

Influence of Use of Different Media on Political Attitude and Political Participation

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Abstract

Information dissemination is not limited to conventional media as the advent of new media has transformed the entire political scenario. In a democratic country like India, people prefer to have information from different media like print media, broadcasting media, outdoor media, and new media, etc., which may impact their political attitude and participation. Therefore, the focus was to study the relative influence of different media on political attitude and political participation. A cross-sectional descriptive research design having a sample of 497 eligible voters was used. OLS regression analysis was used, and it was observed that media use for political information was a significant influencer for political participation, followed by political attitude, political knowledge, interest, and efficacy. Among all, social media was found to have a relatively higher significant positive influence, but traditional media cannot be ignored. The study results will contribute to the conceptualization of media behavior while considering multiple media for political information.

Keywords : different media, political attitude, political interest, political efficacy, political knowledge, political participation

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Political organizations, media, and citizens are the three critical elements of the political communication process wherein media plays an imperative role in binding political organizations with citizens. In a democratic country like India, people like to get information from different media such as newspapers, television, radio, direct contact, and new media (Bakker & Vreese, 2011; Edgerly et al., 2018). New media use has gained popularity due to its affordability and popularity of social media platforms (Alryalat et al., 2017). India is among the top 10 users for most used social media platforms in the world, such as 200 million users on WhatsApp, 7.65 million users on Twitter, and 300 million users on Facebook. On YouTube, 41 million users watch videos monthly. According to Reuters, 52% of Indian social media users use Facebook, and 18% use Twitter as a news source. Although the gained popularity of these developments has attracted the attention of scholars to study the influence of these new media platforms (Ha et al., 2018; Kizgin et al., 2019), the importance of traditional media cannot be ignored.

Social media is regarded as an emerging tool for political participation (Kaur & Verma, 2018a). But examining to what extent people come across different media to get political information (Ksiazek et al., 2010) and identifying media to have a relatively more significant impact on political attitude and participation is less explored. Thus, this study attempts to answer these questions, especially in the Indian context, where new media consumption is very high (Hebbar & Kiran, 2019). Based on this, the current study examines the relative influence

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of different media used for political purposes on political attitude and political participation. The findings will contribute to the conceptualization of media behavior while considering multiple media. The results will be vital for political parties, candidates, and marketers to choose particular media according to its reach, influence, and popularity.

Review of Literature

Different Media Use for Political Information

Shah and D'Souza (2009) defined media as the vehicle or means of delivery system to carry an ad message to the targeted audience. The way of delivering a message is changing over time. For example, in 1932, radio was one of the popular media to convey the political message wherein Franklin D. Roosevelt, an American politician, gave a series of 30 evening radio speeches between 1922 – 1944. Similarly, in 1961, John F. Kennedy became the first American president to hold live televised news for conveying his message to the target audience. Before United States Presidential Elections 2008, only traditional media such as television, newspapers, direct contact with politicians, etc., were used. However, this election transformed the way to communicate with the general public by using social media to a great extent. Later on, political leaders and parties around the globe started adopting social media as a tool of empowerment and oppression, for instance, the use of the WhatsApp campaign by Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and the use of Facebook by Philippines's President Rodrigo Duterte.

Nowadays, media usage is shifting to new media, and it has become commonplace to retrieve information due to the advent of the internet and mobile technology (Hermida et al., 2012; Sharma & Grover, 2021). Similarly, among different media usage for political information and communication, social media and traditional media still significantly influence mobilizing the public (Santekellur et al., 2014; Mohamed et al., 2019; Trivedi & Dikshit, 2020).

Combining social media, the internet, and broadcast news sources exposes people to more personally relevant stories, news recommendations from friends, and information from diverse networks (Bakshy et al., 2015; Lee & Ma, 2012). Undoubtedly, there is a tremendous rise in new media usage (social media, online news, websites). Still, the ignorance of traditional media news sources in the form of newspapers, television, radio, direct contact is not possible. Therefore, different media, including print media, broadcasting media, new media, social media, and direct contact used by an individual for political information, have been considered for the study.

Political Attitude

Authors have studied the association of attitude and political participation wherein voters had a positive political attitude, more probability to vote, and high political participation (Ahmed et al., 2017; Holt et al., 2013; Saji, 2018). Researchers found a strong association between media use and political attitude as well as political behavior due to the motivation people have to get political information or political knowledge (Wang, 2007). Formal training, news, interaction at an office or with friends, and social media are the various tools to get political knowledge (Štětka & Mazák, 2014). Social media usage has increased political interest and political knowledge due to media exposure (Banerjee & Ray Chaudhuri, 2018; Beutelspacher et al., 2018; Dimitrova et al., 2019 ; Holt et al., 2013).

