

The Role of Social Media Marketing in Young Voters' Involvement: The Mediating Effect of Political Expression and Internal Efficacy

Wilmark J. Ramos¹, Maria Tiara Fatima F. Galang²

¹Associate Professor, College of Business and Accountancy, Tarlac State University, Philippines

² Associate Professor, College of Public Administration and Governance, Tarlac State University, Philippines

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 29 Dec 2024

Revised: 15 Feb 2025

Accepted: 24 Feb 2025

ABSTRACT

Voting is one of the most direct methods of participation of citizens in governance. With the heightened number of social media users, candidates resort to using this for marketing their campaigns and parties to influence voters. To develop a model of drivers and outcomes of young voters' political expression and internal efficacy, the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model was used. The indirect effect of the impact of word of mouth and interaction on political product involvement was positive and significant. When mediated by internal efficacy and political expression, WOM correlates positively to the outcome variable, political product involvement. Therefore, political expression and internal efficacy partially mediated the relationship between social media marketing strategies, namely, WOM and interaction and political product involvement. The study tested social media marketing in the context of elections and investigated specific components of social media. The findings underscored strategies to increase youth participation in governance. It is a unique addition to the exploration of gauging citizens' needs and perspectives as springboards for pivotal government actions.

Keywords: social media marketing, political expression, internal efficacy, political product involvement

INTRODUCTION

Political candidates traditionally rely on various marketing and communication strategies during the campaign period to inform and persuade the voters. However, in the past years, they have adopted new communication technologies such as social media. Social media is a web-based application program that facilitates ease of communication and information-sharing. Activities like online advertising campaigns and email marketing are examples of online marketing activities designed to round out the web-based traditional promotion strategy (Barefoot and Szabo, 2010). Politicians use the election season as a time to market themselves to voters who are also consumers (Gong et al., 2017; and Laroche et al., 2013).

According to Okan et al. (2014), social media usage in political marketing has quickly developed over the years. For instance, in the 2008 US presidential election (Ganduri, Reddy and Reddy, 2020) and in the 2018 general elections in Pakistan, there had been more intensive political campaigns over social media (Tariq, Zolkepli, and Ahmad, 2022). On the other hand, social media played a significant role in mobilizing people to participate in political activities like protests (Tiwari & Ghosh, 2017), such as the protests during the impeachment trial of Philippine President Estrada in 2001 and the 2011 London Youth Riots (Ariani & Astuti, 2016).

Theoretically, social media encourages unintentional exposure to political material, which ultimately increases traditional forms of political participation, according to Matthes et al.'s (2020) hypothesis. The term political involvement or participation refers to the general public's involvement in politics, which includes things like participating in political rallies, giving to political campaigns, writing or calling elected officials, attending public meetings, demonstrating, and cooperating with others on political issues (Ganduri, Reddy and Reddy, 2020). The topic of youth political engagement has recently gained more attention across the globe (Skoric & Poor, 2013). According to Sears and Levy (2003), as political efficacy and involvement are still developing during adolescence,

young people are more susceptible to the effects of social media than adults are (e.g., Eckstein et al. 2012). This is so because of their inclination to use platforms of social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Whatsapp, Telegram, and Twitter, political marketers will have the opportunity to support their preferred political candidates on these. Young people are becoming a sought-after demographic for political parties and candidates due to their unique qualities, including strength, high expectations, and a propensity to embrace and support novel concepts (Fjerza, Gega & Memaj, 2014). Youth involvement is, therefore crucial to take into account as it provides insight into potential political participation in the future (Vissers & Maheo, 2012).

According to Velasco's (n.d.) 1996–2002 report on Filipino young participation in politics, neither their lack of political education nor their little social activity has altered. They apparently decided to abstain because they were worried that becoming engaged might hurt their academic performance. As a result, they might have also thought that their involvement in politics was pointless or that, if they did, communists would be associated with them. Sebastian (2014), on the other hand, argued that the youth in the Philippines are not as disengaged as is generally believed. She emphasized that young people are most engaged in voting, including registering to vote, casting ballots in local elections, and casting ballots in presidential elections. Her research found that young people engage in various political activities at random because they are dissatisfied with both national and local politics. Velasco (2005) also emphasized that youth involvement in Philippine politics is influenced by current events. She made a point of saying that although "the youth are not scared to mobilize in dire conditions, in 'regular times,' only organized youth groups engage in advocacy and political disputes.

