

SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted on the social media behavior and political participation of university students. Extensive research was conducted on the impact of social media on university student politics. This study investigates how social media affects political activities and political participation using 200 students from 05 government universities out of 16 government universities. A questionnaire of 17 questions was used for this purpose. For this purpose, 200 students from 05 universities were used, and those 5 universities are the University of Vocational Technology Ratmalana, University of Peradeniya, University of Ruhuna, University of Kelaniya, and University of Colombo. We collected data for this from 200 randomly selected students. Questions about social media and politics were included in this questionnaire. This confirmed that many students use social media for political information. This research confirmed that Facebook is the most widely used social media for political discussions. 74% of the students who participated in this questionnaire use Facebook for political discussions. They further commented that they agree that social media influences their political views and ideologies. 99 percent of the students who participated in this questionnaire said that. Finally, it was confirmed that social media mainly affects the political participation of university students.

Keywords: *Social Media; Political participation; Government Universities; Face book; Political Discussions.*

1. INTRODUCTION.

Social media has become an essential part of today's society. Among the people living in the society, the young generation has the highest rate of social media consumption. Among the young people, university students can be mentioned as the people who use social media the most. This research aims to investigate the use of social media among university students and their political participation. Social media can help university students understand how to influence politics. However, recently, traditional forms of political participation have become less popular in many countries, especially among young people (Zagidullin et al. 2021). In this context, social media has been hailed as a new and innovative tool for enabling political participation among young people and mobilizing them to taken action (Kenna and Hensley 2019). Social media has also been invested for mobilizing young people to contribute to protests and demonstrations, especially those that are organized through social media platforms. However, while social media has been distinguished as a new tool for enhancing political participation, there also fears that it may negatively affect political participation (Arshad and Khurram 2020). As the political scene in Sri Lanka heats up, so will the conversations on Facebook and social media. Most of the people who chat on social media are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four. The result of universities becoming

apolitical is that thugs who have lost their memory have become giants in the political arena of society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW.

Here, a rough analysis of the existing research on the relationship between the use of social media and the political entry of university students is carried out through the following points.

2.1. SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL EFFICACY.

Many studies have shown that social media plays a major role in raising political ideologies among university students. (Gil de Zuniga , Puig – i Abril & Rojas - 2009) Political information is shared using Facebook, Instagram and Twitter social media and university students who are active in the media share their political views and political ideologies with their peers. Problems are discussed. However, the relationship between online political groups and political knowledge is limited because online and offline participation is very strong (Conroye, Feezellb, & Guerreroc – 2012). (Chan and Guo – 2013) investigated social media use in political activities and concluded that “ Social media use among youth can facilitate greater political civic engagement, Particularly for those who perceive that they have limited ability to participate and understand political affairs.

2.2. SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION.

Social media influences university students’ political participation. Social media quickly distributes political information to a large number of people. Among university students, students who are interested in politics use social media to share their views. Social media is used by university students to organize protests to raise awareness of political issues. Some scholars argue that social media has more real-world effects than what appears on the surface. University students also use social media to hold political discussions and debates. (Ellison , Steinfield , and Lampe – 2007) Many have commented that social media is a reason for developing the political knowledge of university students and increasing the political participation of more university students. Studies by researchers show that social media is more likely to be linked to political events and political activities.

2.3. FACEBOOK AND POLITICAL EFFICACY.

No human being born in this world can live alone. The reason is that he is a social animal by nature. Therefore, they are constantly interacting with others. Along with the development of communication, human social relations have also spread to every corner of the universe. Among the methods of building those relationships, the social network Facebook has a

special place. Created by improving Social Networking technology on the Internet, this is also known as a social network that has greatly influenced the world in the forty-five-year history of the Internet. They developed this as a tool to maintain personal relationships with each other. just for fun. It later became a worldwide social network. (Abdu , Mohamad , & Muda – 2017).

