

Using Instagram for Future Young Voter Mobilization

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Abstract

The study evaluates how voter mobilization based on the popularity of certain Instagram features can affect youth voter turnout in the upcoming 2024 U.S. presidential election. Previous research demonstrated that virtual methods and major social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) can mobilize users through direct messages, tagged share posts, and “follower” messages; however, Instagram has yet to be evaluated through the voter mobilization lens at a national scale. A descriptive research design was adopted, and the current popularity of certain Instagram features most compatible with voter mobilization was assessed through percentages of the sample. Participants included (removed) High School students currently enrolled who would be eligible to vote in the 2024 election. Results illustrated that general stories were the only feature used by more than 50% of Instagram users. A calculation of percentages multiplied by the teenage population count shows that voter mobilization using Instagram’s feature would only achieve single-digit percent increases in youth voter turnout. Therefore, this study can conclude that single Instagram features solely cannot uplift youth voters in turnout levels comparable to other age groups; however, this study is only limited to the youngest of youth voters and is highly speculative in conditions where Instagram use is high soon before election day. Future research should explore how Instagram may be involved in political activities other than voting and in the overall U.S. political landscape.

Keywords: voter mobilization, get-out-the-vote, voter turnout, social media, Instagram

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Younger voters typically have lower political efficacy and are less compelled to participate politically, especially in voting. Compared to other age groups, the young electorate (18-29) consistently had the lowest turnout since 1986 (McDonald, 2020). Their disproportionately smaller share in the general electorate creates a potential imbalance that favors older generations. Creating an electorate that would be more representative of the United States population than today's current electorate would ensure that elected leaders represent the views of the entire United States population, instead of a voting population that disproportionately contains more older voters.

However, given that today's teenagers are expected to follow the same trend of lower turnout when they become eligible to vote, voter mobilization on platforms popular among teenagers may combat lower turnout. In general, social media has become more integrated into political mobilization efforts. Coppock and his team examined the value of social media in political advocacy groups and established Twitter direct messaging as an effective means for mobilizing members (Coppock, Guess, & Ternovski, 2016). From their surveys of teenagers and their parents, Monica and Jiang establish Instagram as a platform disproportionately more popular among the 18-to-29 age group (Monica & Jiang, 2018). Instagram may become the platform where online voter mobilization can improve the low turnout of young voters.

Literature Review

After analyzing the current research on the history, the politics, and the social psychology of voter mobilization, no research was found that evaluated Instagram in terms of its young voter mobilization value at a national scale.

History of Voter Mobilization

Strategies on increasing voter turnout have shifted focus from offline to virtual methods. Through their field experiment during the 1998 midterm election, Gerber and Green (2000) had determined that face-to-face and highly personal canvassing was the most effective in encouraging registered voters to go to the polls while virtual methods like impersonal phone calls were less effective. According to Gerber and Green, the personal element was key to establishing a connection between individual voters and the election (Gerber & Green, 2000). The personal element helped reinforce a positive impact on the overall voter turnout in the United States. For an online social media platform like Instagram, an offline, face-to-face approach is not applicable, so Instagram's preservation of the personal element in voter mobilization has remained questionable.

Later research on the early forms of virtual mobilization had formulated conclusions specific to those forms but not completely applicable to the platform of Instagram. Dale and Strauss (2009) had found that impersonal text messages were as effective as personal messages in increasing voter turnout. The personal connection element in voter text messages was only essential to the mobilization of young voters with little to no voting experience (Dale & Strauss, 2009). Instagram's direct messaging feature is similar to the SMS text messaging that Dale & Strauss had analyzed. Instagram may become the medium of personal connection and voter messaging to its young user base in the same way as text messaging. However, with direct messaging only being an auxiliary function of the app with less noticeability, Dale and Strauss's results cannot be completely applicable to the platform. Although Facebook may be closer to Instagram than text messaging was, the research result could still not be applied to Instagram.

Facebook, a virtual social media platform with a friending system based on online personal connections, had a limited role in the overall political engagement, which includes voting, of individual users during the 2008 election (Carlisle & Patton, 2013). The political context of Carlisle and Patton's study is not the same context as today. Social media has become much more included in the political process since 2008 and may have much more influence on the turnout of users.