According to Araguy and Baquisal (2022), social media in the Philippines had a substantial impact on the 2022 national elections. They suggested that the production, transmission, and consumption of election-related information and narratives through social media were crucial to the polarization and mobilization of Filipino voters both offline and online. The election victory of former President Duterte, according to Manila Times (2022), was widely regarded as the first election in which social media was used in a mainstream way. Politicians now have a tremendous weapon in social media that allows them to disseminate information, talk to and appeal to their target demographic of young voters, and even organize Facebook Live rallies to further their campaigns. In addition, the two candidates who came out on top in the national elections in the Philippines, Marcos Jr. and Robredo, used Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok effectively during the campaign period, according to Macaraeg (2022) of Rappler. The same trend can be seen today in the Philippines with the upcoming senatorial and local elections in May 2025.

The social media impact on political marketing has attracted the attention of academics (Gogoi 2020; Ndavula and Mueni 2014). Post-election analyses, planning, and political brand design have repeatedly been the focus of studies on political marketing in Ghana (Mensah, 2017; Hinson and Tweneboah-Koduah, 2010). In South Africa, Ayankoya, Cullen, and Cautz (2014) report that respondents use the internet and mobile technologies to encourage voting and participation; in Nigeria, Nnanyelugo and Nwafor (2013) investigated social media and political participation during the 2011 general elections; Saifullah et al. (2017) investigated social media's use during a specific election; Tudoroiu (2014) concluded that social media marketing strategy plays a significant role in political efficacy. The relationship between social media marketing and political efficacy, real media life involvement, and online behaviors was studied by Ahmad, Alvi, and Ittefaq in 2019.

Political aspects like self-efficacy, political expression, and participation or involvement have not been discussed in any of these research. The investigations of Ibardeola (2022), Dolipas (2021), Palomares et al (2021), David, Pascual and Torres (2019), Cabo (2018), and Lim (2016) were the closest studies conducted in the Philippines. Marketing strategy still has a limited significance in the context of political marketing, according to Lock and Harris (1996). Furthermore, the potential for using social media to influence political activities has not been fully realized (Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010).

In light of this, the study aimed to investigate the influence of social media marketing on young voters' participation as well as any potential mediating effects of political expression and self-efficacy. With the use of our suggested structure equation model, we want to close any current gaps and add to the body of knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Marketing

The characteristics of social media marketing, according to Kim and Ko (2012), are engagement, entertainment, trendiness, personalization, and word-of-mouth (WOM). Chang et al. (2015) extend these dimensions through the components of user attitude and persuading message content on social media. Using Bhattacharjee and Sanford's (2006) reasoning, the latter term refers to the strength and value of an argument.

Although Kim and Ko's (2012) social media marketing characteristics have been used in the context of the luxury business before, it is less obvious how they apply to political marketing (Godey et al., 2016). Therefore, some adjustments are necessary to have a more thorough knowledge of SMM operations within the context of political marketing. To account for SMM activities in political marketing, the following factors are recommended: content, argument quality and utility, interaction, message credibility, and WOM. This is based on a comprehensive assessment of the literature on political and electoral marketing, as well as frequently read news and commentary on the topic.

Social Media Credibility

On any platform, the authenticity and credibility of the information offered are essential components in building trust in the source (Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). This is especially true when the information is intended for marketing purposes. While the topic of the separate and different credibility of messages published on social media has not received much attention in the literature, source trustworthiness, ad, and information credibility have all been thoroughly addressed (Yuan et al., 2016). Given that human brand equity and image are frequently closely correlated with source trustworthiness, its effect on perceived brand image is examined in several settings (Moulard et al., 2015). While Yuan et al. (2016) claim that social media's source credibility and parasocial relationships' stronger credibility have a beneficial impact on relationship equity and brand equity, Bhattacharjee and Sanford (2006) claim that source credibility significantly affects brand attitudes and perceptions. For the aforementioned reasons, we speculate that political expression and internal efficacy may be related to credibility. Therefore:

H1a: Credibility and political expression are associated positively.

H1b: Credibility and internal efficacy are associated positively.

Social Media Interaction

Social media's current dominance is due in large part to the channels it offers for communicating ideas, thoughts, and emotions on a range of topics (Godey et al., 2016). In addition to providing this area for social interaction, social media also enables like-minded people to engage with one another and brands in a more personal setting than mainstream media can (Muntinga et al., 2011). Consumers may grow to love a brand as a result of interactions on social media platforms (Kim & Ko, 2012). Such sentiments of devotion can influence how consumers see a brand (Zhang, 2015). According to Godey et al. (2016), consumers' desire to learn more about "the user behind the profile" is one of the factors that motivates them to participate in social media interactions. For this study, politicians and political parties have been referred to as brands; yet, they are still "human brands" that encourage the voter to think of them as fellow users, encouraging them to get more connected with the aforementioned "person behind the profile" (Moulard et al., 2015). Social media interactions can also enhance customer connections, brand performance, and favorable brand perception, according to Rutter et al. (2016). Thus:

H2a: Interaction and political expression are associated positively.