3. METHODOLOGY.

Students from University of Vocational Technology, University of Peradeniya, University of Ruhuna, University of Kelaniya and University of Colombo are included in this study. 200 students of these universities were used for this purpose. Understanding the effect of social media on university students political participation is one of the key methodologies used within this research. Moreover, it tries to identify the key factors that influence this relationship. The invested research design this quantitative, qualitative and correlational in nature: A questionnaire was made use of for collecting primary data. For this, the questionnaire is divided among a group of randomly selected of 200 university students. Data were collected from a sample of university students aged 21- 26 years. Girls and boys participated representing all years in these universities. The study use convenience sampling to select participants. The purpose of this research was to study university students' social media use and political participation.

3.1. Questionnaire.

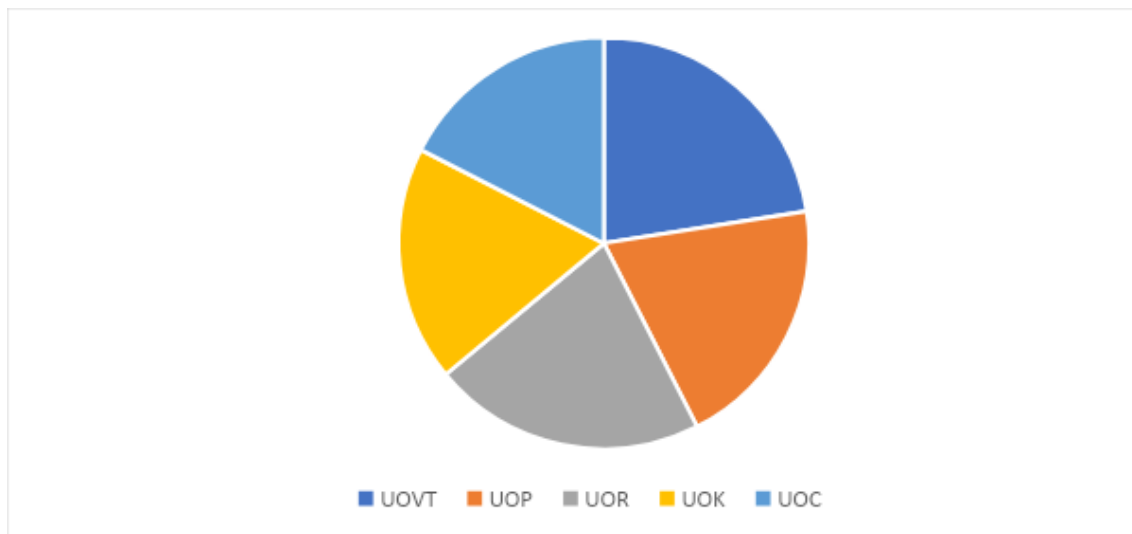
A sample of 200 participants is used, data were gathered using an online questionnaire which consisted of sections. A structured questionnaire is prepared for data collection. The questionnaire includes information about university students' use of social media and political participation activities. Participants were recruited through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter etc.

4. ANALYSIS.

This describes the research approach undertaken by this study. I try to provide a better understanding of the research approach using mixed method; Qualitative and quantitative methods are used for this purpose. This research has two objectives. The first objective is "the effect of social media on political opinion among university students" and the second objective is "to identify social media platforms that motivate university students to engage in political activities". Considering these two objectives, the first one will be analyzed using quantitative method and the second one will be analyzed using qualitative method. Both qualitative method and quantitative method are applied in this study so the data analysis is presented using bar charts and pie charts for easy understanding. Students from all

departments in the age groups of 21 to 26 years studying in all the years of the 5 selected government universities were used for this purpose. 111 girls and 88 boys from the students of all five universities participated in this questionnaire.

