



## Consumption of Online Political News and Political Participation of First-Time Voters

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### ABSTRACT

In some countries, it is stated that youth political participation tends to decline, and the media are then regarded as ones of the causes of this decline. This is strongly supported by the media perspective. However, it is undeniable that there are contradictions to these views, which bring forth the mobilization perspective. There are also parties who consider that the media have merits in increasing political participation. In this case, communication plays an important role as an analytical tool to determine the effect of online political news consumption on political participation. Political knowledge is used as a mediator in this study. This study was conducted to see the position of Consumption of Online Political News in influencing Political Participation through Political Knowledge among Students. The study employed a quantitative method through questionnaires as an effort to collect and analyze data through regression analysis. Population in this study is Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia's student that used online news portal. The questionnaires were distributed to 100 student respondents. Sampling method of this study using purposive sampling with several criterias. The results of the study show that there is a significant effect of online political news consumption on political participation with a direct value 0,719.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The young generation has an interesting position and potential role and is one of the centers of attention in the holding of elections (Hidayaturahman and Ubaid, 2020). Referring to the definition explained by the Indonesian General Election Commission in 2013, first-time voters are citizens who for the first time will use their right to vote in general elections. The age limit for Indonesian citizens with this particular right is 17 years old or below yet having been married. Given their special position, the existence of novice voters are highlighted (Fathurokhman, 2022).

Based on the presentation in the socialization carried out by the General Election Commission (KPU) of West Java Province, Indonesia, together with Radio Republik Indonesia Bandung (Putra, 2023), registered voters in West Java are as many as six million people from the total voters registered on the Permanent Voter List (DPT) of West Java which reached 33.2 million voters. This high potential does not only reveal optimism but also worries.

Concerns over this great potential are reflected in the possibility of novice voters not participating in general elections (voter turnout) occurring in various countries, including countries that declare themselves democratic. Pick Held, Dahl, Davis, and Joslyn stated that active participation of citizens plays an important role in the lives of people in democratic states. (Pang, et al., 2022 ; Pang and Woo, 2022). The presence of media in the sphere of democracy is also an important pillar. Media through the latest forms with the presence of the internet and its relationship with citizens highlighted by Gil de Zúñiga et al. (Kim and Kim, 2022) influences on the presence of a path of community participation that can increasingly develop. However, the potential for turnout due to the media is shown from the perspective of the media malaise. The general election which took place in the United States and the United Kingdom showed a declining trend in voter participation, which was driven by the media being considered the 'most responsible' (Laor and Lissitsa, 2022 ; Livingstone and Markham, 2008). This study seeks to raise other perspectives from turnout voters through the perspective of mobilization. To this relation, Norris views the existence of the media positively; according to him, someone exposed to media coverage can participate more in elections than those who do not get news exposure (Laor and Lissitsa, 2022).

Initially, this theory departs from the view of "Media Malaise" which becomes controversial in political communication research. The assumption in this theory is that trust in politics and governance including citizen participation in it tends to decrease.

In this assumption, the media have a part to be held responsible for this worsening trend. Beginning with the term 'denial of cynicism' of society due to television shows by Weaver in 1972 and developed by Robinson in 1976 with the term "videomalaise". The term is growing along with the strengthening of research claims that television news is dangerous and leads to negative relations with political participation. Thus at its peak the term "media malaise" strengthened and is commonly used in a number of literatures [9].

Nevertheless, Wolling (Aminah, 2006) conduct empirical studies that the media have a beneficial impact on political behavior. The study raised the term 'counterpart', namely mobilization. Mobilization Theory describes the importance of information for the masses

in the political sphere. Considering that previously there were citizens who did not have access to information with a very large amount and scope as it is today (Aminah, 2006).

This framework defines the object of political orientation and direction arising from media effects. There is a conclusion that the orientation of citizens through political competence shows that the positive role of the mass media will have a positive contribution to the political system (in this case includes political participation) (Aminah, 2006).