Social Media in Current Politics

Although social media platforms initially had limited influence in the electoral process, social media has now become a common medium for the grassroots get-out-the-vote efforts of political campaigns. Forbes journalist Suciu (2020) recognizes the rising role of “micro-influencers”, or social media influencers with moderate amounts of followers, in mobilizing voters to vote. Campaigns pay these micro-influencers not to sway voters to a particular candidate but to ‘get-out-the-vote’ or increase the turnout of eligible nonvoters to go to the polls (Suciu, 2020). Academic research on the relationship between social media and general grassroots mobilization supports the decisions of political campaigns to use social media to their advantage. From their meta-analysis, Jost and his team of researchers establish social media as a supportive medium of information transmission, emotional messages, and social networks (Jost et al., 2018). Despite Jost et al.'s research focusing on political protest movements, voter mobilization efforts of political campaigns focus on these identified functions of social media. The micro-influencers mentioned by Suciu are simply portraying the emotional messages and a part of the social networks facilitated by social media. Social media companies themselves have taken the initiative to increase the voter turnout of their own users. According to Gibson (2018)

from CBS News, four social media giants (Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram) have collaborated with a program called TurboVote in registering eligible, but unregistered voters.

Social Norms in Voter Mobilization

The development of voting as a social norm has been effective in encouraging people to vote in offline settings but not on an online platform like Instagram. In their voting history mail experiment, Panagopoulos and his team of researchers found that mail including the receiver's individual voting history had dramatically increased their likelihood to vote and concluded that participants were pressured by the social norm to vote (Panagopoulos, Larimer, & Condon, 2014). To apply the same approach of individual voting history into online social media platforms, there would need to be a link between the social media user and the voter history on government databases. Given the privacy concerns and the relative anonymity of Instagram, sending a user's voting history would be nearly impossible.

On the other hand, the online approaches to making voting a social norm can be readily applied to certain features on Instagram. In their experiment on 61-million Facebook users, Bond and his team found that including the faces of a user's close friends (defined as online friends who also interacted offline) in voter mobilization messages had significantly increased voter turnout (Bond et al., 2012). This close-friends approach to spreading voting behavior is compatible with one Instagram feature: close friends lists. A user's close friends whose faces would be included in Bond et al.'s voter mobilization messages would likely be in this list. However, there is no guarantee that the people in this dedicated close friend list will be the 'close friends' under Bond et al.'s definition. Haenschen had established other Facebook features that were also effective in increasing voter turnout, including tagging and calling (Haenschen, 2016).

Instagram users also can tag and voice call other users. However, with Facebook having both a prominent web and mobile platform and Instagram having only a mobile platform with these features, the effects on voter turnout may differ between the two platforms.

Hypothesis

In evaluating the impact that voter mobilization on Instagram could have on the turnout for the upcoming 2024 presidential election, young voters were defined as voters who are eligible for the 2024 presidential election and would not be able to vote in the previous 2020 election. State voter laws regarding age requirements and Instagram's policies were assumed to not change between these two election cycles.

The initial hypothesis of this study predicted high popularity of certain Instagram features. The general social media and Instagram use among current teenagers (young voters by the 2024 election) is already established to be high from Monica and Jiang's research, so the specified use of Instagram's features is expected to also be high. In terms of impacting youth voter turnout, a significant percentage increase in turnout and the subsequent end to the status of lower turnout for young voters was part of the initial hypothesis. Other social media platforms had demonstrated significant increases in voter turnout, so that increase could be focused on youth voters on Instagram for improvements in voter turnout. To test this initial hypothesis on the popularity of Instagram and its effect on voter turnout, a certain method was established and is described in the next section.

Methods

Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design that assessed the current usage of certain Instagram features among today's teenagers. After an analysis of the popularity of certain features proven to be effective in spreading voting behavior, a hypothesis was formed on the extent that Instagram voter mobilization on today's teenagers (future young voters) can affect voter turnout.

A virtual questionnaire was used for teenage respondents to provide self-reported data on their Instagram use and the use of certain features most compatible with voter mobilization efforts. Although Monica and Jiang's survey on teenage social media use had included phone interviews, their participants' answers were qualitative responses to open-ended questions (Monica & Jiang, 2018). Given the brevity of the questions and strict multiple-choice format, phone interviews would not be necessary for this study as all participants would be restricted to the same answers. The aggregate data created from the questionnaire helped establish the descriptive, qualitative assessments of the current state of overall teenage Instagram usage and the popularity of certain Instagram features. Paired with the features found to facilitate voter mobilization by previous literature, this assessment of the popularity of certain features was used to create predictions on the potential increases in voter turnout for mobilization efforts utilizing those features. Features that demonstrate widespread use among this study's sample and significant increases to voter turnout in previous literature were the focus because features would have the greatest, positive impact on the possible success of voter mobilization on Instagram.

