



SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL AWARENESS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to fill a theoretical gap about how social media affects political awareness. This study examines how social media helps people learn about politics outside of school. Talking with other people on social media is different from doing things that are not directly political. This study is a cross-sectional survey of first-year college students from Pakistan's Sindh's five biggest campuses. Nine hundred seventy-seven students completed questionnaires in total. The results show that students can learn about politics through political discussion on social media networks. The more students talk about politics on social media, the better they understand politics. Since social media activities don't involve users, they only do little to raise political awareness. This study shows that students learn more about politics when they talk about it with their peers than when they only use social media. For people to understand politics through social media, they need to talk about politics. Students' political awareness also depends on their gender, age, and how much money they have. The results are essential for platform-specific research to determine how social media activities affect each platform based on how it works.

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INTRODUCTION

Now, academics have to try out social media to teach and learn. Social media is a way to share information, learn about new things, and access various sources. It starts with reading the news online and ends with being a part of online community groups (Votnova & Votinov, 2019). Students might be more interested in active learning using Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Twitter helps students do better in school (Junco et al., 2011). According to research on social media, adding social media to teaching and learning could lead to new ways of communicating, working together, figuring out who we are, or getting cognitive and social benefits (Gao, Luo, & Zhang, 2012).

Social networks driven by technology offer a huge chance to improve higher education. Social media might be the best place to learn because people can work together and talk to each other. That could help people learn more and get hands-on experience. There is a link between social media and making and sharing knowledge in a collaborative and open way to everyone. Users can create and share their work right away, talk to other people who like the same things they do, and give feedback on the work of other users. Social media makes it easier for students to talk to each other about their assignments, share information, and stay motivated to learn. Wang and Cai (2018) found that many Chinese college students have access to social media and know about politics in their own country and worldwide.

Social media platforms have helped people learn about things in many fields, not just politics. Social media are now the primary way political information gets out (McAllister, 2015). People, especially young people, learn much about politics and social problems through social networking sites (Khan & Shahbaz, 2015). Students often use social media to share political information with

the community, discuss policy concerns, and give their opinions. Boukes (2019) found problems with Facebook and Twitter, which made the knowledge gap hypothesis apply to the Internet.

In a similar study, Fletcher et al. (2015) found that people in the Netherlands are less likely to use Facebook to keep up with news than people in other countries (Turkey and Portugal). So, the results differ from those based on the number of interested people in the country. Twitter is a social media tool that can also be used to talk about politics and help the public have a more informed conversation (Beers, 2014). Since all activities dealing with parts of democracy are seen as important, changing how the millennial generation thinks is necessary. People think it's essential that social media is treated as a tool to teach people about politics ahead of the 2019 Indonesian presidential election. Given the cognitive power of social media and communication, it is essential to study how political effects might come about and if they play a role in deciding political outcomes. This study wants to determine how social media affects political learning to understand how students learn about politics outside school. It is possible to tell the difference between activities that involve conflict and those that don't when students use social media. There are 160 million people in Indonesia who use social media. Social media makes spreading false information, data division, and political polarisation easier. It also makes applying helpful and inspiring ideas easier (Ziga & Chen, 2019). Because of this problem, this study was done to prove that social media can help the study's sample learn. It will be seen if students' use of social media and interactions with political information change how they think about politics. This study aims to determine how students' political awareness is affected by how they talk about politics and how much they use social media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Civics education and social media: a study

Social media is a type of media based on the Internet and has features rarely discussed in traditional media. Stoycheff et al. (2017) say that social media is a non-institutionalized online platform that depends primarily on user-generated content and complicated features that encourage two-way engagement. This definition doesn't include instant messaging, email, online news sources, online opinion sharing, and blogs that let you post and reply to comments. Students might benefit from getting relevant, correct, and up-to-date information through social media. Liburd and Christensen say that social media platforms let students talk to each other and have essential online learning conversations (2013). Social media help create an environment where students can work together to learn, improving their academic performance. Murire et al. say that using social media in the classroom increases throughput rates, contact between students and teachers, student engagement, and student-centred learning (2018). Social media platforms offer various sources, codecs, and formats for political information. Many networks, accounts, and groups often post news about politics, current events, and breaking news on the Internet. Using social media to learn about politics could be a good idea. When social media are combined with traditional mass media, students may be more interested in politics (Intyaswati et al., 2021). You can make online content by participating in online conversations and posting online comments, but you can also use online content by reading online comments and watching online videos. People are more likely to respond to emotionally charged political messages on social media sites like Facebook, which leads to more interactions (Tarullo, 2020). For example, participating in online political conversations makes it possible for people to talk to each other more interactively (Gibson & Cantijoch, 2011). "Passive usage" refers to activities like reading about politics online, where there is only one-way communication.