Mobilization theory presents the concept of virtuous circle when a person is exposed to communication through new media and media technology, there is a tendency to increase interest and political knowledge as well as an assessment of a good political environment and give rise to social trust. The relationship between political communication and political involvement takes place circularly with meaning when the level of interest and political information increases, a greater impact will occur on political trust. This applies to all possible information channels including internet and social media. The data has only been collected from the democratic developments in the Western European region, the United States, Central Europe, Eastern Europe and Latin America (Diaz, 2017).

This virtuous circle is described by Norris, Stromback and Shelata paying attention to citizen involvement, political interest and trust in government (Ceron, 2015). Norris gave the keyword of his discovery that someone who was exposed to media news could be more knowledgeable about politics. Aarts and Semetko conducted their research on television viewers (Laor and Lissitsa, 2022). The results of his research describe high exposure to television shows with political news can increase knowledge and allow a decrease in political participation. Supported by Schuck that citizens with more news consumption will develop a positive orientation and trust in the political system as deep knowledge about political issues (Salman, et al., 2018).

Mobilization theory asserts that the combination of an ever-increasing level of education in the community and easy access to political information with enormous amounts can mobilize society both cognitively and behaviorally. This measurement can use factual knowledge about political parties, party policy, understanding of politics, trust in public officials, subjective interest in politics, interest in the system, confidence in elections, politicians and democracy in their country (Newton, 1999).

The research seeks to explore whether there is a significant influence between consumption of political news on online news portals on political participation of novice voters.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Online Political News Consumption**

In the life of modern society, consumption of news is an important aspect of daily life that cannot be separated from one another (Mitchelstein and Boczkowski, 2010). News consumption at first adheres to the traditional perspective which assesses that the audience is an intelligent information seeker, considering the audience is looking for accurate and unbiased information (Efendi, et al., 2020). Various disciplines such as

history, sociology, and economics view the consumption of news as the fulfillment of basic human satisfaction. Even further, the mass media has been seen as shifting the satisfaction of basic human needs by changing people to a new generation of informed audiences.

The concept of humans as informed audiences was later agreed upon by Ostertag (Begstrom and Wadbring, 2012). Ostertag said that research in a nuance of current experience changes, especially in the perspective of news consumption. The focus of research so far has been focusing on traditional mass media, while the relevant focus at present is through new media.

Lauf revealed that individual characteristics such as age, family situation, and work environment were very influential factors in news consumption (Begstrom and Wadbring, 2012). Individual interest is a very important factor in explaining the use of internet news rather than traditional media as conveyed by Tewksbury (Begstrom and Wadbring, 2012). The younger generation is contributing to an increased use of media news from this new form. In the younger generation (under 30 years), information seeking is generally done online and some of them are looking for information online related to politics (Prior, 2013).

## 2.2 Online News Portal

As a newcomer, the online news media have been able to surpass traditional print media in matters of public interest. There is an interesting summary made by Omar that the shift can occur due to several things, namely: delivery of the latest news that can be received immediately, access to news freely in various forms such as text, images, or videos, and the ability to find information faster (Omar, 2017).

The existing online news portal is actually a news provider of the mainstream news organizations. Tsfati then added the general characteristics surrounding online news portals, including: not bound (in this case online news portals have a vast space that can be newsmakers), reduced hierarchy (in this case online news portals reduce the usual hierarchy that applies to journalism traditional), connectivity (making it easier for journalists to send the information obtained, also making it easier for readers to reach the news synopsis), interactivity (allowing for interaction with online news users, even leading to news forums), and diversity (anyone can become a news publisher, in this case a journalist, to disseminate information on current events (Tsfati, 2010).

## 2.3 Political Participation

Budiardjo delivered a general definition related to political participation. Political participation is defined by Budiardjo as the activity of a person or group of people to participate actively in political life, with several forms such as electing a country leader and directly or indirectly influencing government policy (Fitriani, 2017).

