political education, particularly among young people (Ahmed, 2024). Political discourse and media, especially social media, shape political interests and awareness (Ali et al., 2013).

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Table 1 shows the inclusion and exclusion criteria based on the PRISMA method of screening, evaluation, and Selection; the researchers gathered a total of 75 records from the selected database. After removing the duplicates, 66 total articles were further screened for full-text availability, out of which 55 articles were fully screened. Finally, the researchers selected  $n = 43$  articles that adhered to the selection criteria (see Fig. 1).

Table 1

Inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study literature

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Articles published after 2010 and onwards	Articles published before the year 2010
Studies based on the consumption of social media for political information among university students only are included.	Studies based on general social media use, nonpolitical information consumption, or non-university student populations
Articles published in the English language	Articles published in languages other than English
Google Scholar, Jstore, and Taylor & Francis have been used to retrieve research articles	Articles not retrieved from databases other than Google Scholar, Jstor, and Taylor & Francis

Figure.1

PRISMA flow chart for the articles selection process

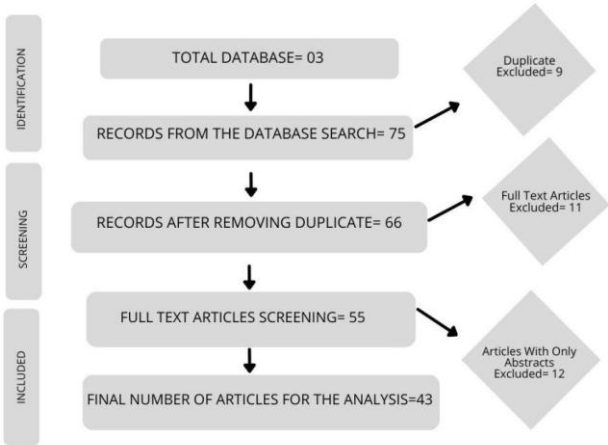


Table 2 shows the percentage of articles selected from the database. Most articles are selected from Google Scholar (n=35) and others from JStor (n=19) and Taylor and Francis (n=12).

Table 2

Numbers and percentages of literature according to their database.

Database	Number	%
Google Scholar	35	53%
Jstor	19	28%
Taylor and Francis	12	18%

Table 3 shows the percentages of selected literature according to their publication years. As it is clearly shown, studies (n = 13) were published from 2010 to 2015, followed by (n = 24) published from 2016 to 2020, and then (n = 29) from 2021 to this year, 2025.

Table 3

Number and percentages according to the literature according to publication year.

Year	Number	%
2010-2015	13	19%
2016-2020	24	36%
2021-2025	29	43%



According to their designs, taking into account the numbers and percentages from the literature, most studies (n = 57) employed a quantitative approach. In contrast, smaller numbers of studies (n = 3) used qualitative methods, and (n = 4) studies employed a

mixed-methods approach. Additionally, two review studies (n = 2) were included. The researchers examined how the studies collected their data and calculated the number of studies that used each method.

**Table 4**  
*Numbers and percentages according to their paradigm models*

Paradigm Model	Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed Method	Review Study
	3 (4%)	57 (86%)	4 (6%)	2 (3%)

**Validation of Selected Methodology**

The methodology of this systematic literature review, which examined how college students utilize social media to obtain political information, was carefully evaluated to ensure accuracy, reliability, and transparency. The following crucial components show the methodological accuracy and adherence to recognized research standards.

**Adherence to PRISMA Guidelines**

This review is conducted according to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) standards suggested by Page and McKenzie (2021). PRISMA guarantees a methodical, open, and repeatable review process. By ensuring that every step of the article selection, screening, and inclusion process was meticulously and impartially documented, the use of a PRISMA checklist and flow diagram enhanced the legitimacy of the process.

**Clearly Defined Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

To ensure relevance and thematic emphasis, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were created. The review includes peer-reviewed journal studies published in English after 2010 that specifically address the political use of social media by university students, particularly in relation to disinformation, platform usage, awareness, and visual material. Articles on general social media usage, nonpolitical content, or non-university demographics were excluded. This focused approach increased the study’s thematic accuracy as well as its academic usage.

**Comprehensive Search Strategy and Database Selection**

A thorough search technique was devised to obtain a diverse variety of relevant scholarly articles.