H2b: Interaction and internal efficacy are associated positively.

Social Media WOM

The prevailing consensus is that word-of-mouth is substantially more effective than marketing-driven programs (Chu & Kim, 2011). The impact of online WOM on customer preferences and purchasing decisions has grown more pronounced and potent as the internet's relevance in marketing grows (Godey et al., 2016). Opinion seeking, offering, and passing are the three layers of WOM, according to Chu and Kim (2011). When seeking guidance, consumers turn to social media platforms, which promote information exchanges. This has an impact on the brand's reputation and customer equity (Godey et al., 2016). The nature of politics and political campaigns makes opinion gathering and

sharing both desirable and unintended results of social media campaigning. One of the most important factors for fostering and sustaining a closer bond between a company and its customers is social WOM (Mooradian & Swan, 2006).

It follows that word-of-mouth has a similar impact on perceived candidate image given that brand perceptions have a significant impact on perceived brand image (Aaker, 1996; Winchester et al., 2014). Even while the WOM's impact on voters' decisions has not received much attention in the literature, marketers believe it to be one of the most crucial aspects of political marketing, especially given the younger generations' increasing usage of social media (Hobbs, 2017). Hence:

H3a: Word-of-mouth and political expression are associated positively.

H3b: Word-of-mouth and internal efficacy are associated positively.

Social Media Content

Since brand perceptions significantly affect perceived brand image, it follows that word-of-mouth also significantly affects perceived candidate image (Aaker, 1996; Winchester et al., 2014). Despite receiving little attention in the literature, marketers believe that WOM is one of the most crucial elements in political marketing, particularly given the rise in the usage of social media among younger generations (Hobbs, 2017). According to Bhattacharjee and Sanford (2006), the effectiveness, productivity, and performance advantages of communication as perceived by the target audience are more important than its plausible, potent, and convincing arguments when used in social media. Chang et al. (2015) proposed a connection between the two factors by arguing that when social media posts have poor argument quality, their perceived utility will also be poor. Social media is frequently seen as a hobby and a way to have fun (Godey et al., 2016; Muntinga et al., 2011). Entertainment is viewed as being equally important given that political marketing is frequently related to comparison and hilarious messaging (Clementson, Pascual-Ferrá, & Beatty, 2014; Kaid, 2012). The posts' amusing and fascinating material is part of the content's entertainment component (Godey et al., 2016). Therefore:

H4a: Content and political expression are associated positively.

H4b: Content and internal efficacy are associated positively.

Mediating Effect of Political Expression and Internal Efficacy

Political expression

Political news can be shared, political commentary can be made, political videos and photos can be shared, and political perspectives can be exchanged online (Yamamoto et al., 2015). This involvement in politics has a high risk since audiences from various social, cultural, and economic backgrounds may not understand the material that users produce (Boyd, 2010; Thorson, 2014). The literature has established a consistent link between political conversation and political action during the past ten years, linking political expression on the internet to political participation (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995). More chances for speech, especially those available online, may encourage people to take actual acts, according to some studies (Elin, 2003).

Through online expression, people can become active participants in politics (Gil de Ziga et al., 2014). According to Rojas and Puig-i-Abril (2009), political participation happens when research repeatedly shows that political discussion, both offline and online, mediates the effects of news media use on involvement (Cho et al., 2009; Shah et al., 2007). This is so that political discussion can ultimately lead to political engagement. According to Gil de Ziga et al. (2014), the usage of social media for news and political expression has a beneficial link that affects both offline and online engagement, sequence of expression, mobilization, and participation.

Research consistently demonstrates that the impacts of news media use on involvement are mediated by both offline and online political conversation (Cho et al., 2009; Shah et al., 2007). This is so that political debate can eventually lead to political engagement. News offers the required background and content of political topics, facilitating future conversations about them. Social media use for news and political expression has a favorable correlation, according to Gil de Ziga et al. (2014), which in turn affects offline and online engagement. Therefore:

H3: Political expression is positively associated with political product involvement.