Another opinion from Zukin, et al. note that political participation has been widely studied and has extraordinary value on policy outcomes and elections (Saryono, et al., 2022). In the perspective of Zukin, et al., Political participation is interpreted as an

engagement through habit. These habits are picked up by a number of experts through a definition that is built.

Nevertheless, Nelson also gave a definition of political participation as an action carried out by citizens with a desire to influence the activities or composition of local or national government (Rues, et al., 2023). This definition is based on two notes. First, political participation can include illegal activities and violence that can affect the government. Second, attention can be focused only on the form of government.

Brady explained that political participation has four essential components, namely: activity, citizenship, influence, and political policy (Quintelier and Vissers, 2008). All of these components are contained in many definitions submitted by experts regarding political participation as has been stated in several sections of the above definition. As a binding constraint, political participation is counted towards activities carried out by citizens in the last twelve months.

Booth notes that elections are not the only form of political participation (Salzman, 2015). Political conversation, attending local government meetings, and protesting to the government are the other three types of political participation. Conway revealed that within the framework of political science, political participation is associated with electoral activities, such as elections and following political parties (Rozali, et al., 2021). The dimensions contained in this construct are divided into three levels:

- a. Citizen Participation. This participation includes activities outside of political issues.
- b. Offline Political Participation. This activity shows political participation without utilizing technology; and
- c. Online Political Participation. This activity demonstrates political participation by utilizing technology.

## 2.4 Mobilization Theory

Initially, this theory departs from the view of "Media Malaise" which becomes controversial in political communication research. The assumption in this theory is that trust in politics and governance including citizen participation in it tends to decrease. In this assumption, the media has a part to be held responsible for this worsening trend. Beginning with the term 'denial of cynicism' of society due to television shows by Weaver in 1972 and developed by Robinson in 1976 with the term "videomalaise". The term is growing along with the strengthening of research claims that television news is dangerous and leads to negative relations with political participation. Thus at its peak the term "media malaise" strengthened and is commonly used in a number of literatures (Salman, et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, Wolling conducted an empirical study that the media has a beneficial impact on political behavior (Aminah, 2006). The study gave rise to the term 'counterpart', namely mobilization. Mobilization Theory describes the importance of information for the masses in the political sphere. Considering that previously there were citizens who did not have access to information with a very large amount and scope as it

is today (Aminah, 2006). The differences regarding the term 'malaise' and mobilization are outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Effects of Media on Orientation Based on Aspects of Political Culture

Object Orientation	Positive effect	Negative effect
Personal as a Political Actor	Apathetic	Mobilization
Political Regime	"Malaise"	Support

Sumber: Schmitt-Beck and Voltmer

Table 1 attempts to classify two forms of the framework. This framework defines the object of political orientation and direction arising from media effects. In the table, it can be seen that the orientation of citizens through political competence shows that the positive role of the mass media will have a positive contribution to the political system (in this case including political participation) (Aminah, 2006).

In Newton's research "Mass Media Effects: Mobilization or Media Malaise?", He tried to compare the two concepts in media effects (Newton, 1999).

Norris expressed mobilization as a virtuous circle-shaped process with the function of the media as a positive driver in democracy (Laor and Lissitsa, 2022). The more a person is exposed to media information, the more knowledgeable, the more trusted the political system and the more they want to participate in political campaigns (Laor and Lissitsa, 2022). Norris explores supporters of his theory based on the state of consumption of television news that occurs in England and the United States which helped shape Newton's summary (Avery, 2009).

Mobilization theory presents the concept of virtuous circle when a person is exposed to communication through new media and media technology, there is a tendency to increase interest and political knowledge as well as an assessment of a good political environment and give rise to social trust. The relationship between political communication and political involvement takes place circularly with meaning when the level of interest and political information increases, a greater impact will occur on political trust. This applies to all possible information channels including internet and social media. The data has only been collected from the democratic developments in the Western European region, the United States, Central Europe, Eastern Europe and Latin America (Diaz, 2017).