Searches were conducted in scholarly databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Taylor & Francis, which are renowned for publishing research in communication, political science, and media studies. Particularly thoughtful terms were “fake news and university students,” “social media political engagement,” “Facebook and political awareness,” “visual political content in social media,” and “university students political information consumption.” Boolean operators and thematic relevance led the keyword approach, ensuring variety in opinions and decreasing selection bias.

**Use of PRISMA Flow Diagram**

A PRISMA flow diagram was used to visually display and explain the article selection process, showing the number of studies identified, screened, excluded, and ultimately included. This graphic representation clarified the review process and helped to preserve methodological transparency throughout the study.

**Review of the Selected Studies:  
Impact of Misinformation on Political Activism**

Several publications examine the effects of social media's fake news and disinformation on pupils. Tucker et al. (2018) found that "disinformation" online may be easier to spread. Valenzuela et al. (2019) found that social media use, political involvement, and misinformation are interconnected, with a significant proportion of respondents being aware of these connections. Misinformation on social media is linked to political activity (Saba, 2024). Media literacy, critical thinking, and digital accountability are crucial, as political prejudice influences confidence in misinformation (Sultana et al., 2024).

(Levy, 2021) discovered that Facebook exposure to pro-attitudinal content increases polarization, while counter-attitudinal information did not, suggesting selective exposure. A literature review and data analysis show that Facebook and Twitter influence public opinion by spreading false information (Alami, 2016). Studies on the spread of misinformation on these platforms show that respondents use social media for political updates, which shape their views (Saba, 2024). Encourage students to reduce everyday social media use (Mansoor, 2022). Active social media users and activists can enhance their media literacy to reduce the transmission of false or harmful information (Subair, 2012). Social media also spreads misinformation (Sadia, 2024).

Due to their frequent use and changing political ideas, young people, especially students, are vulnerable to political manipulation on social media and lack the critical thinking abilities to discern authenticity (Isha, 2023). Many mass communication students believed they could spot political misinformation, but they still fell for it (Nowrin, 2024). Disinformation can significantly influence the political views of young social media users (Garcia, 2019). To evaluate media content and identify fake news, media literacy is essential because social media provides a lot of information but raises questions about its legitimacy (Rehan, 2025). Overuse of social media may impede pupils' critical thinking. Moderate use may enhance media literacy when consumers encounter biased and misleading content (Garcia, 2019). Fake news on social media poses a threat to media literacy among young people (Rehan, 2025).

University students must understand how social media can polarize and actively fight its negative effects by critically examining information and participating in civic debate (Umrani, 2024). Turkish people distrust social media (Ahmad, 2023). When consumers distrust information sources, learning and action are inhibited (Bode, 2016). This trust crisis may cause political disengagement or misinvolvement (Bode, 2016). Media motivation and coverage affect how users comprehend

performance-relevant information, with poorly contextualized or incorrect content affecting political efficacy and meaningful involvement, according to Elenbaas et al. (2013). Poorly contextualized or inaccurate performance-relevant media content diminishes political efficacy and meaningful engagement (Boczkowski et al., 2017).

Confirmation bias makes students more susceptible to fake news, especially when they like political content that reflects their views, according to Bringula et al. (2021). Instead of encouraging critical thinking or informed advocacy, this prejudice supports established notions. Online political interactions have been swayed by misinformation, undermining public trust and democracy (Bringula et al., 2021). Social media misinformation and fake news have exacerbated political divisions (Garcia, 2019). Internet media research reveals bogus news can influence agendas (Isha, 2023).

Social media users encounter altered or false political information that may influence public opinion as students form political beliefs and engage in civic debates (Mansoor et al., 2022). Tang and Lee (2013) argue that political behavior is significantly influenced by shared political information, whether true or not, particularly from public political figures. The rise in political disputes caused by unverified content, especially on Facebook and Twitter, demonstrates that social media can both inform and misinform, leading young people to act hastily and erroneously (Muzaffar et al. 2019).

Students acquire political opinions and participate in civic debate on social media, but they also expose users to altered or falsified political information that may affect public perception (Mansoor et al., 2022). Tang and Lee (2013) believe that political behavior is strongly influenced by shared political information, whether accurate or not, mainly when obtained from public political personalities. (Muzaffar et al. 2019) found a surge in political disputes triggered by unverified material, mainly on Facebook and Twitter, demonstrating that social media informs and misinforms, leading young people to act impulsively and incorrectly.