Political efficacy is a great predictor of political behavior and political participation (Zhang et al., 2010). Political efficacy is defined as the feeling that political and social change is possible and that the individual citizen can bring about this change.

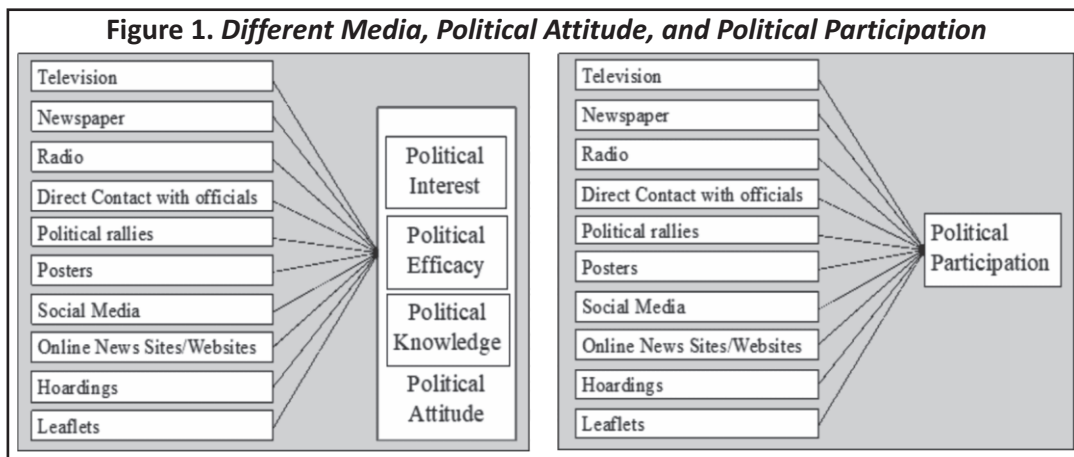
Political Participation

Political participation reflects the active role of people to influence political outcomes by participating in elections or by performing supporting activities. Panopoulou et al. (2012) described behaviors intended at decisive governmental policy both by influencing the choice of a political leader and by affecting their preference.

Different Media Use, Political Attitude, and Political Participation

Amid the past half-century, studies demonstrated the influential role of media in politics. Before that, the question arises: What sort of media do political parties or candidates use to influence the general public? What kind of media does the general public use to get political information? Is there any relation between media use with political participation? By following these questions, media preference for political news is emphatically related to various types of political participation such as interpersonal discussion, voting, protest, and interest in political affairs (Bakker & De Vreese, 2011; Dimitrova et al., 2014). Getting political information from traditional media such as newspapers and television is positively related to attending political rallies and meetings. Also, a researcher found a positive association between freedom to use different media and political participation, which includes signing petitions, voter turnout, and self-governance (Abraham, 2012), including all generations, especially youth, who did not read to many newspapers. A study conducted in Australia appreciated both traditional media and social media as a useful communication tool that can change voter decisions (Sauter & Bruns, 2013).

Modern elections have changed their shape after the successful winning of the ex-president of the US, Barak Obama, in the 2008 presidential elections, where the use of the internet was to a great extent. Similarly, political participation has taken a new form with the rise in use of the internet (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2010) by performing activities online such as maintaining contact with a political organization, joining any political group, or filing a petition (Bakker & De Vreese, 2011; Gil De Zúñiga et al., 2009). Vitak et al. (2011) suggested a strong association between political participation and the intensity to use social media among college students. Strandberg (2013) found the use of social media as one of the predictors for political participation, where he concluded that Facebook and Twitter had a significant influence on political participation than other platforms. Boulianne (2015) found a positive association between 80% of the coefficients in community and political life. The studies demonstrated that media has played a vital role in getting political information and political news, which may influence voters' political attitudes and political participation. Based on this, the current study attempts to address the below-mentioned objective and proposes a model depicted in Figure 1.



↳ **RQ** : To study the relative influence of different media used for political purposes on political attitude and political participation.