Research has shown that having access to the Internet makes people smarter about politics.

Reading websites about campaigns is a great way to learn more about politics. When friends or group members post something, it shows up on the timelines of users who aren't interested in it. It lets them passively learn (Zukin & Snyder, 1984). Even though we don't access the most up-to-date information, we still know things from the media. Iskhakova et al. say that political education needs to teach about political figures, state symbols, and the rules governing politics (2020). As a democratic way of life becomes more common, social media makes it easy for teenagers to learn about politics.

There isn't much known about social media studies as a field. There are many ways in which social networking sites affect education. Dimitrova et al. says that how people learn depends on the learning resources they access (2014). On the other hand, too much political content on social media may be a distraction (Yoo & Gil de Zuniga, 2014). Park (2017) says that how people use social media makes it hard to teach people about politics. The student will look at the news kids see on social networking sites by accident, think about it, and remember it. So, the following theory is put forward:

Students' political knowledge is affected by how much they use social media.

Social networking sites are talked about.

Students may have the chance to learn more by talking to other students. Conversations on social media show that students are more interested and know more about their subjects than those who use social media less (Dyson et al., 2014). As students argue about a topic, they will think about it, remember it, repeat it, and listen to others. This strategy lets people share information in conversation, which helps people remember important information and spreads knowledge. People can argue about even the most complicated topics in interpersonal discussions, make logical connections, and present well-reasoned arguments. Innovative thinking helps people understand

politics better, which leads to a strong political orientation.

Polls show that social networking allows students to study together at any time and place. Jumaat et al. (2019) say meaningful learning requires student and instructor interactions. However, they warn that unstructured interactions may not have much of an effect on students' intellectual growth. Facebook makes it easier for students to find helpful information by letting them see their social connections with people who share their interests (Jeon et al., 2016). Students also think a Facebook group about chemistry helps them learn online and improve their skills. Facebook has become a social networking site that affects college student leadership campaigns (Chininga et al., 2019). Intyaswati et al. Depending on how many people are in the discussion group, online communication may help people learn in higher education. Social media gives students a chance to build their professional networks by putting them in touch with experts directly or indirectly. The visibility of these experts' work made students aware of their work (Dragseth, 2020).

The second idea goes like this:

Social media political discourse raises students' political consciousness.

METHODOLOGY

Respondent

We did a cross-sectional survey of first-year college students in Bandung, Indonesia, from January 2 to February 14, 2020. The five campuses in Bandung with the most students are used to choosing which one to use (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019). Some of these universities are Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), Universitas Pasundan (UPS), Universitas Telkom (Tel-U), Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), and Universitas Padjadjaran (Unpad) (Unpas). Questionnaires were used to gather information, which was then looked at by researchers in the field.

The sample comprises a group of students from those five colleges whose names were used to pick them randomly. Also, field researchers sent questionnaires to students at their different schools. One student from each of the five colleges comprised the 977 students who were polled.

The survey instrument's questions

There were two parts to the study's questionnaire. In the first part, students are asked about their ages, genders, how often they use social networking sites, and which ones they prefer. In the second part, we'll gather data about numbers. In the second half of the survey, people answer 10 out of 15 questions using a 5-point Likert scale, a common way to measure things in social science research (Groshek & Krongard, 2016).

They were getting a neutral measuring tool and accurate, trustworthy data. A pre-test was given to 30 first-year college students to check the questionnaire. Also, any questions thought to be confusing or misleading were taken out of the final form and emailed to respondents. Before taking the survey, participants were told about the research goals and asked to sign a form saying they were willing to answer the questions. Also, they were told that the information would not be shared with anyone else.

Measurement

Four questions were asked of the respondents to find out how much they knew about politics: which major party supports the president, who is the head of parliament when President Jokowi's term ends, and what role Retno Marsudi plays in the president's government. False answers were given a score of zero, and correct answers were given a score of one. The sum was worked out for each of the four questions. The average value of this asset was \$3.17, and the standard deviation was \$1.

The frequency of their actions was found through questions about how often people use social media. Some examples of political behaviour are following politicians, learning about politics, sharing other people's views, giving opinions on current events, uploading political experiences, sharing images, films, or other materials, and commenting on different points of view. The average score was 2.01, and the standard deviation was 0.73. The answers ranged from "never" (1) to "always" (3). (5).

During the political debate, people were often asked about their political conversations with 1) family, 2) people with different views, 3) friends, and 4) strangers with whom they talked on social media. Responses were ranked between 1 (never) and 5 (always) (always). The average amount of political talk was 1.81, and the standard deviation was 0.75.