**Table 5**

represents the key points in defining the “Impact of Misinformation on political activism” presented by literature.

Author Name	Year	Key Points
Alami	2017	People rely on Facebook and Twitter for political updates, and these platforms influence their beliefs by disseminating misleading information.
Valenzuela et al.	2019	Social media use is linked to increased political engagement and the spread of misinformation.
Saba	2024	Social media influences political engagement and spreads false information, affecting public opinion.
Sultana et al.	2024	Political bias predicts belief in disinformation; media literacy and critical thinking are essential.
Levy	2021	Proactive content on Facebook has a greater impact on users; conflicting content has a lesser impact.
Tucker et al.	2018	Disinformation can significantly influence people's online political views.
Mansoor	<a href="#">2022</a>	Students should reduce daily social media usage to avoid misinformation.
Subair	2012	Media literacy is crucial for social media users and activists to fight fake news.
Sadia	2024	Social media presents challenges, including misinformation.
Isha	2023	Young people are vulnerable to political manipulation due to evolving ideologies and a lack of critical thinking.
Sohana	2024	Mass communication students believe they can detect misinformation but remain susceptible to its influence.
Garcia	2019	Misinformation affects youths' political decisions; moderate use of social media can improve media literacy.
Rehan	<a href="#">2025</a>	Media literacy is essential for assessing authenticity on social media; overuse can hinder critical thinking.
Umrani	2024	Students must recognize the role of social media in polarization and practice critical engagement.
Ahmad	<a href="#">2023</a>	Turkish students distrust news on social media platforms.
Bode	<a href="#">2016</a>	A lack of trust in social media news can reduce learning and lead to political disengagement or misinformed activism.
Elenbaas et al.	2013	Misleading content and poor media coverage weaken political efficacy and participation.
Boczkowski et al.	2017	Media framing and inadequate context hinder meaningful political engagement and understanding.
Bringula et al.	<a href="#">2021</a>	Confirmation bias increases students' susceptibility to fake news, reinforcing echo chambers and undermining critical discourse.
Mansoor et al.	<a href="#">2022</a>	Social media helps facilitate civic learning, but it also spreads deceptive content and misleading political perceptions.
Tang & Lee	<a href="#">2013</a>	Exposure to political content (whether real or fake) shared by public actors influences political behavior.
Muzaffar et al.	<a href="#">2019</a>	Unverified information on Facebook and Twitter sparked political debates and prompted impulsive activism among young people.

Social Platforms Usage (Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter)

Internet and social media platforms may be highly valued in a state when they provide a new political path (Bekmagambetov et al. 2018). The sources emphasize how students use social media for political involvement, particularly news consumption. Social media has become a vital forum for political debate, providing access to SNSs for political information and interaction (Zaher, 2016). Social media is an important source of news material and influences how consumers trust news sources, perhaps because endorsements indicate legitimacy (Garimella et al., 2021). Narowal University students utilize Facebook and Twitter, hence the study explores how social media affects political polarization (Saba, 2024). The findings show that students use political information on digital platforms to stay informed, discuss their thoughts, and communicate with political actors (Umrani, 2024).

University students use Facebook most for political purposes, followed by Twitter and YouTube. Facebook is a major medium for political socialization in Pakistan because it allows users to follow candidates, share political information, and participate in online debates, according to Muzaffar et al. (2019). According to Mansoor et al. 2022, Baluchistan students use Facebook most to learn and share political information. Tang & Lee (2013) provide a complete study showing that Facebook usage, particularly political material, and relationships with public political personalities, highly predicts political engagement online and offline. Political information is popular on Facebook and Twitter, although their influence varies. Twitter has changed political discourse by allowing politicians to directly communicate. Famous people use Twitter to interact with their followers and influence public opinion on political issues. Social media is increasingly used in political debates, as seen in Pakistan's recent elections (Ali et al., 2024). Twitter defines political communication in the digital age despite deception and echo chambers.

Twitter encourages users to learn, mobilize, and speak out, which boosts political participation (Sultana et al., 2024). Twitter users gained moderate but statistically significant political knowledge, but Facebook users, especially less politically minded ones, did not (Bode, 2016).