Questions with electoral undertones are excluded due to the likelihood of overreporting on voting behavior. Overreporting on surveys including questions on whether the participant would vote could be solved with cross-validation with public voting databases (Hanmer, Banks, & White, 2014). However, the participants of this study have not voted yet, so voting questions were removed altogether to prevent the current turnout rate used from being inflated.

Subjects of Study

Students currently enrolled in (removed) High School (ages 14-18) and their associative data were randomly selected after the data collection process is finished. Mathematically, these students would be between ages 18 and 22, the age range defining the youngest of young voters, and would therefore reach the age requirement to vote when the 2024 presidential election comes.

Instruments

Google Forms was used to create the questionnaire establishing informed consent of participants and assessing participants' Instagram features usage. Google Sheets will then be used to store and analyze the quantitative data from Google Forms. Responses that did not meet the requirements to be subject of this study were removed with the help of Google Forms to ensure that the sample was directly extracted from only members of the population, (removed) High School students.

The Calculator application for Windows 10 was used for calculating potential percent increases in turnout and increases in total vote counts.

Procedure

A Google Forms questionnaire titled “Instagram Voter Mobilization Survey” is created. The first item in the questionnaire aims to establish the assent of participation for teenage respondents and the informed consent of the parent or guardian of the teenage respondent. The remaining items then ask about the degree that the respondent used certain Instagram features and how those features are used (see Appendix A for specific questionnaire items).

The questionnaire did not have questions about specific Instagram usernames of the participants or their followers, and participants are unable to reveal any of their personal Instagram content. Participants were assured of this confidentiality on the consent form (see Appendix B for a sample consent form). This assured confidentiality to the participant aimed to mitigate such discomfort or embarrassment and distill any incentive to exaggerate or diminish individual responses. Participants were informed that they could remove their responses from the sample after they filled out the questionnaire (see Appendix C for a sample debrief form).

Initially, the procedure had the link to the questionnaire converted to a valid QR code. These QR codes would have been printed on flyers and hung on randomly selected classrooms with teacher consent, and students would scan these QR codes to fill out the form on their phones. However, due to personal COVID-19 health concerns and ongoing parental restrictions, interacting with teachers posed a serious health risk. Survey outreach was forced to be virtual and through social media platforms.

The final procedure included shortening the questionnaire link on tinyurl.com and sending the shortened link with a message through posts on social media platforms (see

Appendix D for a sample post). After one month of collecting responses, a total of 32 valid responses to the questionnaire were collected.

Results

Out of the 32 respondents, 100% indicated that they had an Instagram account. 93.8% of them answered “Daily” to the question evaluating the degree they check their photo feed, and 84.4% answered “Daily” to the question evaluating the degree they check their stories.