Figure 3 shows a CFA with maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) for three construct measurement models. The Chi-square test is susceptible for groups of more than 200 people (Zainudin, 2012). The normed chi-square value is .757 (less than 3), the Comparative Index (CFI) value is .991 (higher than .90), and the Tucker-Lewis Index value is .988. Root Mean Square Approximation Error (RMSEA) is .028 (less than .08) (more than .90). The three structures that met the set criteria should be looked into more. The Cronbach coefficients () of the three multi-item scales are examined to prove that the measurements fit. The score for political discourse was 0.759, the score for political knowledge was 0.731, and the score for using social media was 0.839. The suggested lowest point on the scale of dependability is 0.70. So, the performance and reliability of the three criteria are both excellent.

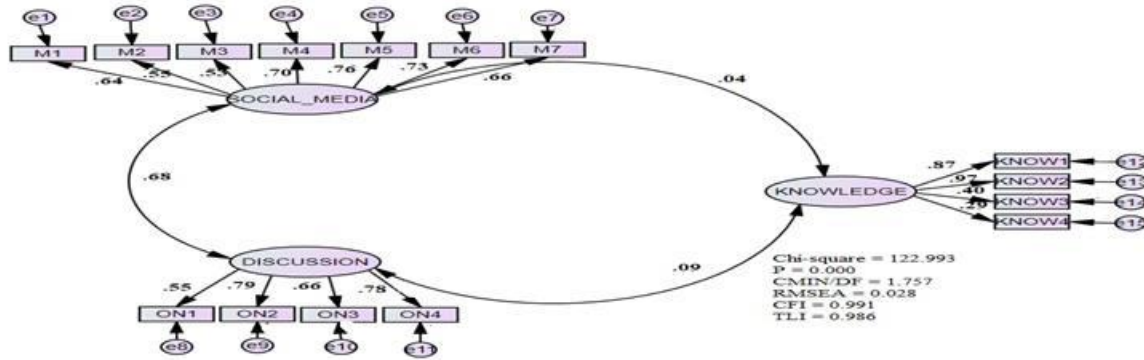


Figure 3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis model

Results

There were 66.94% women and 33.06% men among the students. Figure 1 shows that the ages of the students range from 17 to 19, with more than half being 19 years old. Figure 2 shows that most students spend less than IDR 2,000,000 monthly (95.08%). Figure 4 shows that 41.97% of students use YouTube, followed by 31.73% who use Instagram and 9.21% use WhatsApp.

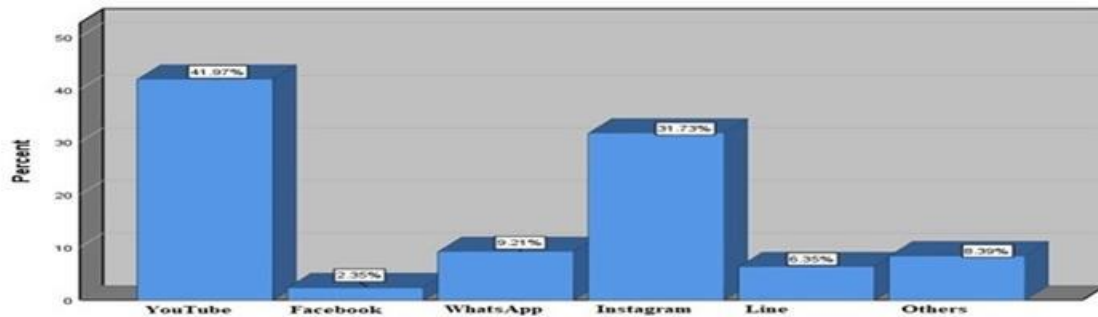


Figure 4 Distribution of Social media favourite

Table 1 shows that 69.3% of men could answer all political questions, but only 51.5% of women could do the same. Otherwise, 0.9% of male and 5.8% of female students couldn't answer political questions correctly. Overall, 57.4% of students got all the political questions right, while 4.2% did not get all the questions straight.

Table 1 Gender-based political knowledge score of students

Political Knowledge score						
	0	1	2	3	4	Total
Male	3	6	42	48	224	323
Female	0.9	1.9	13.0	14.9	66.3	100
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	41	54	160	161	561	977
	4.2	5.5	16.4	16.5	57.4	100
	%	%	%	%	%	%

Source: Field research. N = 977.

Table 2 gives an overview of the One-Way Analysis of Variance based on the students' schools. School groups significantly differ in how much they know about politics and how much they use social media ($p = 0.000$ and 0.040 , respectively). Tukey's "post hoc" analysis was used to look further into the differences. Students at UPI and Unpad used social media differently than UPI and ITB ($p = 0.002$) and UPI and ITB ($p = 0.047$), respectively. Students at UPI were more likely to use social media than students at Unpad and ITB. On the other hand, students from UPI knew more about politics than those from Tel-U, ITB, and Unpas ($p = 0.000$ for each). Students at Unpad learned more about politics than students at Tel-U and ITB (both $p = 0.000$).