Twitter has changed how people talk about politics. Politicians, activists, and individuals use it to express their thoughts, disseminate information, and mobilize support due to its real-time updates and hashtag-driven conversations (Sultana et al., 2024). Facebook news use decreases political knowledge, although following political figures or groups may increase interest and engagement. Users with politically interested friends and regular political talks learn more (Sultana et al. 2024).

In Pakistan, many people utilize Facebook, the most popular platform worldwide (Sadia, 2024). Pakistani youth prefer Facebook for political information, and university students, particularly Punjab University students, are increasingly using Facebook for political involvement, which is congruent with their offline political action (Garcia, 2019). Political figures utilize Twitter to interact with their followers and influence public opinion (Sadia, 2025). Students in Western China may casually browse news hotspots on WeChat (Ahmad, 2023). A Bangladeshi poll found that most respondents use Facebook, with a lesser number using Instagram (Razib & Pinky, 2023). Pakistani preachers can reach a wide following on YouTube (Sadia, 2024). Like Facebook algorithms, Instagram stream algorithms affect political content (Elvis, 2020).

Bringula et al. (2021) revealed that regular Instagram use and political content participation (liking or sharing posts) can make students more susceptible to fake news. YouTube and Facebook are prominent political update sites, which spread misinformation and increase political awareness (Bringula et al. 2021). Ahmad et al. (2019) found that 37.5% of respondents watch official or unofficial election issues, party leader, and local candidate videos on YouTube daily, while 44.0% visit party, leader, and candidate Twitter accounts.

Table 6

Represent the key points on defining "Social Platforms Usage" presented by literature.

Author Name	Year	Key Points
Bekmagambetov et al.	2018	The Internet and social media provide new platforms for political exchange.



Author Name	Year	Key Points
Zaher	2016	Social media evolved as a key platform for political discourse and engagement.
Garimella et al.	2021	Verify news on social media and assess the credibility of sources.
Saba	2024	Facebook and Twitter are used by students to access political content, thereby enhancing their awareness.
Umrani	2024	Students use social media to express their beliefs and connect with political figures.
Muzaffar et al.	<a href="#">2019</a>	Facebook facilitates political activities and online discussions in Pakistan.
Mansoor et al.	<a href="#">2022</a>	Among Baluchistan students. Facebook is the most popular platform for delivering political information.
Tang & Lee	<a href="#">2013</a>	Facebook exposure and connections to political actors predict political participation.
Ali et al.	2024	Twitter revolutionizes political communication with direct interactions between citizens and politicians.
Sultana et al.	2024	Twitter boosts political engagement and knowledge; Facebook increases interest but not awareness.
Bode	<a href="#">2016</a>	Twitter slightly increases political knowledge; Facebook shows no gain among less interested users.
Sadia	2024	Facebook is the most used platform in Pakistan for gaining political information.
Garcia	2019	Pakistani youth prefer Facebook; its use is correlated with offline political behavior.
Sadia	2025	Twitter enables political figures in Pakistan to influence public opinion.
Ahmad	2023	Chinese students utilize social media platforms like WeChat to stay informed about news updates.
Razib & Pinky	2023	In Bangladesh, Facebook is used mostly some also use Instagram for political content.
Elvis	2020	Facebook and Instagram algorithms affect exposure to political content.
Bringula et al.	<a href="#">2021</a>	The use of Instagram for political content increases the vulnerability to fake news; YouTube and Facebook also spread awareness and disinformation.
Ahmad et al.	2019	Extreme daily usage of YouTube and Twitter for viewing political leaders and election-related content.

## Increase in Political Awareness and Engagement

Social media boosts student political awareness and engagement, according to various sources. Social media can help university students socialize politically (Mansoor, 2024). Social media may help students understand local and national politics, therefore student political platforms should be helpful (Elvis, 2020). Social media has enhanced political understanding and involvement in emerging nations including Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan (Sadia, 2024). Internet users becoming

more politically active offline. SNS are vital to political education, especially for youth (Umrani, 2024). Student use of SNS for political debates has been shown to increase political awareness in Pakistan (Sadia, 2024). University students' political engagement relies on social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter (Nowrin, 2024).