H4: Political expression mediates the positive effect of (a) credibility, (b) interaction, (c) word-of-mouth, and (d) content on political product involvement

Internal Efficacy

Internal efficacy mostly refers to how much influence people think they can have because of their own skills (Caprara, Vecchione, Capanna, & Mebane, 2009). Because of this, internal efficacy can have a big impact on political activity, which then results in societal change (Semetko & Valkenburg, 1998). High internal efficacy individuals think that their actions are the primary driver of progress (Rotter, 1966). Regarding political actions that require a lot of work, internal political efficacy is predicted to perform better than external political efficacy. Studies have revealed that internal political efficacy is a key predictor of involvement in both traditional forms of engagement, such as voting, as well as group activities like attending protests (Corcoran, Pettinicchio, & Young, 2011; Klandermans, Van der Toorn, & Van Stekelenburg, 2008; Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008).

Numerous research has shown that knowledge can raise self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982; Compeau & Higgins, 1995; K.Lee, 2006). Greater knowledge is anticipated to boost self-efficacy because it encourages a sense of control in pertinent circumstances (Bandura, 1977). While Lee (2006) found that information-related Internet use predicts college students' political self-efficacy, Newhagen (1994) found that greater exposure to information media, such as newspapers or national television news shows, related to an increase in political efficacy.

As a result, it is reasonable to assume that the information produced and made available by social media will have an impact on citizens' ideas about their capacity to engage in political participation. Additionally, numerous research has shown that self-efficacy is a result of political participation (e.g., Finkel, 1985; Hoffman & Thomson, 2009; Kenski & Stroud, 2006; Vecchione & Caprara, 2009). In other words, internal political efficacy significantly and favorably influences political engagement (Condon & Holleque, 2013; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). Krampen (2000). It is seen as a crucial factor in determining how politically engaged persons are. People who are driven to participate in politics more frequently than those with low levels of self-efficacy are those who are confident in their capacity to do so. According to a study by Park (2014), internal efficacy affects how news intake affects involvement both offline and online. In terms of accessibility, diversity, and breadth of knowledge, social media provides effective people with a number of advantages over other media. By activating various motivational, cognitive, and emotional components of internal political efficacy, which in turn might boost participation, these benefits can be leveraged to motivate political action (Chan, 2014). According to the literature, this study predicts that the influence of social media marketing initiatives may lead to expressive involvement through the mediating role of internal political efficacy. Therefore:

H5: Internal efficacy is positively associated with political product involvement.

H6: Internal efficacy mediates the positive effect of (a) credibility, (b) interaction, (c) word-of-mouth, and (d) content on political product involvement.

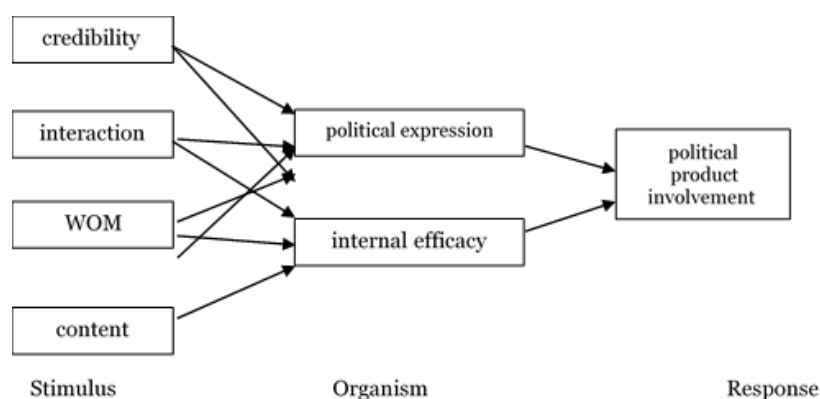


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework

It is in this light that the researchers seek to develop a model of drivers and outcomes of young voters' political expression and internal efficacy through the lens of the stimulus- organism- response (SOR) model.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as an overall technique to verify the proposed model. To test and show causal relationships in between variables, SEM is applied. The relationships shown in the proposed model represent the hypotheses of the researchers. SEM is mostly used for research that is designed to confirm a research study design rather than to explore or explain a phenomenon. As articulated by Martínez-López, Gázquez-Abad, and Sousa (2013), SEM is a frequently applied method by marketing and business researchers to empirically assess theoretical proposals articulated using complex models.

Respondents and Sampling Technique

According to Kline (2016), though it is difficult to set a minimum sample size in SEM studies, a median sample based on study reviews is $N = 200$. Thus, for this study, 400 registered young voters who are actively using Facebook served as respondents. The population of the study are those who are registered voters by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) and have access to social media. The scope of the study is limited to young voters (aged up to 35 years old only). According to Boczkowski et al. (2018) and Essoungou (2010), the young voters' cohort is more inclined to use social media and is therefore believed to best serve as respondents.