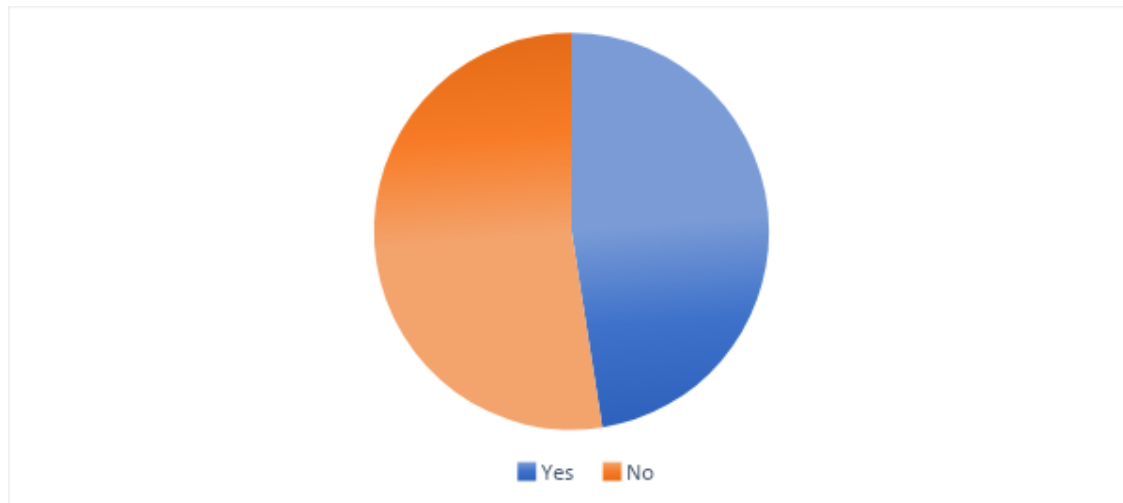
4.1. RANGE OF STUDENTS OF PARTICIPANTS.



Frame 1 – Range Of Students Of Participants.

The percentage of students who participated from each university can be presented as shown in the graph above. According to this, the percentage of students in University of Vocational Technology is 45 students which is 22.5%, the percentage of students in University of Peradeniya is 40 students which is 20%, the percentage of students in University of Ruhuna is 43 students which is 21.5%, the percentage of students in University of Kelaniya is 37 students which is 18.5%, and the percentage of students in University of Colombo is 35 students which is 17.5%, were used for this purpose.

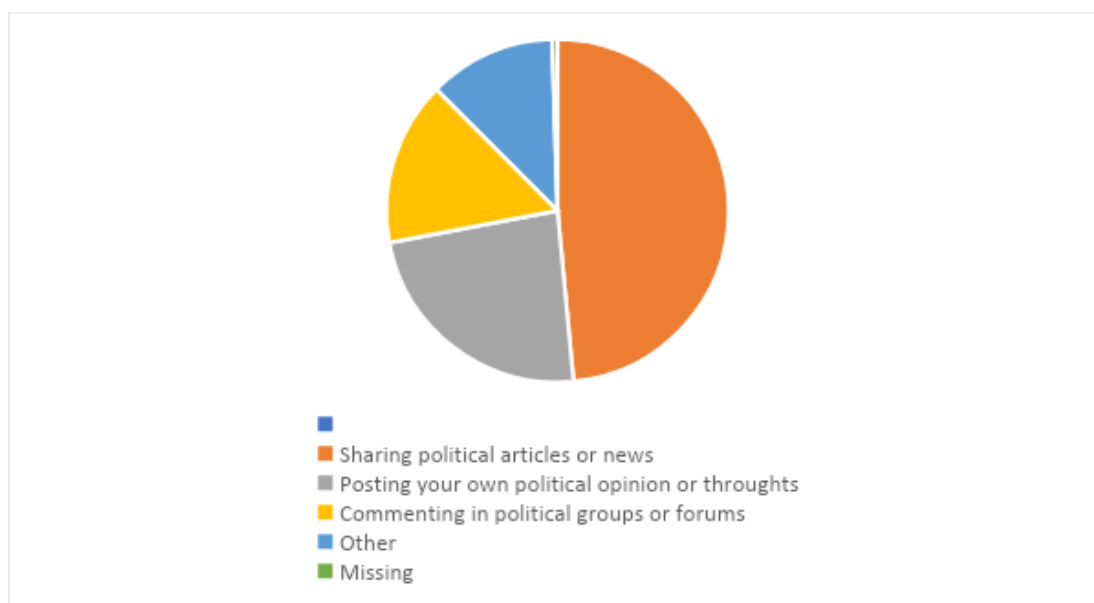
4.2. FOLLOWING POLITICAL PAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA.