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Mobilization theory asserts that the combination of an increasing level of education in the community and easy access to political information with a very large amount can mobilize society both cognitively and behaviorally (Newton, 1999). This measurement can use factual knowledge about political parties, party policy, understanding of politics, trust in public officials, subjective interest in politics, interest in the system, confidence in elections, politicians and democracy in their country (Newton, 1999).

Based on all the information above, the researcher arranged the research hypothesis as follows:

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no significant effect of consumption of online political reporting on political participation.

H<sub>a</sub> : There is a significant influence of consumption of online political reporting on political participation.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study was conducted by applying quantitative methods. Kriyantono explained that quantitative research is research that gives a picture of a case with the result of generalization [27]. The research conducted was explanatory research that describes the condition of the research not only has a conceptual definition but also has compiled a temporary answer (hypothesis) related to the research (Avery, 2009).

Participants in this study were students of Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI). The selection of participants was based on UPI's academic and non-academic environmental conditions that have relevance to the research. The researchers considered that at least UPI students have received learning in the Civics Education course and participated in activities related to politics within the campus internal environment, at least related to the organizational regeneration regularly carried out by the students' association.

Population is interpreted by Bungin as a whole of research objects which can be humans, animals, plants, air, symptoms, values, events, life attitudes, and so on, so that the object becomes a source of research (Sikki, 2020). Considering the theory, the researchers saw that this research was made in the same characteristic so that the population in this study was determined as all students of Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia who use or read news through the online news portal. This population did not have valid data regarding the number of users of online news portals, given that no research or census had been carried out in relation to that data. This study adapted sampling by purposive sampling. Darmawan explained that the respondents selected through the sampling method were based on the researchers' own considerations (Nasution, 2016).

Thus, the researchers pay attention to the following criteria in conducting research:

1. Is a student at the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia;
2. 16-30 years old (refer to RI Law No. 40 of 2009, Article 1); and
3. Have read news through electronic devices online in the past month.

Based on population-related data in the previous section, the researchers used the Lemeshow formula with a total of 100 people [30].

The questionnaire was then distributed after going through a validity test and a reliability test. The questionnaire had 26 questions divided into two variables. The

variable consumption of political news online had 12 questions with five sub-variables tested, namely: motivation to get news, trust in news, avoidance of news, access to news, and interest in available news channels.

The second variable or dependent variable in research was political participation with three sub-variables, namely: citizen participation, online political participation, and offline political participation. The three sub-variables are explained in 14 question points.

Data processing was carried out after distributing questionnaires using IBM SPSS software version 23. The results of the questionnaire were then tested with normality test, multicollinearity test, heteroscedastity test, and autocorrelation test. The results that had been tested were then tested with simple regression and interpreted as listed in the results and discussion section.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Conditions for Online Political News Consumption

The researchers have conducted a series of tests to ensure 12 statements on the independent variable (X) consumption of online political news meet the elements of validity and reliability. The researcher then conducts an analysis based on the frequency of answers to each item answered by the respondent. The average value of the score of each answer is then calculated through the frequency of respondents' answers. The results of these calculations are explained in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Average Score, Standard Deviation and Estimated Interval Average Average Consumption of Online Political News (n = 100)

Description	Statistics	
Mean	46,14	
The estimated average score interval at the 95% confidence level	Lower limit	46,50
	Upper limit	48,00
Minimum	37,00	
Maximum	56,00	
Std. Deviation	4,00	
Varians	16,00	

In accordance with the data shown in Table 2, the average score of online political news consumption variables is 46.14 with an estimated interval score that has a limit of 46.50 to 48.00. The level of trust used in the assumptions of this study is at nominal 95%, the use of online political news consumption is in the moderate category.