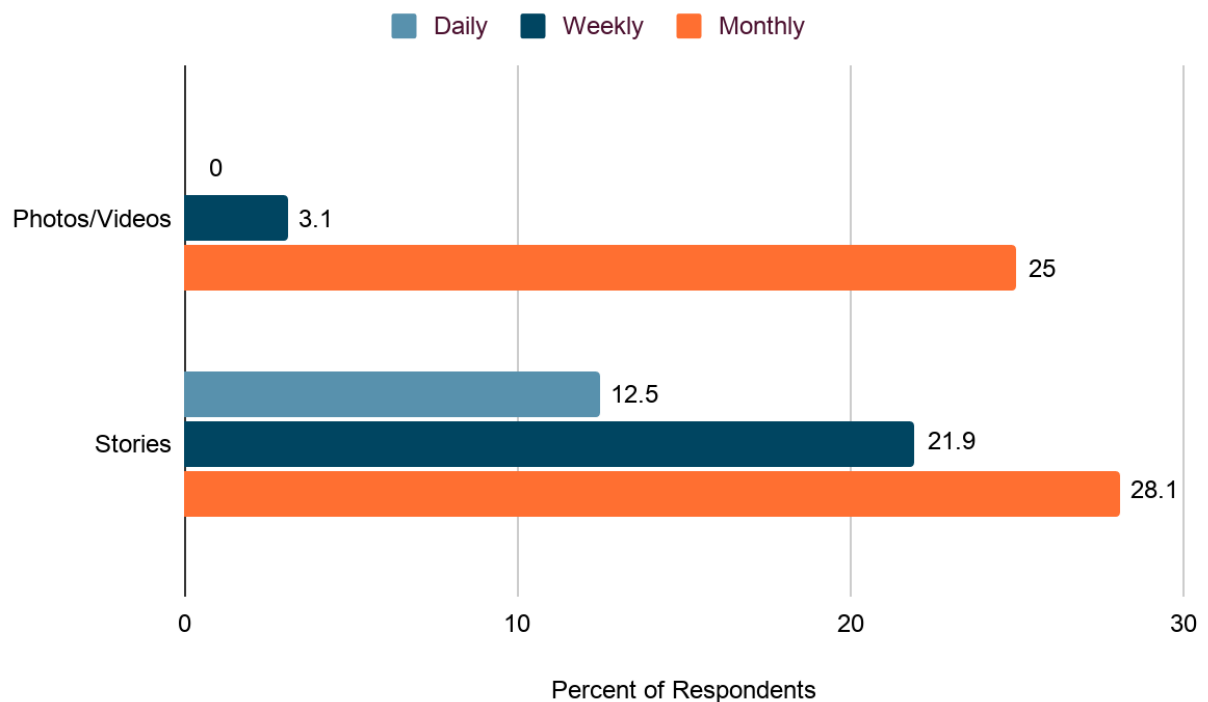


Figure 1. Bar graph comparing general photos/videos and stories at different levels of posting frequency.

For general Instagram content creation, the posting of stories was found to be more popular than photos and videos. Figure 1 depicts story posts having higher percentages in all three categories indicating more-than-once-a-month usage (Daily, Weekly, Monthly) than photos/videos, with 26.1% of respondents with more-than-once-a-month usage for photos/videos

and 62.5% of respondents with more-than-once-a-month usage for story posts. Additionally, photos and videos were found to have more respondents with low posting usage than stories. The percentage of respondents who answered ‘Almost Never’ for how much they post photos or videos was higher than the percentage of respondents who almost never post stories (34.4% vs. 15.6%). Both observations suggest that stories have broader popularity in the sample than photos and videos.

Table 1

Frequency of Posting Tagged Photos v. Tagged Videos

Degree of Posting Frequency	Percent of All Respondents	
	Photos	Videos
Daily	0.0	0.0
Weekly	0.0	12.1
Monthly	12.1	12.1
Every Few Months	45.5	18.2
Almost Never	42.4	57.6

However, for content tagging other Instagram users, the popularity between stories and photos is more nuanced. Table 1 demonstrates that tagged stories have the same or a higher percentage than photos in weekly and monthly postings. No respondent answered ‘Daily’ to questions on how much they post tagged stories or photos/videos. Interestingly, more respondents answered ‘Almost Never’ more in posting tagged stories than in posting tagged photos, with 56.3% for tagged stories and 40.6% for tagged photos. As tagged stories have a

higher more-than-once-a-month usage but a higher “Almost Never” percentage, the popularity of tagged stories over tagged photos remains uncertain.

Most of the respondents (74.2%) had indicated that they had a nonempty close-friend list. Only a total of 50% had indicated that they posted stories for their close-friends more than once a month (21.9% for Daily, 12.5% for Weekly, and 15.6% for Monthly), while the other 50% indicated that they posted less than once a month (3.1% for Every Few Months and 46.9% for Almost Never). The difference between the percentage of those having a nonempty close-friend list and the percentage of those more-than-once-a-month posting stories for their close-friends suggests that some respondents who consume close-friend stories rather than post them. 24.2% of respondents fall into this category, which is found by subtracting the more-than-once-a-month usage of posting close-friend stories (50%) from the percentage of respondents having a nonempty close friends list (74.2%).

In answering the notification question, 56.3% of respondents indicated that they had notifications enabled for Instagram.

An analysis of these results was performed and described in the following section.

Analysis

The more-than-once-a-month posting frequency group of respondents in certain questions is targeted since the month before election day is the time frame where Instagram voter mobilization is most effective. The average start time for the early voting window in a U.S. state is 22 days (NCSL Elections Team, 2020). The month-long time frame encompasses this early voting time frame and the voting on election day, so focusing on this time frame would

maximize voter turnout results. Users posting at least monthly would be posting in this month-long time frame, allowing such a post to potentially mobilize their followers.