Research Methodology

The research design is the structure, contributes direction, and systematizes the research. A cross-sectional study was conducted using a descriptive research design for this study. The target population was the voters as defined by the Constitution of India, and the collected sample was 500 voters, out of which 497 responses were found useful for the study after removing the missing or incomplete questionnaires. The sample size of 500 voters was calculated based on total voter number, 95% confidence level, and 5% margin of error during General Elections 2019. Further, to remove the biases in choosing the sample, multistage stratified sampling was used. The questionnaire consisted of subsections wherein the first section consisted of questions related to different media being used by individuals to get political information on a 5-point scale, from 'Never' to 'Frequently,' wherein 1 was assigned to "Never" and 5 was assigned to "Frequently" and then the average was taken.

A further 5-point scale was used for political participation (Dimitrova et al., 2014; Gil de Zuniga et al., 2010; Gopal & Verma, 2018), political attitude including political efficacy (Jung et al., 2011), political knowledge (Dimitrova et al., 2011), and political interest (Rojas & Puig-i-Abril, 2009). The current study has used a combination of these scales after checking the reliability and validity of the scale. Firstly, the questionnaire was given to a panel of five experts familiar with the construct to check face validity and ensure that language and content were readable and understandable by the targeted audience. It also ensured that the scale appeared to measure what it was intended to measure. Further, a subset of 50 responses was collected to measure reliability. Cronbach's alpha values for each scale were above the prescribed standard values of 0.7, which means the questionnaire was fit for final data collection.

Analysis and Results

Demographic Profile

The final sample consisted of 497 respondents, out of which 51.9% were males, and 48.1% were females. In addition, 29.8% of the respondents were in the age category of 18–25 years; whereas 16.6% were between 26–35 years of age, 23.5% were between 36–45 years of age, and 20.1% were more than 40 years of age.

Further, in terms of the level of education, 23.3 % had education below or till matric, 20.3% had passed senior secondary, 28.2% had a graduation degree, 24.7% had passed post-graduation, while 3.4% were others. Concerning the respondents' employment status, 30.2% were students, 18.5% were self-employed, private sector employees were 17.3%, 16.1% were government employees, and 18.9% had no job.

Concerning the monthly income of the respondents, 40.2% of the respondents had an income level below ₹10,000 per month, while 14.3% earned between ₹10,001 – ₹20,000 per month. Similarly, 16.1% of the respondents earned a monthly income between ₹20,001 – ₹30,000 per month. Those who stated to have an income between ₹30,001 – ₹40,000 per month were 14.9% of the total respondents, and 14.5% of the respondents reported an income above ₹40,000 per month.

Observing the marital status of the respondents, 50.1% of them were unmarried; whereas 49.9% of the respondents fell under the married category. Regarding residential areas, 48.5% of the respondents lived in an urban area, and 51.5 % belonged to a rural area.

Influence of Different Media on Political Attitude, Political Interest, Political Efficacy, and Political Knowledge

In this section, an attempt has been made to study the relative influence of different media used for political purposes on political attitude and political participation.

To begin with, checking the assumptions of proposed models, the F - value for the models with a p -value less than 0.05 represents that the suggested models are appropriate for regression analysis. Further, the mean of residuals for all the models is 0.00, which depicts the normality of residuals. To meet the assumption of outliers, Mahalanobi's distance value is found to be under critical value, that is, 29.59 for the degree of freedom 10 at a p -value less than 0.001, which is also tested using boxplot. Furthermore, multicollinearity can be tested by VIF as well as tolerance value. The maximum permit value for testing no multicollinearity through VIF is 4.0, and the tolerance should be at least 0.2 (Hair et al., 2010). VIF and tolerance values in Table 1 for all the variables are under the standard values, which ensures that no multicollinearity exists in the respective models.

Table 2 shows a correlation among political participation, political attitude, political interest, political knowledge, political efficacy, and different media, indicating a significantly low to moderate linear relationship among them. Also, the correlation between all independent variables (see Table 3) is below the standard value ($r=0.8$) (Cooper & Schindler, 2003), depicting no problem of multicollinearity.