Data Collection

A survey questionnaire was developed as the research instrument of the study where items on social media content were based on Kim and Ko (2012) and Bhattacharjee and Sanford (2006). Three items from Van Vaerenbergh and Holmqvist (2014) were used to measure WOM, whilst interaction was measured using three items provided by Kim and Ko (2012). Message credibility was measured by incorporating items from Bhattacharjee and Sanford (2006) and Chang et al. (2015); for internal efficacy, it was from Moore (2005), political expression in social media by Gil de Zúñiga, Molyneux, & Zheng, (2014); and political product involvement by Zaichkowsky (1994); and Schneider & Rodgers (1996).

The instrument's composite reliability (internal consistency reliability) and construct validity were measured. A composite reliability (CR) of 0.60 or higher was computed and is hence, considered acceptable since the study is exploratory. Furthermore, all estimates (standardized loadings) are significant; all estimates were above 0.50 and most above 0.70; and AVE for all constructs are above 0.50. Therefore, the measurement model is acceptable.

For convergent validity, since the AVE value of each latent variable is more than 0.50, then the criteria are satisfied for convergent validity of the structured model. Discriminant validity was likewise computed.

Table 1. Discriminant Validity

Latent Variables	CON	INT	CRED	WM	PoE	InE	PPIn
CON	0.7814						
INT	0.5920	0.7210					
CRED	0.6550	0.5350	0.8843				
WM	0.6010	0.5250	0.8120	0.8271			
PoE	0.3750	0.3480	0.5160	0.6060	0.8134		
InE	0.3530	0.3960	0.4400	0.4450	0.5810	0.7730	
PPIn	0.2310	0.3920	0.2440	0.2240	0.5020	0.6890	0.7045

RESULTS

Data Multivariate Assumptions for Structural Equation Modelling and Results

Cook's Distance was applied to the data to ensure that there are no outliers or influential respondents, as they have a bigger influence on the regression of variables. Under this test, if the Cook's distance is greater than 1.00, that influential respondent will be removed, and it is justifiable. In the case of this study, the outliers are not removed since their values are not greater than 1.

Table 2. Residuals Statistics

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1.7231	5.2462	3.9791	.47061	400
Std. Predicted Value	-4.794	2.692	.000	1.000	400
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.020	.141	.041	.017	400
Adjusted Predicted Value	1.7520	5.2644	3.9777	.47297	400
Residual	-1.16183	1.47135	.00000	.33001	400
Std. Residual	-3.494	4.425	.000	.992	400
Stud. Residual	-3.523	4.883	.002	1.007	400
Deleted Residual	-1.18112	1.79180	.00142	.34007	400
Stud. Deleted Residual	-3.575	5.032	.003	1.012	400
Mahal. Distance	.435	70.360	5.985	6.976	400
Cook's Distance	.000	.742	.005	.038	400
Centered Leverage Value	.001	.176	.015	.017	400

In addition, causal modelling also assumes that the independent variables are not highly correlated with each other, meaning there is no multicollinearity. This assumption was tested using the Variance Inflation Factor or VIF values. Results showed that Word of Mouth, Interaction, Internal Efficacy, and Political Expression are correlated to Political Product Involvement.

Table 3. Variance Inflation Factor

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.844	.148		5.703	.000		
CON	-.057	.047	-.057	-1.215	.225	.375	2.664
WM	-.392	.056	-.476	-7.047	.000	.184	5.432
CRED	.014	.045	.020	.310	.756	.210	4.756
INT	.430	.060	.306	7.132	.000	.457	2.189
InE	.573	.032	.657	17.649	.000	.605	1.653
PoE	.295	.035	.354	8.527	.000	.486	2.059

Causal Model in AMOS

The causal model in this study used the imputed factor scores since there exists a common method bias in the constructs. Figures 2 and 3 show the diagram of the standardized estimates of the structural model, with modification indices set at 10.