The level of use of online news portals for students is in the medium category. This shows that news portals are generally used to find new information related to politics. Respondents were also influenced by how friends behave in consuming news based on online news portals. Respondents still rated 'reading' friends about politics as having an important role in socializing and opening conversation. In general, respondents already have good media literacy by avoiding negative content that is spread freely through online news portals.

### 4.2 Conditions of Political Participation



Researchers have also conducted a series of tests to ensure 14 statements on the dependent variable (Y) political participation meet the elements of validity and reliability. The researcher then conducts an analysis based on the frequency of answers to each item answered by the respondent. The average value of the score of each answer is then calculated through the frequency of respondents' answers. The results of these calculations are explained in Table 3.

**Tabel 3.** Average Score, Standard Deviation and Estimated Interval Score Average Political Participation (n = 100)

Description	Statistics	
Mean	48,66	
The estimated average score interval at the 95% confidence level	Upper limit	49,00
	Lower limit	49,00
Minimum	28,00	
Maximum	59,00	
Std. Deviation	5,37	
Varians	28,93	

Based on Table 3, an average score of political participation variable data was obtained at 48.66 with an estimated interval at a 95% confidence level ranging from nominal 49.00. Adjusted for the categorization used, information can be obtained that at the 95% confidence level of political participation in youth the student segment is in the moderate category.

Political participation in students is in the medium categorization. This reflects that respondents have carried out many forms of political participation online and offline. In fact, in this finding the average respondent stated that he chose to vote in a general election which was considered in several studies as a vital form of political participation. The researcher also does not doubt that political participation in some forms of political participation such as direct attendance at demonstrations or public debates have a tendency for low participation.

### 4.3 Online Political News Consumption and Political Participation

The calculated data is then tested on the correlation coefficient test. Correlation coefficient testing using Pearson Correlation method in SPSS software version 23.0. The results of testing through these methods are explained in Table 4

**Tabel 4.** Correlation Coefficient Test Results

	Online Political News Consumption
Online Political News Consumption	1
Political Participation	,719**
Mean	50,37
Std. Deviation	4,72

Note: \*\* p < 0.01

The table shows the correlation number of online political news consumption with political participation is 0.719. In the case of data interpretation shown in Table 4, a correlation coefficient interpretation table has been provided in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Interpretation of Correlation Coefficients

Correlation Interval	Relationship Level
0,00-0,199	Very low
0,20-0,399	Low
0,40-0,599	Average
0,60-0,799	Strong
0,80-1,000	Very Strong

Source: Sugiyono

The interpretation that can be done with the reference shown in Table 5 is the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable can be concluded as a strong correlation.

Existing data then testing the hypothesis. The test results can be seen in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Hypothesis testing

Model	R	R2 (Adjusted R2)	B	SE	B eta ( $\beta$ )	(F) T	P
(X-Y)	,7 19	,517	- .072	5.5 40		(105,04 4)	** *
Online Political News Consumption			1.1 04	.10 8	,7 19	10,249	** *

Note: \*\*\* p < .0001

The first test performed is the coefficient of determination test. In this test, the adjusted R square value indicates the magnitude of the effect of the independent variable when compared to other factors outside the variables tested in the study. Consumption of online political news (X) on political participation (Y) can be seen the impact by the coefficient of determination in Table 6.

The results of R and R square in Table 6 show the numbers 0.719 and 0.517. R values that reached 0.719 illustrate the correlation possessed by the two variables. It can be concluded from the data that variable X has a positive relationship with variable Y of 71.9% or can be classified as a moderate relationship. This positive value shows that consumption of online political news can have a positive impact on political participation.