On running regression analysis (Table 3), Model 1 explains 18.2% variance in political attitude ; wherein, social media ($\beta = 1.12, p < 0.05$) followed by newspapers ($\beta = 0.96, p < 0.05$), direct contact with candidates ($\beta = 1.25, p < 0.05$), online news/websites/news portals ($\beta = 0.93, p < 0.05$) are observed as the positive significant predictor of political attitude. Likewise, political rallies ($\beta = 0.80, p > 0.05$), discussion with friends and relatives ($\beta = 0.42, p > 0.05$), television ($\beta = 0.25, p > 0.05$), and magazines ($\beta = 0.22, p > 0.05$) have a positive but insignificant influence on political attitude. However, an insignificant negative influence is also found for hoardings/ posters ($\beta = -0.18, p > 0.05$) and radio ($\beta = -0.19, p > 0.05$) on political attitude.

Model 2 shows a 12.1% variation in political interest. Individually, the influence of online news/websites/news portals ($\beta = 0.70$) and social media ($\beta = 0.38, p < 0.05$) in establishing positive political interest is found to be significant and higher among all other media. Besides these, candidates ($\beta = 0.60, p > 0.05$), friends and relatives ($\beta = 0.30, p > 0.05$), newspapers ($\beta = 0.3, p > 0.05$), political rallies ($\beta = 0.17, p > 0.05$), television ($\beta = 0.08, p > 0.05$), hoardings/posters ($\beta = 0.04$) are found to have an insignificant positive influence on

Table 1. Multicollinearity Test

	Tolerance	VIF
Online news/websites/ news portals	0.685	1.459
Television	0.675	1.481
Newspapers	0.677	1.478
Social Media	0.717	1.395
Radio	0.525	1.905
Candidates Themselves	0.497	2.011
Magazines	0.527	1.898
Political Rallies	0.428	2.336
Hoardings/ Posters	0.574	1.741
Friends and Relatives	0.789	1.267

Table 2. Correlation Matrix

	<i>PP</i>	<i>PI</i>	<i>PE</i>	<i>PK</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>ON</i>	<i>TV</i>	<i>NP</i>	<i>SM</i>	<i>RD</i>	<i>CT</i>	<i>MZ</i>	<i>PR</i>	<i>HP</i>	<i>FR</i>
<i>ON</i>	0.32*	0.28*	0.18*	0.22*	0.29*	1									
<i>TV</i>	0.26*	0.17*	0.16*	0.23*	0.22*	0.29*	1								
<i>NP</i>	0.30*	0.21*	0.22*	0.27*	0.28*	0.36*	0.49*	1							
<i>SM</i>	0.31*	0.24*	0.25*	0.22*	0.30*	0.47*	0.29*	0.30*	1						
<i>RD</i>	0.31*	0.16*	0.19*	0.21*	0.22*	0.24*	0.35*	0.30*	0.15*	1					
<i>CT</i>	0.39*	0.23*	0.24*	0.25*	0.30*	0.18*	0.24*	0.21*	0.19*	0.51*	1				
<i>MZ</i>	0.31*	0.16*	0.21*	0.21*	0.24*	0.20*	0.27*	0.20*	0.14*	0.53*	0.57*	1			
<i>PR</i>	0.43*	0.19*	0.21*	0.26*	0.26*	0.22*	0.18*	0.19*	0.13*	0.59*	0.61*	0.60*	1		
<i>HP</i>	0.25*	0.19*	0.20*	0.13*	0.22*	0.28*	0.26*	0.24*	0.19*	0.51*	0.5*	0.48*	0.57*	1	
<i>FR</i>	0.28*	0.19*	0.17*	0.13*	0.21*	0.12*	0.16*	0.19*	0.23*	0.28*	0.40*	0.28*	0.30*	0.31*	1

Note. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

PP = Political Participation, *PI* = Political Interest, *PE* = Political Efficacy, *PK* = Political Knowledge, *PA* = Political Attitude, *ON* = Online News/Websites/News Portal, *TV* = Television, *NP* = Newspaper, *SM* = Social Media, *RD* = Radio, *CT* = Candidates Themselves, *MZ* = Magazines, *PR* = Political Rallies, *HP* = Hoardings/Posters, *FR* = Friends and Relatives.