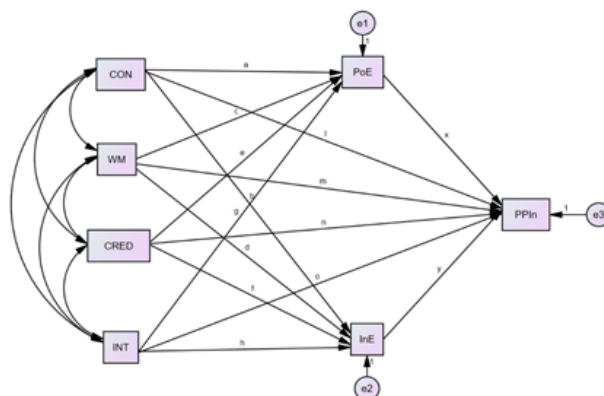


Figure 2. Path Diagram of the Study's SEM

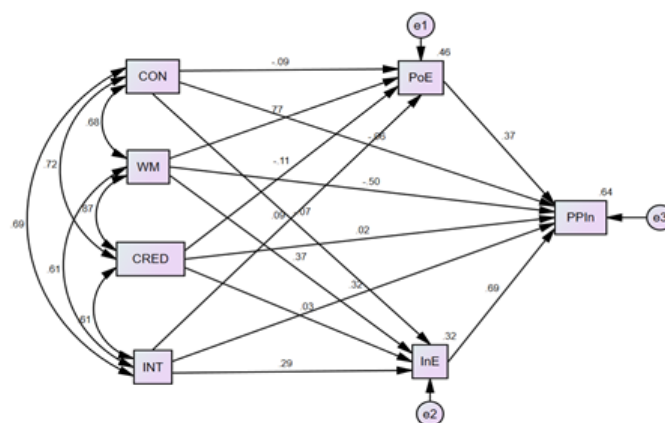


Figure 3. SEM for standardized estimates

Although the probability value of Chi-Square is not greater than zero for a perfect fit model, the resulting model in the study was still considered good since it has shown a minimum fit.

Table 4. Standard Regression Weights

Parameter	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P
PoE <--- CON	-.085	-.268	.125	.463
PoE <--- WM	.773	.613	.915	.000
InE <--- INT	.287	.123	.446	.001
InE <--- CON	-.074	-.284	.124	.503
PoE <--- CRED	-.112	-.297	.074	.221
InE <--- CRED	.033	-.192	.233	.810
PoE <--- INT	.085	-.052	.216	.233
InE <--- WM	.375	.186	.566	.000
PPIIn <--- InE	.690	.587	.774	.001
PPIIn <--- PoE	.372	.258	.469	.001
PPIIn <--- CON	-.060	-.245	.100	.527
PPIIn <--- WM	-.499	-.660	-.347	.000
PPIIn <--- CRED	.021	-.130	.170	.796
PPIIn <--- INT	.321	.210	.465	.000

The regression weight of the variables, the influence of the exogenous or independent variables (credibility CRED, interaction INT, content CON, word of mouth WOM) through the mediating factors (political expression PoE and internal efficacy InE) to the dependent variable (political product involvement PPIIn) were computed. The influence is significant for parameters with p-value less than or equal to 0.05.

Then, a user-defined estimand built-in AMOS estimated the indirect effects of the mediating factors from the independent variables to the dependent variable. Partial mediation happens when direct and indirect effects are significant. Full mediation takes places when indirect effect is significant while direct effect is not significant.

Table 5. Summary of Unstandardized Multiple Mediators' Indirect, Direct, and Total Effects – Two-Tailed Significance

Parameter	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P
Indirect CON > PoE > PPIIn	-.030	-.108	.040	.454
Direct CON > PPIIn	-.057	-.225	.097	.529
Total Effects CON thru PoE	-.088	-.216	.045	.205
Indirect CON > InE > PPIIn	-.049	-.197	.078	.497
Direct CON > PPIIn	-.057	-.225	.097	.529
Total Effects CON thru InE	-.106	-.245	.043	.149
Indirect WM > PoE > PPIIn	.226	.148	.307	.000
Direct WM > PPIIn	-.392	-.513	-.273	.001
Total Effects WM thru PoE	-.166	-.282	-.055	.002
Indirect WM > InE > PPIIn	.203	.097	.320	.000
Direct WM > PPIIn	-.392	-.513	-.273	.001
Total Effects WM thru InE	-.189	-.358	-.020	.028
Indirect CRED > PoE > PPIIn	-.028	-.079	.018	.206
Direct CRED > PPIIn	.014	-.089	.118	.794
Total Effects CRED thru PoE	-.014	-.123	.097	.767
Indirect CRED > InE > PPIIn	.016	-.088	.113	.805
Direct CRED > PPIIn	.014	-.089	.118	.794
Total Effects CRED thru InE	-.106	-.245	.043	.149
Indirect INT > PoE > PPIIn	.042	-.024	.117	.224
Direct INT > PPIIn	.430	.280	.623	.000
Total Effects INT thru PoE	.473	.331	.638	.000
Indirect INT > InE > PPIIn	.266	.114	.436	.001
Direct INT > PPIIn	.430	.280	.623	.000
Total Effects INT thru InE	.696	.514	.883	.000

In the study, both the direct and indirect effects of the independent variables (content and credibility) are not significant. Hence, content and credibility are not correlated to political product involvement.