Social media connects politicians and university students, facilitating political communication and ideas (Saba, 2024). The political views of Narowal University students are heavily influenced by social media (Nowrin, 2024). New media political discourse raises university students' political

consciousness (attention, awareness, understanding) (Farooz, 2023). Netizens need social media to participate in politics (Ahmad, 2023). Social media encourages “by-product learning,” where individuals passively study politics while browsing. This accidental exposure to politics can raise awareness and involvement (Bode, 2016).

Political awareness and offline participation are highly linked to online political actions (Ahmad, 2023). Most kids learn about politics on social media (Farias-Batlle et al., 2023). Youth are interested in politics, and the media raises awareness (Ali, 2016). Young people use social media and other internet platforms to learn about politics (Ahmad, 2023). Youth are politically conscious (Ali, 2016). Social media has increased political activity, especially in urban areas with more internet access. Digital connectedness helps young adults form their political views and engage, as Zhang et al. (2010) demonstrated that social networking sites have a strong influence on political attitudes and behaviors. Social media fosters inclusive civic behavior and encourages youth political participation. Political expression on social media affects youth engagement (Sadia, 2024). Pakistani rural university students' political efficacy and real-life engagement are affected by online political participation (Ramas, 2023). Digital media affects political socialization and student and citizen engagement (Sadia, 2024). Western Chinese university students who use social media are more likely to engage in political discourse and stay informed about the latest news (Ahmad, 2023). By sharing, discussing, and spreading news on social media, individuals can more effectively participate

in politics and influence offline conversations (Ahmad, 2023). Rehan et al. (2025) found that social media use enhances media literacy, which in turn boosts public trust and political engagement. Similar to Bringula et al. (2021), students exposed to political news on social media were more aware of political issues, spent more time, and learned more about politics. Political participation and involvement on online and offline platforms show that new media and other online channels allow political players to express their opinions openly. Digital media use and political participation differ by person (Ahmad et al., 2019).

Muzaffar et al. 2019 Argument that the rapid proliferation of Internet platforms has made young more politically conscious by providing direct access to political content and interactive debates. Mansoor et al. (2022) found a statistically significant association between social media usage and students' understanding of local and global political dynamics, indicating that online platforms enhance political awareness. Tang and Lee (2013) demonstrate that Facebook political content, particularly from diverse and politically active networks, enhances both online and offline political engagement. Citizens' political participation can increase with online group formation. Political campaigns can energize supporters in this category, but administrators should emphasize quality debates. Consider these benefits while making policy (Sultana et al., 2024). Fayaz (2024) examined the influence of media, active young political participation, and changing attitudes regarding youth political activity and voting turnout.

**Table 7**  
*Represent the key points on defining “Increase in Political Awareness and Engagement” presented by literature.*

Author Name	Year	Key Points
Mansoor	2024	Social media is an effective tool for the political socialization of university students.
Elvis	2020	Encourages students to develop political platforms to help understand local and national politics.
Sadia	2024	Social media enhances political involvement and awareness in developing countries, impacting political awareness in Pakistan.
Umrani	2024	SNS plays a crucial role in political education, particularly among young people.
Nowrin	2024	Facebook and Twitter influence political engagement among university students and shape public beliefs.

Author Name	Year	Key Points
Saba	2024	Social media brings close political personalities and students together, facilitating political communication.
Farooz	2023	Political discourse on new media raises awareness & understanding among university students; online political participation impacts offline engagement.
Ahmad	2023	Social media fosters both real-life political activities and passive political learning, with urban students being more likely to engage both online and offline.
Bode	<a href="#">2016</a>	Social media fosters 'by-product learning' that lowers barriers to political awareness and engagement.
Battle et al	2024	Mostly, students use social media for political awareness and to gain political information.
Ali	2016	Youth show political interest; the media acts as an agent for political awareness.
Zhang et al.	2010	Social networking sites (SNS) influence political attitudes and behaviors; digital connectivity helps students shape their political views.
Rehan et al.	<a href="#">2025</a>	Social media use correlates with increased media literacy and political engagement.
Bringula et al.	<a href="#">2021</a>	High exposure to political news via social media boosts awareness of issues and perceived importance.
Ahmad et al.	2019	New media enable political participants to express their views openly; attitudes vary by the type of media used.
Muzaffar et al.	<a href="#">2019</a>	Digital platforms transform youth into politically conscious individuals through interactive access.
Mansoor et al.	2022	Social media usage correlates with students' understanding of local and global political dynamics.
Tang and Lee	<a href="#">2013</a>	Exposure to diverse political content on Facebook boosts online and offline engagement.
Sultana et al.	2024	Online political groups mobilize their supporters; discussion of equality should be prioritized in their campaigns.
Fayaz	2024	Youth and media involvement has shifted attitudes and increased political and voting participation.