Table 3. Regression Analysis

	Model 1:		Model 2:		Model 3:		Model 4:		Model 5:	
	Political Attitude		Political Interest		Political Efficacy		Political Knowledge		Political Participation	
	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>
<i>ON</i>	0.93	2.35*	0.70	3.27*	0.07	0.38	0.16	1.47	0.95	2.71
<i>TV</i>	0.25	0.66	0.09	0.42	-0.02	-0.09	0.18	1.69	0.48	1.40
<i>NP</i>	0.97	2.56*	0.30	1.46	0.37	2.13*	0.30	2.87*	0.81*	2.44*
<i>SM</i>	1.13	3.13*	0.38	1.95*	0.55	3.34*	0.20	1.98*	1.04*	3.26*
<i>RD</i>	-0.19	-0.40	-0.15	-0.55	-0.02	-0.11	-0.02	-0.17	-0.11	-0.27
<i>CT</i>	1.26	2.48*	0.61	2.20	0.36	1.55*	0.29	2.09	1.18*	2.64*
<i>MZ</i>	0.22	0.46	-0.04	-0.13	0.23	1.05	0.03	0.21	-0.08	-0.18
<i>PR</i>	0.81	1.55	0.18	0.62	0.21	0.89	0.42	2.92*	2.56*	5.55*
<i>HP</i>	-0.18	-0.40	0.05	0.18	0.07	0.33	-0.30	-2.32	-1.02	-2.49
<i>FR</i>	0.43	1.13	0.31	1.49	0.13	0.78	-0.01	-0.12	0.73*	2.17*
<i>R</i> ²	0.18		0.12		0.11		0.14		0.30	
<i>F</i> - value	12.04*		7.83*		7.10*		9.34*		22.39*	

Note. *= Significant at 5%.

political interest. However, political interest is insignificantly negatively influenced by radio ($\beta = -0.14, p > 0.05$) and magazines ($\beta = -0.03, p > 0.05$).

In Model 3, 11% variation is explained for political efficacy. Further, to analyze the contribution made by different media, social media ($\beta = 0.54, p < 0.05$), newspapers ($\beta = 0.36, p < 0.05$), and direct contact with

candidates ($\beta = 0.35, p < 0.05$) are significant and greater for political efficacy among all other media. Besides, magazines ($\beta = 0.22, p > 0.05$), attending political rallies ($\beta = 0.21, p > 0.05$), interaction with friends and relatives ($\beta = 0.13, p > 0.05$), hoardings/posters ($\beta = 0.07, p > 0.05$), and online news/websites/news portals ($\beta = 0.06, p > 0.05$) are found to be insignificant. On the contrary, insignificant negative influence is found for radio ($\beta = -0.02$) and television ($\beta = -0.01, p > 0.05$) on political efficacy.

Further, the adjusted R square for the respective Model 4 is 0.144, which means 14.4% variation is explained by different media for political knowledge. Among various media, the contribution made by political rallies ($\beta = 0.42, p < 0.05$), newspapers ($\beta = 0.301, p < 0.05$), and social media ($\beta = 0.19, p < 0.05$) in generating positive political knowledge is found to be significant and greater. Besides, direct contact with candidates ($\beta = 0.29, p > 0.05$), television ($\beta = 0.18, p > 0.05$), online news/websites/news portals ($\beta = 0.16, p > 0.05$), and magazines ($\beta = 0.02, p > 0.05$) have been found to have a positive but insignificant influence on political knowledge. However, significant negative influence on political knowledge is found for hoardings/posters ($\beta = -0.3, p > 0.05$); whereas, insignificant negative influence is found for radio ($\beta = -0.02$) and discussion with friends and relatives ($\beta = -0.01, p > 0.05$) on political knowledge.

Adjusted R -square for Model 5 shows that 30.2% variation is explained for political participation. Thus, media plays a noteworthy role in predicting the participation of voters in the political sphere. Political rallies ($\beta = 2.5, p < 0.05$), social media ($\beta = 1.04, p < 0.05$), newspapers ($\beta = 0.81, p < 0.05$), direct contact with candidates ($\beta = 1.18, p < 0.05$) significantly influence voters to participate in the political sphere. In other words, people who are active in attending political rallies, reading newspapers, using social media, or having direct contact with candidates have greater chances to show political participation. Besides television ($\beta = 0.47, p > 0.05$), online news/websites/news portals ($\beta = 0.95, p > 0.05$) are found to have an insignificant positive influence on political participation. However, significant negative influence on political participation is found by hoardings/posters ($\beta = -1.02, p > 0.05$); whereas, insignificant negative influence is found for radio ($\beta = -0.11, p > 0.05$) and magazines ($\beta = -0.07, p > 0.05$). Surprisingly, people who come across hoardings or posters to retrieve information have an inverse relation with political participation.

Findings and Discussion

Social media is found to be the most frequent and often used media for getting political information followed by television; whereas attending political rallies, having direct contact with political candidates, and radio are observed as the least used media.