Mediation Analysis

Finally, mediation analysis was applied for variables with significant effects.

Table 6. Mediation Analysis Results

Relationship	Mediator	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Confidence Interval		P-value	Interpretation
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Word of Mouth >	Political Expression	-0.392 (0.001)	0.226	0.148	0.307	0.002	Partial Mediation

Political Product Involvement	Internal Efficacy	-0.392 (0.001)	0.203	0.097	0.32	0.028	Partial Mediation
Interaction > Political Product Involvement	Political Expression	0.430 (0.000)	0.042	-0.024	0.117	0.000	Partial Mediation
	Internal Efficacy	0.430 (0.000)	0.266	0.114	0.436	0.000	Partial Mediation

The study assessed the mediating roles of political expression and internal efficacy on the relationship between the independent variables namely credibility, interaction, word of mouth, and content to the dependent variable political product involvement.

The results revealed the indirect effect of the impact of word of mouth on political product involvement was positive and significant ($b = 0.226$, $p = 0.002$, $p < 0.05$), supporting the hypothesis. Furthermore, the direct effect of word of mouth on political product involvement in the presence of political expression was also found to be negative and significant ($b = -0.392$, $p = 0.001$). Hence, political expression partially mediated the relationship between word of mouth and political product involvement. Further, the results revealed the indirect effect of impact of word of mouth on political product involvement was positive and significant ($b = 0.203$, $p = 0.028$, $p < 0.05$), supporting the hypothesis. On the other hand, the direct effect of word of mouth on political product involvement in the presence of internal efficacy was also found to be negative and significant ($b = -0.392$, $p = 0.001$). Hence, internal efficacy partially mediated the relationship between word of mouth and political product involvement.

Meanwhile, the indirect effect of the impact of interaction on political product involvement was positive and significant ($b = 0.042$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), supporting the hypothesis. The direct effect of interaction on political product involvement in the presence of political expression was also found to be positive and significant ($b = 0.430$, $p = 0.000$). Hence, political expression partially mediated the relationship between interaction and political product involvement. The results revealed the indirect effect of the impact of interaction on political product involvement was positive and significant ($b = 0.266$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), supporting the hypothesis. Furthermore, the direct effect of interaction on political product involvement in the presence of internal efficacy was also found to be positive and significant ($b = 0.430$, $p = 0.000$). Hence, internal efficacy partially mediated the relationship between interaction and political product involvement.

CONCLUSIONS

Because of the growing popularity and normative use of social media among young citizens, there have been studies conducted to investigate its potential for civic engagement and collective action. The proposed model contributes to the literature and builds on the works of Obar, Zube, and Lampe (2012); Novak, Becker, Grey, and Mondardini (2018); and Letcher (2018), to name a few. Further, the study provides additional explanations for citizen involvement, such as the inclusion of mediating variables. The other studies focused on advocacy-related tasks; the study tested social media marketing in the context of election, which is the most common form of citizen participation, and investigated specific components of social media.

In the field of public administration, with new public management's focus on client orientation, the study is a useful addition to the exploration of gauging citizens' needs and perspectives as springboards for pivotal government actions and decisions. It has been experienced that collecting citizen's perspectives can be bureaucratically challenging, and the results of the study offer new theoretical perspectives on increasing political involvement, especially among the youth.

Furthermore, the National Youth Commission (NYC), in its Philippine Youth Development (PYDP) 2017-2022 envisions the Filipino Youth to be active in government and civil society in 2022. Among the centers of participation stipulated in the plans is governance. Under this, the Philippine government aims to ensure nationwide participation in the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK); increased participation in local and national elections and intensify youth participation in government bureaucracy particularly in policy development, program, project, and activity

formulation and participation. The proposed and tested model in the study guides the government in attaining such a target. The involvement of youth can be influenced through social media marketing, which is a go-to communication channel among them.