According to the data shown in Table 6, the adjusted R square value is 0.512 or 51.2%, it shows the effect of variable X on Y reaches 51.2%. The contribution of other variables not examined through this study reached 48.8%. Then in measuring the amount of external factors in the path analysis the following formula is used:

$$\rho_{ze_3} = \sqrt{1 - R \text{ Square}}$$

$$= \sqrt{1 - 0,517}$$

$$= 0,694$$

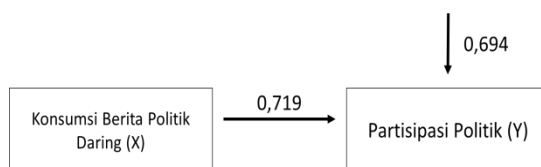
Can be seen based on the analysis that the influence outside the X variable that affects the Y variable is 0.694 or 69.4%.

The results of the regression analysis based on Table 6 are as follows:

$$Y = -0.072 + 1.104X$$

The formula shows that the constant value a is -0,072 which means the value of political participation without being influenced by the consumption variable online political news will be negative at -0,072. Political participation has a negative value. Constant b shows the number 1.104 which means that every increase of one unit of political knowledge will have an impact on political participation of 1,104 points.

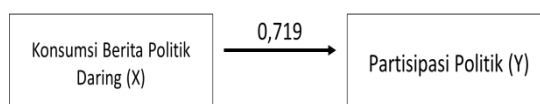
In the next section, Table 6 shows the multiple correlation values. This value serves to show how consumption of political news online has a relationship with political participation which is classified as a strong category. The description related to the regression is shown as follows:



**Figure 1.** Overview of Variables X and Y

Testing through partial t-test to find out the first hypothesis is done next. Based on Table 6, the calculated t value for both variables is 10.249. T count is then compared with the value of t in the distribution table t on the alpha criterion 0.05 and  $df = N - K - 1 = 100 - 1 - 1 = 98$ , worth 1.661. The t value of the regression analysis is 10.249 and is greater than the t table, thus  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. It can be concluded that the consumption of political news online has a significant influence on political participation.

The results showed the relationship between consumption of online political news with political participation in students. This figure shows the value of political knowledge received a positive response, while the relationship between the two variables is classified as moderate but still positive. The results of data processing show the regression value that occurs is 0.719 which means that every increase of X by one unit will cause an increase in Y of 0.719 and vice versa. The description of the results of the study is consistent with the above view, that consumption of online political news has a strong influence on political participation shown in Figure 2.



## Figure 2. Regression Variables X and Y

The results of the regression analysis showed a positive and significant effect between consumption of online political news and political participation in students. The results of the t-test which is higher than the t-table shows that the hypothesis related to online political news consumption has an influence on political participation. This finding is in line with Salzman's research which proves that someone with a high consumption report will have high political interest as well (Saryino, et.al., 2022). In other words, students who often consume online political news will have high political participation.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research discussed earlier, it can be concluded that Online Political News Consumption variable significantly influences Political Knowledge.

In addition, from the results of the discussion conducted it can be concluded that Political Knowledge significantly influences Political Participation. Variable Consumption of Online Political News through Political Knowledge significantly influences Political Participation. All research questions have been answered by accepting all research hypotheses.

This research succeeded in verifying the mobilization theory put forward by Norris about increasing media consumption which influenced political participation (Memoli, 2011).

## 6. RECOMMENDATION

The study that has been done with the analysis described above provides many notes for the researchers. In terms of scientific accountability, the researchers try to provide recommendations to relevant stakeholders for consideration and are expected to be utilized for future progress.

This study sees that the government has a role in creating conditions for political participation in students, given its relatively low value. The government through relevant agencies in order to carry out good socialization, in accordance with the theme of this study, socialization is strongly recommended via the internet. Students have good digital literacy and have a tendency to read news online, it is possible to open social media channels that are interactive and in a contemporary style.

In addition, this study can also be seen in the perspective of the academic environment. The researchers on political communication or online communication are also advised to pay attention to online news coming from social media. Researchers can also develop this research on other factors that influence the consumption of political news and political participation.

In accordance with the results of the study, students should further increase their consumption of online political news to strengthen political participation. Students can pay attention to the latest facts related to politics in order to increase their political participation.

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