Undoubtedly, voters' interest in politics is significantly influenced by media use for political information, however, different media have varied influences in terms of relationship and significance. Thus, the selection and effect of media should be accordingly chosen to arouse voters' interest in politics. New media is found to be most prominent for generating positive interest because nowadays, political actors and voters have started using new media to a great extent, especially after the victory of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the General Elections 2014 and 2019.

Different media has a low to moderate relationship with political interest. Moreover, media usage has been observed as a significant influencer for political attitude. New media, such as social media and online news/websites/news portals as political sources of information, have a significant influence on framing a positive attitude about political actors. This finding is supported by the results obtained by Wang (2007), who also observed the positive effects of new media on political attitude as it has become an essential source for political information and communication. Although people rarely prefer to have contact with political candidates, it is a significant contributor to building a positive political attitude. It means direct contact with the targeted audience may help the

politicians to reap positive results. Likewise, among traditional media, newspapers are found to be a significant predictor for political attitude because people consider it as a vital source of political information (Kaur & Verma, 2018b). Researchers have examined that newspapers followed by online news and television, respectively have more trustworthiness (Kononova et al., 2011). Also, television is identified as the primary source of political information by most people (Štětka & Mazák, 2014). The current findings reveal that television only impacts insignificantly in shaping positive attitudes. Besides, more than half of the respondents have never attended political rallies; still, retrieving information by attending political rallies positively impacts attitude towards the political sphere. Relatedly, discussing politics with friends and families may lead to an increased positive attitude.

Also, the findings reveal a significant influence by media use to boost political interest among citizens, as supported by Banerjee and Ray Chaudhuri (2018). New media is a more significant influencer to arouse political interest, whether it is social media or online news portals (Barsaiyan & Sijoria, 2021). Holt et al. (2013) showed similar results where new media was found to be a positive influencer for political interest compared to traditional media. Also, Boulianne (2015) conducted a study using panel data and reported a positive correlation between online news use and political interest.

Additionally, print, broadcasting, and outdoor media, along with direct or social contacting and attending political rallies, have a positive influence in generating political interest among voters except information retrieved from radio and magazines, which negatively affects interest towards political parties. Therefore, multi-platform news use has a varied influence on political interest. Undoubtedly, television, newspapers, and social contact are positive contributors but not significant in raising political interest in voters.

Furthermore, political efficacy is a person's own belief about himself/herself – whether he/she is competent enough to take part in politics or opinions about others' competency to have political participation. However, the findings reveal that media has a low to moderate positive correlation with political efficacy. In other words, media consumption for political purposes results in building citizens' strong beliefs towards themselves or political actors. Individually, social media is found to have a more substantial impact among other media, as supported by the findings of Velasquez and Quenette (2018).

Conversely, Hoffmann and Lutz (2019) studied the mediating effect of self-efficacy between internet use and political participation and observed a positive relationship between internet use, efficacy, and political participation. It means the relationship between new media and efficacy is two-way. Apart from these, reading a newspaper and having direct contact with political candidates also have a significant influence on political efficacy after social media, but Moeller et al. (2014) concluded a more considerable positive impact by a newspaper for political efficacy. According to the current outcomes, voters who use social media, read newspapers, or maintain direct contact with candidates for political information have a stronger belief about their own and candidates' competency to participate in elections or politics. Additionally, the findings reveal that political efficacy is insignificantly influenced by consuming online news. In contrast, television has an insignificant negative influence, but Moeller et al. (2014) reported a significant positive impact of online news and no considerable influence of television. Furthermore, other media like magazines, hoardings, and discussions with friends and families may positively influence someone's beliefs about politics, but insignificantly.

Apart from these, a significant influence by the multiple media usage for political purposes on political knowledge is found. More specifically, social media, along with traditional media such as reading newspapers, attending political rallies, and using hoarding or posters, respectively, as the sources of political information, have a significant influence to enhance knowledge about politics. Also, the current findings support Alami et al. (2019) in terms of a positive association of social media with political knowledge and contradict results from Chen and Chan (2017), where they reported that higher social media consumption leads to lower political knowledge. Likewise, attending political rallies and reading newspapers have been positively associated with political

knowledge, as verified by the previous findings (Kentmen, 2010). Scholars revealed that disseminating and retrieval of news through television (Mujani & Liddle, 2010), online platforms (Shaker, 2009), and radio (Kentmen, 2010) were observed as significant predictors for enhancing voters' political knowledge. Nevertheless, radio is observed to be negatively associated but insignificantly.