Finally, it is imperative to ensure the social acceptability of public policies, and the study's model can be applied to such. According to Dunn (2018), policy stakeholders are essential parts of the policy system, which is the overall institutional pattern within which policies are made. To gauge social acceptability, stakeholder analysis (SA) is performed as this allows policymakers to know whether policy proposals will be well received or not, hence providing strategic inputs for policy adoption and implementation. Social media marketing for policy proposals can also be considered as the model implies that social media can be an unconventional source of valuable inputs to policies, plans, programs, and others.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ayankoya, K., Calitz, A. P., & Cullen, M. (2015). A Framework for the use of Social Media for Political Marketing: An Exploratory Study. Retrieved December, 12(September), 2018.
- [2] Ayankoya, K., Cullen, M., & Calitz, A. P. (2014). Social media marketing in politics. International Marketing Trends Conference, March. <https://doi.org/10.13140/2.1.1099.1043>
- [3] Banerjee, S., & Chaudhuri, B. R. (2020). Factors shaping attitude of voters about celebrity politicians: Direct and indirect effects. Journal of Business Research, 109(April 2018), 210–220. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.12.009>
- [4] Dankwah, J. B., & Mensah, K. (2021). Political marketing and social media influence on young voters in Ghana. SN Social Sciences, 1(6), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-021-00151-4>
- [5] Dunn, W. (2018). Public Policy Analysis: An Integrated Approach Sixth Edition. Routledge
- [6] 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017.
- [7] Elin, L. (2003). The radicalization of Zeke Spier: How the Internet contributes to civic engagement and new forms of social capital. In M. McCarthy & M. D. Ayers (Eds.), Cyberactivism: Online activism in theory and practice (pp. 97–114). New York, NY: Routledge.
- [8] Ganduri, Rakesh & Reddy, E. & Reddy, Tomas. (2020). Social Media as a Marketing Tool for Political Purpose and Its Implications on Political Knowledge, Participation, and Interest. International Journal of Online Marketing. 10. 21-33. [10.4018/IJOM.2020070102](https://doi.org/10.4018/IJOM.2020070102).
- [9] Gil de Zúñiga, H., Molyneux, L., & Zheng, P. (2014). Social media, political expression, and political participation: Panel analysis of lagged and concurrent relationships. Journal of Communication, 64(4), 612–634. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12103>
- [10] Gil de Zúñiga, H., Veenstra, A., Vraga, E., & Shah, D. (2010). Digital democracy: Reimagining pathways to political participation. Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 7(1), 36–51. [doi:10.1080/19331680903316742](https://doi.org/10.1080/19331680903316742).
- [11] Huckfeldt, R. R., & Sprague, J. (1995). Citizens, politics and social communication: Information
- [12] and influence in an election campaign. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- [13] Hultman, M. (2019). Drivers and outcomes of political candidate image creation: The role of social media marketing. Psychology & Marketing, 36(12)
- [14] Jacoby, J. (2002). Stimulus-organism-response reconsidered: An evolutionary step in modeling (consumer) behavior. Journal of Consumer Psychology, 12(1), 51–57.
- [15] Jahan, T., Sabbir, M. M., Zenelaj, B., Gambarov, V., Kasirye, F., Hultman, M., Ulusoy, S., Oghazi, P., Kalsnes, B., & Matthes, J. (2019). Social Media and the Political Engagement of Young Adults: Between Mobilization and Distraction. International Journal of Politics, Public Policy and Social Works, 3(9), 6–22. <https://doi.org/10.35631/ijppsw.39003>
- [16] Lees-Marshment J (2019) Marketing scholars and political marketing: the pragmatic and principled reasons for why marketing academics should research the use of marketing in the political Arena. Custom Needs Solution, 6(3):41–48

- [17] Letcher, D. (2018). Online political participation, collective action events, and meaningful citizen engagement: social media use during mass protests. *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations*, 10(2), 70–75. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26802342>
- [18] Morrell, M. E. (2005). Deliberation, democratic decision-making and internal political efficacy. *Political Behavior*, 27(1), 49–69. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-005-3076-7>
- [19] Novak, J., Becker, M., Grey, F., & Mondardini, R. (2018). Citizen engagement and collective intelligence for participatory digital social innovation. In S. Hecker, M. Haklay, A. Bowser, Z. Makuch, J. Vogel, & A. Bonn (Eds.), *Citizen Science: Innovation in Open Science, Society and Policy* (pp. 124–145). UCL Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv550cf2.16>
- [20] Obar, J.A., Zube, P. & Lampe, C. (2012). Advocacy 2.0: An Analysis of How Advocacy Groups in the United States Perceive and Use Social Media as Tools for Facilitating Civic Engagement and Collective Action. *Journal of Information Policy*, 2012, Vol. 2 (2012), pp. 1-25
- [21] Tariq, R., Zolkepli, I. A., & Ahmad, M. (2022). Political Participation of Young Voters: Tracing Direct and Indirect Effects of Social Media and Political Orientations. *Social Sciences*, 11(2), 81. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11020081>