



RESEARCH PAPER**Impact of Short Videos on Political Information and Participation of Teens**

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ABSTRACT

The field of visual communication suggests that the use of imaginative visuals like images, videos, and graphics might potentially influence the perceptions and attitudes of the general public including teenagers. These teenagers have access to social media platforms and spend most of their time watching short videos. The present study aimed to investigate the impact of political short videos on political information and participation of teenagers. A quantitative survey research methodology approach is used with a sample size of (N = 250) Teens. Major findings of the study proved that exposure to short videos in the form of TikTok Videos, YouTube Shorts, Facebook, and Instagram Reels is one of the major sources of information for teens and political information and political participation of teens. These teenagers are very aware of political data and information which helps them actively participate in political activities, and discussions. The government and educational institutions may develop a strategy to help teenagers better understand the political system, which will encourage the positive use of social media.

KEYWORDS Political Information, Political Participation, Short Videos, Social Media

Introduction

People actively participate in online social networking platforms with the specific purpose of seeking aid and obtaining information. According to (Beaudoin, 2008), Social Media platforms provide users with a constant stream of up-to-date information and a diverse array of perspectives. This leads to improved accessibility, quicker retrieval of information, and a broader scope of knowledge when compared to traditional internet sites. Individuals are obligated to possess the capacity to identify, evaluate, and choose information. The use of social media platforms to obtain information satisfactorily meets the curiosity and needs of customers (Ruggiero, 2000). The importance of both online and offline interaction in democratic societies has been constantly underscored in research shown in the domains of communication, media, and political science (Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013). It would seem reasonable to acknowledge the present form of the deliberative online public sphere, which is reliant on visual content more and more, by looking at the effect of social media visuals on online political interaction (Halpern & Gibbs, 2013). This discourse aims to elaborate on the notion that political participation is fundamental to the process of policy formation, contending that it is of inherent importance not only to the advancement of individual citizens' political participation but also to the preservation of democratic principles (Frieß & Porten-Cheé, 2018). The phenomenon of political activity among young

persons in Europe has a paradoxical nature. The disengagement paradigm is substantiated by empirical evidence, which includes young people exhibiting little participation in national elections, a decline in party membership, and a general lack of interest in political affairs (Weiss, 2020). Instagram's political clout, as a mobile photo-sharing service, is on the rise. Instagram has 400 million active users each month, it ranks as the second most popular social media network after Facebook. All major party candidates in the 2016 US presidential election utilized Instagram to spread their message, both in the primaries and the general election. More than two-thirds of UN member states' heads of state are active on Instagram (Rodríguez-Salcedo & Gómez-Baceiredo, 2017). According to scholarly investigations in the field of visual communication, it has been posited that the use of creative imagery can have an impact on public opinion. This is mostly attributed to the fact that pictures possess a heightened ability to captivate the attention of viewers, effectively express emotions, and ultimately bring about alterations in political behavior (Macafee, 2013). It is important to acknowledge that images play a pivotal role in the execution and consequences of present-day politics. Due to its pronounced emphasis on visual content, Instagram has the potential to have a comparable political impact (Alhabash & Ma, 2017). The use of media by individuals is typically influenced by a combination of variables, including demographic characteristics and political beliefs. These elements may either stimulate or impede communication objectives, impact media consumption patterns, and shape the consequences of media usage (Parmelee, 2013). Regarding demographic variables, studies on the use of social media and the Internet for political purposes show that age, gender, income, and education are related to the motivations behind and usage patterns of these platforms. There is a correlation between a younger age demographic and the inclination to use Twitter for political purposes, specifically driven by social and entertainment objectives (Shelton, 2016).