Lastly, media selection for political news and information has a relationship with political participation, which is supported by previous results (Bakker & De Vreese, 2011; Dimitrova et al., 2014). However, authors examined varied information media for fluctuated participation in politics. Sauter and Bruns (2013) appreciated both traditional media and social media as active media for boosting political participation. Researchers found newspapers as a prominent source of information for having a positive effect on participation in politics; whereas, authors concluded the use of social media as one of the predictors for political participation (Chen & Chan, 2017; Strandberg, 2013; Vitak et al., 2011). Social media usage assists citizens in maintaining direct contact with political officials that could affect their political attitude, political interest, political knowledge, political behavior, etc. (Ahmed et al., 2017; Holt et al., 2013; Wang, 2007). The study confirms these outcomes as social media, newspapers, political rallies, direct contact with candidates, discussion with friends and relatives as prominent factors which significantly influence political participation.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

Social media is a widely used phenomenon, and many researchers have attempted to observe the impact of social media usage for political participation, particularly in Western and Arab countries, from different perspectives, but very few studies have been carried out in India. The results thus highlight some critical aspects related to news consumption through different media with clear differentiation in media use, political attitude, and participation.

This study emphasizes the significance of new media as well as traditional media on the development of political attitude and political participation and will add to the literature of media consumption in politics. The majority of the studies focused on single media, either social media or traditional media, as the usage of new media has not been explored much in an Indian context, and minimal literature is available that studied the relative influence of different media. However, this study removes this gap by considering different media for a political purpose, which is a novelty in itself. This study contributes to the conceptualization of media behavior by considering multiple media, including traditional media and new media, for political attitude and political participation.

Managerial Implications

Analyzing the use of different media for political purposes is vital for political parties, political candidates, marketers and journalists, or media houses. The results will be vital for political parties, candidates, and marketers to share their message or information depending upon the media's popularity among the voters. Furthermore, the political parties or candidates need to use a judicious mix of traditional and social media for the campaigns targeted at a specific kind of audience. To arouse public interest, they can focus on social media and online news media more than any other media. Similarly, to provide knowledge about the political sphere, social media along with print media can be opted for; whereas, for political efficacy, direct contact along with social media and print media can be opted for sharing information.

Moreover, political participation, that is, the actions done by the citizens in response to their decisions, can be influenced by multiple media. In a nutshell, the political actors can select the media depending on the motive.

Furthermore, as political leaders, parties, or voters have started shifting to social media from traditional media, media houses or journalists also need to be present or increase their presence on new media. Also, traditional media is acting as a watchdog, but social media is like a watchdog over watchdogs. Therefore, the study results will be helpful for mass communication and journalism to understand the political leaders and party strategies and communication on new media in addition to voter behavior and feedback.

Conclusion

Information dissemination is not limited to conventional media as the advent of new media has transformed the entire political scenario. In a democratic country like India, people prefer to have information from different media like print media, broadcasting media, outdoor media, new media, etc., which may impact their political attitude and participation. Therefore, the focus is to study the relative influence of different media on political attitude and political participation. A cross-sectional study using a descriptive research design was conducted, and it is observed that media use for political information is a significant influencer for political participation, followed by political attitude, political knowledge, interest, and efficacy. Among all, social media has a relatively higher significant positive influence, but traditional media cannot be ignored. Therefore, the results will contribute to the conceptualization of media behaviour while considering multiple media for political information.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Future Research

The limited availability of literature in the Indian context concerning social media usage for political participation might have limited our understanding to some extent. The study investigates political participation as a whole. Future research can be conducted by considering offline and online participation separately. The study is a cross-sectional study that can be extended using longitudinal data to understand the changes over the years. Also, exact voting can be considered for specific elections to measure the influence of different media in a particular manner.

Authors' Contribution

Dr. Manpreet Kaur and Dr. Rajesh Verma conceived the presented idea and formulated the research questions. Dr. Rajesh Verma developed the research design, and Dr. Manpreet Kaur painstakingly collected the data from the respondents. Dr. Kaur, using software, applied statistical techniques to analyze the data, and both the authors discussed the results to bring out quality interpretation. Dr. Kaur drafted the manuscript, and Dr. Rajesh Verma revised it critically to bring out the final version of the paper.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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