For the analysis of Instagram content, only the people that post, not receive, a certain type of Instagram content (photos, stories, tagged photos, etc.) was part of the group affected by voter mobilization on that type of content. The number of receivers from voter mobilization posts is hard to predict with follower count, time of posting, and other factors affecting the number, so the receivers that would not have a more-than-once-a-month answer to certain questions were treated as unaffected by voter mobilization.

Frequency of Overall Usage

The abnormally high percentages found in the collected sample may be attributed to the virtual methods of survey outreach. The survey link was posted on social media, and those who use social media platforms more frequently were more likely to fill out the survey. The sample was heavily skewed towards people with a high amount of Instagram usage, making the sample not very representative of the teenage population. The later analyses on the effects of voter turnout for certain Instagram content may have inflated results.

General Voter Mobilization

The percentage of high school teenagers with Instagram (72%) was used for this analysis (Monica & Jiang, 2018). The following analysis employs the 15.19 million number for the number of students enrolled in high school in the United States (Statista Research Department, 2018).

Voter mobilization solely through the medium of user-generated Instagram photos and videos may only increase turnout by single percentages. The “follower” messages on Twitter are

similar to the Instagram photos/videos encouraging followers to vote and had increased turnout by 4.6% (Jost et al., 2018). The 26.1% of the teenage Instagram users with a more-than-once-a-month posting of photos and videos would take up 18.79% of the general teenage population. Applying the increased turnout rate by Jost et al. onto that 18.79% of high school teenagers, the turnout increase for the general youth voter electorate would only be 0.86% or an increased vote total of about 130,000 additional votes.

For Instagram stories, the increase in future youth turnout is greater than photos and videos. Applying the same calculations as above with the same 4.6% increase in signature turnout from Jost et al. but with the 62.5% of teenage Instagram users with more-than-once-a-month posting of stories, the future youth voter turnout would increase 2.0% and approximately 300,000 votes could be added.

However, the increased turnout in Jost et al.'s study was on online petition signatures, not votes. Considering that voting is a physical, in-person activity, the actual increased voter turnout is expected to be lower than the ones calculated above.

Personal Voter Mobilization

Tagged Posts. Despite demonstrating higher increases in voter turnout in previous studies, voter mobilization via tagged photos would still have similar impacts on youth voter turnout as general stories. Tagged Facebook shame posts reinforcing a social norm were found to have increased turnout by 17.0% (Haenschen, 2016). Taking the increased turnout rate of 17.0% in Haenschen's study, such an increase in turnout for the 12.5% of teenage Instagram users with more-than-once-a-month usage of tagged photos would increase general youth voter turnout by

1.53%, adding about 230,000 votes. The higher success rate of tagged photos over general stories is counterbalanced by the lesser popularity of tagged photos.

On the other hand, tagged stories would have greater increases in voter turnout than both tagged photos and general stories. With the same increase in turnout from Haenschen's study, the 25% of Instagram users with more-than-once-a-month usage of tagged stories would result in an increased turnout of 3.06% and about 460,000 additional votes.

Since Haenschen had only focused solely on tagged shame posts, the turnout increase (17.0%) may not be the same for all Instagram tagged posts that could be posts of shame or encouragement, affecting the possible increases from Instagram tagged posts calculated above. The social effect that compels the receivers of shame posts to vote may be different from the effects of other tagged posts.

Close Friends Stories. Voter mobilization through close-friend stories had the lowest potential in increasing youth voter turnout compared to other posts. Facebook posts with close-friends demonstrated only a 1.8% increase in voter turnout (Bond et al. 2012). With 50% of respondents with more-than-once-a-month posting of close-friend stories, applying the same increase from Bond et al. would result in an overall increase of 0.65% in turnout and about 98400 additional votes. The increase may be less as the close-friends in these user-created lists may not fit the criteria of 'close-friends' (online friends that also meet offline) defined in Bond et al.'s study. The close-friend effect that encourages more get-out-the-vote sentiments cannot be guaranteed to be present between the poster and the receiver on Instagram's close-friends circles.