Literature Review

The presence of visual information is pervasive in our everyday lives, and this is also applicable inside educational environments (Fahmy et al., 2014). The use of technology enables the integration of innovative forms of visual representation inside educational institutions and learning environments. At the outset, individuals are often drawn to digital culture not only due to its technical complexities but also due to a need for communication or amusement (Drotner, 2008). There is little doubt that the emergence of digital communication technology has had a profound impact on several societal domains, including politics. The Internet has played a pivotal role in enabling the propagation of political knowledge among youth, therefore serving as a powerful platform for socialization and communication that is influenced by many social groups. Moreover, the emergence of digitalization has resulted in significant changes in possible forms of political participation. In addition to conventional means of voting, there has been an increase in other forms of political participation. These activities include backing digital petitions, creating blogs and articles about political topics, distributing them through social media platforms, engaging in online voting, elections, and referendums, and participating in virtual party conferences and congresses (Eremenko, Chentsova & Kuzmenko, 2021). The advent of the digital revolution has precipitated the emergence and proliferation of visual material, which has seen significant advancements in terms of accessibility, emotional resonance, and aesthetic appeal, owing to the advancements in current technology. The use of visual symbols has played a significant role in political communication for an extended period. Their significance has further escalated due to the prevalence of television as the primary medium for political information dissemination (Eremenko, Chentsova & Kuzmenko, 2021). Visual communications are gaining significance in politics and culture due to expansion of the info society, resulting in an amplification of their social roles (Wijaya, 2015). The academic disciplines of communication and political science have

placed considerable emphasis on the importance of both offline and online interaction in connection to the functioning and long-term viability of democratic societies. Furthermore, empirical studies have shown, the media has extensive influence on people's propensity to contribute in political discussions (Strömbäck, Falasca, & Kruikemeier, 2018). The contemporary landscape of political involvement necessitates the use of digital tools since it can no longer be confined only to traditional, labor-intensive offline activities (Lilleker & Koc-Michalska, 2017). The mechanisms via which political engagement occurs in online deliberative environments, in light of the rise and popularity in social media platforms (Friess & Eilders, 2015). The phenomenon under consideration involves the widespread sharing, assessment, and debate of political content via social media platforms. This practice leads to the establishment of deliberative groups and the initiation of political discourse (Anduiza et al., 2012). The role of digital media videos and pictures on online political engagement seems to be a rational progression in recognizing the contemporary manifestation of the deliberative public sphere in the digital realm, which is progressively characterized by visual elements (Muzaffar, et. al., 2020; Halpern & Gibbs, 2013). The advent of digital photography and the rise of online publication have facilitated a remarkable transition towards visual content in online media, driven by the aesthetic expectations of editors and readers alike (Fahmy, Bock, & Wanta, 2014). The incorporation of pictures has emerged as a fundamental component in political communication and the covering of political information (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017). Users of new media are often exposed to a diverse range of visual representations related to war, terrorism, environmental degradation, and social inequities, which are deeply intertwined with their routine engagement with media. News photographs provide considerable potential in effectively communicating information, arousing the reader's inclination for further reading and knowledge acquisition, motivating the reader, evoking emotional reactions, and instigating following actions that are relevant to promoting active civic participation (Rafter, Novelli, & Holtz-Bacha, 2016). However, despite the presence of numerous studies conducted in the disciplines of communication, political science, and media psychology, which have demonstrated the importance of visuals as a vital means of conveying information, reducing selective exposure, capturing attention, and enhancing information dispensation (Zillmann, Knobloch, & Yu, 2001). Both deliberative and participative views are important for examining democracies (Gutmann & Thompson, 2009; Pateman, 2012). This discourse aims to present the notion that political involvement plays a pivotal part in the policymaking procedure, positing that it has significance not just in terms of fostering the political integration of all the citizens but also for the overall sustenance of democracy (Frieß & Porten-Cheé, 2018). Numerous scholarly articles in the fields of political science and communications explore an impact of visual stimuli on the emotional states and cognitive processes of receivers, and their potential to influence political outcomes (Rafter et al., 2016). News photographs had a considerable capacity for information compression, hence fostering a sustained engagement with news consumption, information retrieval, emotional responses, and civic participation. Visual pictures have a crucial role in enhancing the memorability and ease of processing of information inside a message (Corrigall-Brown & Wilkes, 2012). The use of short videos enhances comprehension of campaigns and social movements. The favorable influence of digital media on public engagement, and political involvement. A study conducted with a sample size of 2409 individuals aged 16 to 24 revealed a favorable correlation between use of internet and several manifestations of political engagement (Bakker & De Vreese's, 2011). The specific photographs shared on social media platforms exerted a significant impact on the recipients' inclination to engage in various activities (Powel et al., 2015). Notably, the perception of news-related images heightened individuals' motivation to engage in detailed discussions regarding political matters, contribute monetary funds, endorse petitions, and partake in protests in solidarity with the individuals or groups involved in