Frame 2 – Following Political Page On Social Media.

According to the chart above, 47.5% of the people follow political pages on social media. This percentage is 95 students in total, and 18 of those students are from University of Vocational Technology, 13 from University of Peradeniya, 19 from University of Ruhuna, 23 from University of Kelaniya and 22 students from University of Colombo are also included. According to this chart, about 52.5% people do not follow political pages on social media.

4.3. *TYPICALLY ENGAGE IN POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS.*

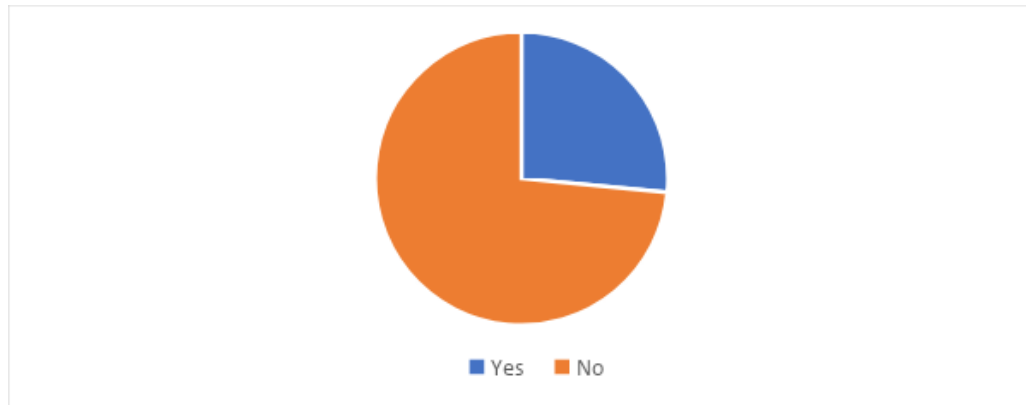


Frame 3 – Typically Engage In Political Discussions.

According to this chart, about 48.5% of the 97 students are used to engage in political conversation on social media by sharing political articles or news. Among the university students, 47 students, which is about 23.5%, engage in political dialogue in a social media by presenting their own political opinion and ideas. About 15.5% of the university students, 31

students comment in political groups and forums. 24 students, which is about 12% of the students who participated, used social media to engage in political conversations in other ways. One child did not respond, which is a percentage of 0.5%.

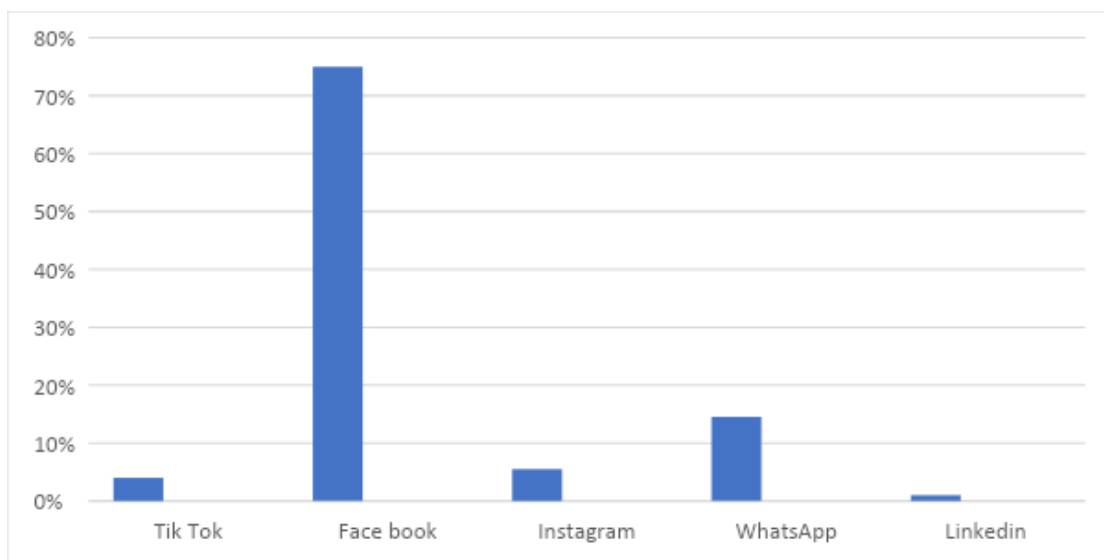
4.4. *PARTICIPATION IN A POLITICAL EVENT OR CAMPING.*



Frame 4 – Participation In A Political Event Or Camping.