Personal Messaging

Unlike Instagram posts, messages are guaranteed to have only one receiver, so there is less uncertainty on how far voter mobilization reaches. Despite personal messaging having possible increases in voter turnout similar to general posts and tagged photos, having only one receiver would mean that the message outreach for messages is more likely smaller than posts. Voter mobilization via SMS messages had increased turnout by 3.0% (Dale & Strauss, 2009). With the 56.3% of respondents having notifications enabled, turnout would increase by 1.22% and total votes would increase by approximately 185,000. However, because the noticability of Instagram messages may not be as high as the SMS messages from Dale and Strauss's study, the increases from Instagram's messages may be smaller.

Discussion

Implications

No single method of voter mobilization on Instagram would not be enough for the 18–29-year-old vote to no longer have the lowest voter turnout in terms of age. In the 2016 election about a 10% gap separated 18 to 29-year-old voters from 30 to 44-year-olds, the age group with the second-lowest voter turnout (McDonald, 2014). A certain combination of all the methods analyzed may need to be employed to overcome this 10% gap. Additionally, the effects of voter mobilization would not be solely on one age group. The receivers of voter mobilization posts or messages may involve members of different age groups, spreading the increase in voter turnout among age groups beyond youth voters. Due to this study examining only the impact of a single method of mobilization and only a portion of young voters, the initial hypothesis cannot be entirely verified or refuted.

With only total votes increasing by only hundreds of thousands, the outcomes of presidential races in terms of the national popular vote would unlikely change. Since the election of 1964, the difference in the popular vote between the Democratic and Republican candidates has been greater than 500,000 (O'Neill, 2021). If the additional votes from any form of possible Instagram voter mobilization were entirely skewed onto one candidate, every national vote outcome would not change regardless of the method of Instagram voter mobilization.

However, the national popular vote does not determine which party holds the White House. Due to the winner-take-all-systems in 48 states, the potential additional votes from Instagram voter mobilization could have changed the total electoral count and even the winner of the race. In the 2020 election, Biden had an 11,779-vote lead over Trump in the 2020 presidential election in Georgia (Wasserman et al., 2020). That lead could have been overcome if the additional votes from voter mobilization via tagged stories had heavily lean Republican as about 15,000 votes could be added to Georgia's total (assuming that state vote count is proportional to state population). However, youth voters tend to lean more Democratic, with more young voters voting Democrat than Republican in 32 out of 39 states with available voter demographic data in the 2020 election (Beadle et al., 2020). Applying the 2020 demographics to Florida during the 2000 election, the 537-vote lead that Bush over Gore had in the state, which earned Bush the presidency, could have been overcome by Gore if Instagram voter mobilization on younger voters was applied.

Voter mobilization may help with the overall political efficacy of the young electorate. Compelling young Instagram users in the United States to vote makes them more involved in the political process and can combat the lower political efficacy that young people have compared to

other age groups. Voting in presidential elections may be the first step for many young people to be involved in smaller-scale elections, such as their local U.S. House, U.S. Senate, governor, and state legislature races. Those affected by possible get-out-the-vote efforts on Instagram may also begin to commit themselves to other political activities like campaigning and even running for political office.

Limitations

With the sample only containing high school students, the possible voter turnout increases from voter mobilization on Instagram cannot be applied to the entire youth electorate in the 2024 election. The future ages of these high school students would range from 18 to 22, encompassing only half of the age of the 18 to 29 age group McDonald's study assessed for voter turnout. This study's calculated increases in turnout cannot be applied to the 24 to 29-year-olds, who would be currently in the latter years of college.

Multiple unconsidered factors possibly could change the increases in turnout and vote count evaluated in this study. Since the receivers of voter mobilization posts that do not post more-than-once-a-month were not considered, the increases in youth voter turnout may turn out to be higher if voter mobilization on Instagram did occur. The connections of senders and receivers Instagram would form a directed graph, not a simple tree structure, where one receiver may be reached by two or more different senders, which only further complicates this study's calculated percentages. These factors that vary among Instagram users and that can either improve or diminish increases in youth voter turnout make Instagram usage data a weaker predictor in voter turnout than controlled experimentation.

In addition, this study assumed that the current demographics and Instagram usage data would remain stagnant into the 2024 general election day. A major shift in the age demographics of the U.S. electorate and in the user behavior on Instagram before the 2024 election could make this study's analysis obsolete in this future election.