the depicted conflicts. Given the inherent distinctions between visual content and textual forms, the study of visual content necessitates the use of specialist methodologies and methods (Bock, 2020). The visual social semiotic method investigates the many meanings conveyed by visuals, including their representational, interactive, and compositional aspects. This technique aims to analyze the specific properties of visual material produced by organizations that are linked to increased levels of public participation on social media platforms (Valentini et al., 2018). Engaging in online discussion has a positive effect on political efficacy, defined as a person's subjective perception that their political actions may influence or impact the political process (Zúñiga et al., 2014).

Hypotheses

- H1** Watching Short videos on social media positively correlated with the political information of teens.
- H2** Watching Political Short videos positively correlated with the political participation of teenage social media users.

Social Media Political Participation Model (SMPPM)

The social media Political Participation Model (SMPPM), aids in analyzing the political and non-political motivations that affect purposeful and accidental exposure techniques. The study takes into account several moderating factors, such as a person's capacity for curation and how frequently they are exposed to political content on social media. By considering these elements, the study seeks to develop a full knowledge of the reasons behind and consequences of political visuals and pictures on social media platforms (Nanz & Matthes, 2022). Drawing upon research conducted in both the United Kingdom and the United States, the scholarly publication titled "The Making of Citizens" explores the nuanced dimensions of how adolescents perceive and understand news content, as well as their evaluations of the portrayals of significant social and political matters. Instead of lamenting the lack of knowledge among young individuals, the author advocates for a reevaluation of the criteria for political comprehension in present-day society. The author proposes using factual reporting strategies that might perhaps better correspond to the evolving self-perceptions of young people as engaged members of a community (Buckingham, 2002). According to the SMPPM, detailed analysis occurs whenever a political message appears to be pertinent in a social media timeline. Following the relevance evaluation, people determine if there is a difference between the present political climate and the desired future condition. If this is the case, they develop an urge, frame participatory goals around it, and assess how dominating these targets are in pertinent behavioral circumstances (Muzaffar, et. al., 2019; Nanz et al. (2020). The study of political engagement along with the utilization of social networking sites has been increasing significantly (Ekström et al., 2013). Political behavior among citizens has increased as a result of social media and new involvement strategies. Researchers have created and statistically validated the social media Political Participation Scale to assess these changing political activities. Proactive and outspoken political social media use and more reflexive interaction, like sharing posts to spread information, are intended to be covered by this tool. The integration of goal systems theory and the uses and gratifications method is seen in the SMPPM. This research incorporates and defines the crucial contextual factors that determine the extent of this influence, using current scholarly references. Furthermore, this study aims to provide valuable perceptions into the strategies used to promote psychological well-being, including various degrees of effort, and considering both short-term and long-term outcomes. Furthermore, the social media Political Participation Model (SMPPM) offers researchers a comprehensive theoretical

framework for generating and evaluating hypotheses about the utilizations of political information on social media platforms and other media channels. It also addresses the development of explicit and implicit participatory objectives and the subsequent enactment in real-world behavioral contexts (Kruglanski et al., 2018).