Variable	UPI	UnPad	Tel-U	ITB	Unpas	F	df	P
	mean	mean	mean	mean	mean			
Social Media	2.17	1.90	1.98	1.97	2.01	3.291*	4	0.040
Political Discussion	1.89	1.84	1.83	1.68	1.80	2.217	4	0.065
Political knowledge								

N = 977. UPI = 220. Unpad = 221. Tel-U = 198. ITB = 194. Unpas = 154. * $p < 0.05$.

DISCUSSION

Kids use social media more and more in their daily lives. This study examines how political knowledge is gained through social media by figuring out how students use social media not covered by undergraduate learning tools. Due to the high cognitive load, mobile learning is good for getting information, achieving goals, having good attitudes, and staying motivated (O.F. Marzouki et al., 2017).

This survey separated political conversations involving others from political actions that don't need to apply to others. From what the students said, men gave more accurate answers to questions about political knowledge than women. The t-test shows that men know more than women about politics. Previous research on how men and women learn aligns with these results (Ferrn et al., 2019). Compared to students at other schools, more UPI students use social media than other schools. Also, compared to other students, UPI and Unpad students know more about politics than other students. Even though the difference in age between the younger and older students was only 18 years, the younger students were more politically aware (19 years). Students who used social media less than once a month were less active on social media and knew less about politics than students who used social media more than once a month. This study used the monthly amount spent to measure social class.

The results of this study suggest that people learn more about politics on social media when they talk about politics with others. The results back up what other studies have shown: online conversation spreads information that makes people more aware of politics (Park, 2017). The Internet helps people remember information they've already learned, which is improved through conversation.

Students need to learn about politics to do well in school. Even though it gets less attention, seeing it daily will help you better understand it. Findings show that following politicians, reposting the comments of others, learning about politics, giving opinions on current events, and keeping a record of political experiences don't help people learn about politics much. Since these activities don't involve discussing politics, no one will likely use social media to learn about politics. YouTube and Instagram, employed by 73.7% of students, were the two social media sites that students used the most. During the 2019 Indonesian election, many young people used YouTube to tell the world what they thought about politics (Intyaswati et al., 2019). It is in line with what previous research has found, which is that the effect of social media on learning depends on the platform used and the user's social situation (Boukes, 2019).

The study results show that children of different ages, backgrounds, and genders have different levels of political knowledge. The results of this study back up what was already known about how gender, age, and socioeconomic class affect things. Mainstream research in political science says that socioeconomic status affects political participation (Ridgeway, 2014). Dolan (2011) says that women don't know as much about politics as men. This is a common and reliable finding in the field of political science. According to Malafaia et al., student civic learning shows that younger community students are more likely to objectively evaluate theoretical ideas and material (2016). In past research, sites that are part of the learning framework were used for social networking. Students who participate in Facebook groups about their classes do better than those who don't (Bowman & Akcaoglu, 2014). On the other hand, students said that learning on Twitter was driven by other users who were experts or interested in the same things (Lackovic et al., 2017). More research will be done on how political information affects how people use the most popular social media sites.

Even though social media wasn't a part of the learning design, the results show that social media discourse affects politics. People are encouraged to learn how to use social media to learn. These ideas about mobile learning are suitable for higher education because statistics show that social media use goes beyond choosing which media to use and how much exposure it can get. Passive learning showed how mobile learning technologies affect how well students do in school.

Through social media networks, students may see politically wrong things. On the other hand, the current network encourages people to talk with their peer group. Students can learn about politics through political debates and then study material that helps them understand politics better. The results of this study showed that discussion helps people learn more about politics, which backs up what was found in earlier studies (Dragseth, 2020).

The study's limits emphasize the total use of social media across all platforms. Also, because the sample comprises first-year college students, the respondents can only be between 17 and 19. In the future, a study will look at the conversations and activities on the different social media platforms to find out what makes the conversations and activities on each platform unique. Each social media platform is different in how easy it is to make connections, how political the content is, and how groups can talk to each other.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that social media networks can be used to teach people about politics. Research from the past backs up this finding. Even though social media is not part of the class plan, talking about politics helps students learn more about politics. The results of this study do not back up claims made by earlier research on how people learn that using social media affects political knowledge. The first result of the study is that social media and political debate activities have different effects on how students learn about politics. Learning about politics had nothing to

do with repeating what other people said, listening to what politicians said, collecting political data, trading political experiences, or talking about current events. These things don't include interactions between users on social media platforms. To learn about politics through social media, you have to talk about politics. Some of these accomplishments are fundamental democratic safeguards encouraging young people to participate in politics. The results of earlier studies will be confirmed by later research that looks at a broader range of demographic factors and can draw more general conclusions.

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