Because this study's sample is skewed towards Instagram users with more frequent usage, this study's results are applied best when all Instagram users, including the less-than-once-a-month users, happen to receive voter mobilization posts and messages during the month-long early voting window before and during Election day.

Conclusion

The analysis of aggregate Instagram user data of high school teens suggests that voter mobilization on Instagram can only increase youth turnout in single-digit percentages. Instagram alone cannot guarantee that 18 to 29-year-olds will no longer have the lowest voter turnout out of all age groups. The potential increases in voter turnout through different mobilization methods on Instagram may change the outcome of close 2024 presidential elections at a state-scale.

The many unconsidered factors of this study's analysis of survey data and its speculations on future youth voter turnout lend credibility to experimentation. Future research that applies voter mobilization on a certain Instagram feature to a designated experimental group needs to be conducted in order to better evaluate Instagram's voter mobilization value. Real-world experiments may corroborate or debunk the analysis of this study's prediction on Instagram's turnout effects with observed results. Instagram's involvement in the general political landscape may also be explored. Future research may examine how effective Instagram is in mobilizing its users to do certain political activities other than voting.

Social media is becoming integrated into the political process. Instagram's potential significance in allowing Americans to practice their right to vote may establish Instagram as a major factor in the outcome of the upcoming 2024 election and the preservation of American republicanism and democracy.

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Appendix A

Sample Consent Form

You are being invited to participate in a research study titled “Using Instagram for Future Young Voter Mobilization”

- This study is being done by (removed) from (removed) High School as a requirement of the College Board Capstone – AP Research class.
- You were selected to participate in this study because you have indicated interest by scanning a flyer hung on the classroom walls throughout (removed).

The purpose of this research study is to examine current teenage Instagram use and the popularity of certain Instagram features and develop new conclusions on the potential impact that Instagram could have on voter turnout in the United States.

- If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey/questionnaire.
- This survey/questionnaire will ask about how often and the way you use certain Instagram features and will take you approximately 5 minutes to complete.

PARTICIPATION

- Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time without penalty. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

BENEFITS

- You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study; however, we hope that your participation in the study may allow the development for more of Instagram's young voices to be heard in local, state, and national elections.

RISKS

- The possible risks or discomforts of the study are minimal. You may feel a little uncomfortable or embarrassed answering some survey questions if your Instagram usage is very personal to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Your survey answers will be sent to Google Forms where data will be stored in an electronic format. Your responses will remain anonymous. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether you participated in the study or not.
- You will not be forced to or be about to provide specific usernames, passwords, security questions, linked phone numbers, linked emails, or Instagram posts.

CONTACT

- If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact my AP Research teacher, (removed) via email at (removed).

ELECTRONIC CONSENT

Please select your choice below. You may copy and paste this consent form for your records.

Clicking on the "Agree" button indicates that

- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate

- Your parent or guardian have read all of the previous information and approves your participation
- ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree

Appendix B

Questionnaire Items

Questions marked D/E have the following answer choices: Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Every Few Months, and Almost Never. Questions marked Y/N have the following answer choices: Yes and No.

- Are you currently a student at (removed) High School? (Y/N)
- Do you have an Instagram account? (Y/N)
- How often do you check and scroll through your Instagram photo feed? (D/E)
- How often do you check Instagram stories from the people you follow? (D/E)
- How often do you post a new photo or video on Instagram? (D/E)
- How often do you post a new personal story on Instagram? (D/E)
- How often do you post a new photo tagging your friends' accounts? (D/E)
- How often do you post a new story mentioning your friends? (D/E)
- Do you have a close-friends list with at least one other Instagram account included?
(Y/N)
- How often do you post for the followers in your close-friends list? (D/E)
- Do you have notifications enabled for Instagram on your phone? (Y/N)

Appendix C

Sample Debrief Form

Thank you for your participation! Your responses will help with the efforts in expressing young voices during the United States electoral process.

CONFIDENTIALITY

If you do not want your responses to be used in this study and to be permanently deleted, please check the following box.

☐ Please withdraw my responses

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about the purpose, methods, and procedure of this study or if you are concerned about the structure or certain questions of this questionnaire, feel free to contact me via email (removed) or phone (removed).

RESULTS

If you wish to receive the final findings and conclusions of this study, feel free to contact me via email (removed) or phone (removed).

Please copy and paste this form as a later reference. Once again, thank you for your time!

Appendix D

Sample Outreach Survey Post