Material and Methods

The present study is characterized by a quantitative research design and focuses on the young population of Pakistan. A sample size of $N = 250$ individuals was selected for the study, and data was gathered using an online survey administered via Google Docs. The randomly selected 250 teenagers from different areas of central Punjab have different demographic statuses. The present study employs a questionnaire as a means of collecting data from the specified participants. Various measures have been used in this study, including a measure for exposure to short videos that has been established based on previous research, as well as a measure for political information and political participation that has been adopted and modified from a different source. The measure for political information consists of a total of 11 questions. The concept of political information was derived and modified from previous scholarly work. The first part of the questionnaire pertains to the demographic characteristics of teenagers, the subsequent section focuses on the independent variable (exposure to short videos), and dependent variables political information and political participation. The data were acquired via an online survey administered on Google Docs. The latest version of SPSS was used for data analysis and testing of hypotheses and reliability analysis, correlation testing was carried out. A pilot study was conducted with 25 respondents to better understand the validity and reliability of the questions in the questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 250)

	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	135	53.0
Female	115	47.0
Age		
13-15	59	23.6
16-17	71	28.4
18-19	110	44.0
Area		
Urban	140	56.0
Rural	110	44.0

Table 1 shows the Demographic Profile of Respondents ($n = 250$) and provides a comprehensive summary of the study. At 53% male and 47% female, shows that the sample is fairly balanced in terms of gender. The age distribution shows that the majority of teenagers (44.0%) are in the 18 - 19 age range, followed by the 16 - 17 age group (28.4%) and the 13 - 15 age group (23.6%). Geographically, a majority (56.0%) live in cities, while a minority (44.0%) are from rural areas. This in-depth Demographic information is presented in a way that makes it easy to understand and helps put the study's participant composition into context, which is important for understanding the relevance of the research findings.

Table 2*Correlation of Short Videos with Political Information and Political Participation (N = 250)*

	PVL	HS
SV	1	
PI	.323**	1

SV = Short Videos; PI = Political Information

**. "Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)"

To examine H1, which states that teens' political knowledge is favorably connected with their watching of short social media videos. Table 2 shows that there was a positive correlation (.323) between political information (DV) and short films (IV). It shows a positive linear relationship between viewers' political knowledge and their consumption of political short videos on social media. Because there is a positive link found between watching short videos and political information, these data support hypothesis H1.

Table 3**Correlation of Short Videos with Political Participation (N = 250)**

	PD	HS
SV	1	
PP	.521**	1

SV = Short Videos; PP = Political Participation

**. "Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)"

In the Hypothesis 2: There is a favorable correlation between teenage social media users' political activity and their viewing of political short films. Table 3 demonstrates a significant correlation (.521) between audience political participation (DV) and Short Videos (IV). The results corroborate H2 since a positive correlation is found between IV and DV and it shows a somewhat positive linear link between Short Videos and viewers' political participation.

Conclusion

The first hypothesis of the study posited that Watching Short videos on social media positively correlated with the political information of teens. The present study has subsequently confirmed this hypothesis via correlation analysis. The outcomes of this theory are reliable with previous research conducted by (Amadeo, 2013) and (Rasul, Shin, and Beede, 2022). The second hypothesis posited in the study Watching Political Short videos positively correlated with the political participation of teenage social media users. This hypothesis was substantiated using the correlation test, which provided empirical evidence in previous research conducted by (Lane et al.,2019) and (Velasquez and LaRose, 2015), further bolstering the support for this hypothesis. Furthermore, both hypotheses posited that short videos uploaded on different social media platforms in the form of TikTok videos, YouTube shorts, Snapchat Spotlight, Instagram, and Facebook reels are the main sources of political information for teenage users. These teenagers are very aware of political data and information which helps them actively participate in political activities, and discussions (Muzaffar, 2016). Notably, only a few participants cast their vote in recent general elections in February 2024 because the minimum age to vote in elections is 18 years and they must have a National Identity card.

Recommendations

Teenagers are getting information according to their perceptions, the educational institutions must play a vital role in helping their students by creating awareness sessions so the students can understand democracy, political party systems, elections, and voting systems. There is a chance of exposure to misinformation, intolerance, and changing in behavior because of information disorder. The government, the election commission, and mainstream media should help the students, these recommendations also open the doors for future researchers.

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