## Visual Content Influence on Students' Awareness and Understanding

Few publications, especially those exploring social media's effects on political awareness and activity, directly address how visual content affects students' knowledge and understanding. Some sources examine political communication on social media, which typically uses visuals. Visuals reduce cognitive load and increase attentiveness, especially for political novices (Anderson & Stromback, 2021). The wording, layout, tone, and material of political information in new media are crucial (Farooz, 2023). Social media allows news media to engage in debates, establish viewpoints, and publish online (Razib & Pinky, 2023). To reach their target

audience, news organizations may interpret or focus on other topics (Razib & Pinky, 2023).

Nazeer and Ashfaq (2023) examine how political Facebook memes engage young people offline in politics. (Sadia, 2024). This implies that memes engage youth with political content. In an experimental Facebook simulation, Bode ([2016](#)) discovered that visual political content helped people detect political information better than text-only or nonpolitical content. This supports Krugman's "learning without involvement," where visually engaging media aids memory retention without effort (Bode, [2016](#)). Edited photos and false visuals are often used to convey misinformation and corrupt political narratives (Bringula et al., [2021](#)). Emotional appeal and virality make such content more believable and spreadable, increasing its

influence. Ceron (2015) also noted that unfiltered social media material exposes users to divisive and opposing views, challenging established media narratives. A more diversified public domain can weaken faith in institutions and hamper understanding of complex political issues.

According to Muzaffar et al. (2019), political leaders and parties are employing images and video messages to engage youthful audiences, making

political tales more approachable. According to Mansoor et al. (2022), students watch political campaign videos and infographics on Facebook and Twitter, which influences their political knowledge. Tang and Lee (2013) propose that public actors' unintended yet influential sharing of visual political information encourages involvement even among previously disengaged people. Visual media may bridge language barriers and evoke strong emotions with political information.

Table 8

Represent the key points on defining “Visual Content Influence on Students' Awareness and Understanding” Presented by Literature.

Author Name	Year	Key Points
Anderson & Stromback	2021	Visuals reduce cognitive load and enhance comprehension, especially for students with low political interest.
Farooz	2023	The tone and content of political communication on media platforms are crucial for audience engagement.
Razib & Pinky	2023	Social media enables news agencies to shape dialogue, and make opinions, and news more accessible; they may redirect attention to influence perception.
Nazeer & Ashfaq	2023	Political memes on Facebook engage young users and influence offline political participation.
Sadia	2024	This supports the idea that engaging visual content like memes helps increase youth interest and involvement in politics.
Bode	2016	Visual political posts improve recall of political information, and support 'learning without involvement' through visually stimulating content.
Bringula et al.	2021	Manipulated visuals and misleading graphics spread misinformation, and influence political beliefs through emotional appeal.
Ceron	2015	Social platforms expose users to unfiltered, polarized views, promoting pluralism but possibly reducing trust in institutions and political comprehension.
Muzaffar et al.	2019	Political leaders use images and videos to make political content more accessible and relatable for youth.
Mansoor et al.	2022	Students interact often with visual political content (e.g., infographics, campaign videos), shaping their political awareness.
Tang & Lee	2013	Political info in visuals encourages accidental yet impactful exposure, driving engagement among previously disengaged individuals.

Conclusion

In summary, this study demonstrates how social media has become a vital platform for college students to engage with and access political information. Students can follow political news, leave comments, and participate in online debates on social media platforms such as Facebook,

Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. Social media raises political consciousness and may inspire real-world actions, such as voting or protests, but it also disseminates false information and fake news that misleads and confuses students. Videos and memes are examples of visual media that might interest students, but they might not provide them with a



comprehensive understanding of political concerns. For kids to become critical thinkers, identify false information, and make well-informed judgments, media literacy needs to be promoted. Social media has both beneficial and detrimental effects on

students' political participation and understanding of politics. It is also essential for effective civic engagement that students learn how to utilize it wisely.

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