According to this graph, about 73.5% of the people submit their opinion that they have never participated in a political event or learned about social media. This group includes 147 students, 87 girls and 62 boys. About 26.5% of the students who participated in this said that they have participated in a political event and have learned about social media. There are 53 students in this group, 25 girls and 28 boys.

4.5. *MOST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA.*

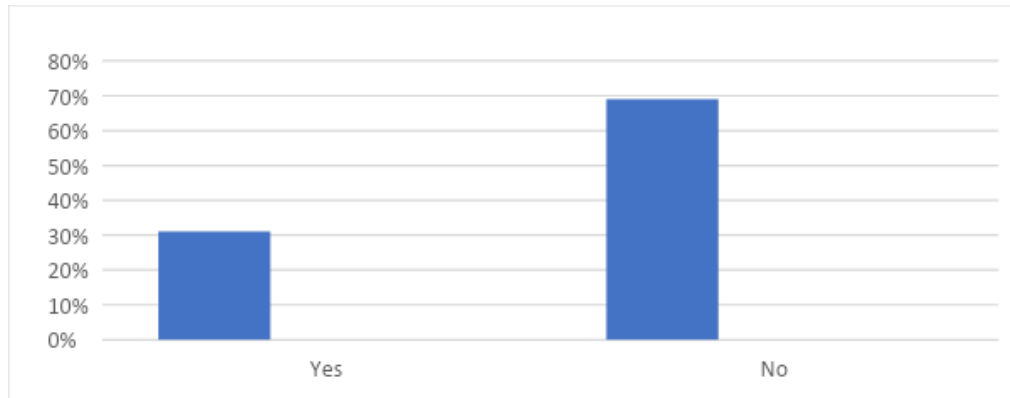


Frame 5 – Most Use Of Social Media.

According to this chart, Facebook is the social media used by university students the most. It is used by 150 students and it can be expressed as a percentage of 75%. WhatsApp is the

second most used social media among university students . It is used by 29 students and it can be expressed as 14.5% as a percentage. According to this graph, about 5.5% of people use Instagram and that is 11 student. Tik tok is used by eight student which is a percentage of 4%. 2 students use Linkedin which is 1% as a percentage.

4.6. ENGAGE IN POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS OR ACTIVITIES.



Frame 6 – Engage In Political Discussions Or Activities.

According to the above graph, about 31% of the students have engaged in political discussions or activities and that group includes 62 students. About 60% of the students who participated in this have never participated in political discussions and that group is 138 students.

5. CONCLUSION.

This research was conducted on the social media behavior and political participation of university students. Extensive research was conducted on the impact of social media on university student politics. This study investigates how social media affects political activities and political participation using 200 students from 05 government universities out of 16 government universities. A questionnaire of 17 questions was used for this purpose. For this purpose, 200 students from 05 universities were used, and those 5 universities are the University of Vocational Technology Ratmalana, University of Peradeniya, University of Ruhuna, University of Kelaniya, and University of Colombo. We collected data for this from 200 randomly selected students. Questions about social media and politics were included in this questionnaire. This confirmed that many students use social media for political information. This research confirmed that Facebook is the most widely used social media for political discussions. 74% of the students who participated in this questionnaire use Facebook for political discussions. They further commented that they agree that social media influences their political views and ideologies. 99 percent of the students who participated in this questionnaire said that. Finally, it was confirmed that social media mainly affects the political participation of university students. Through this study, it was possible to identify that social media has a positive and negative effect on political participation in university students. Some students said that social media has a strong influence on politics. Thus, it was confirmed that social media affects the formation of political attitude among university students.

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