

## **Social Media and Elections: Facebook and TikTok's Influence on First-Time Voters' Preferences in Maasin City, Philippines**

**Gemar B. Mori<sup>1\*</sup>**

**The College of Maasin, Maasin City<sup>1</sup>, Philippines**

\*Corresponding Author: morigemabarola@gmail.com

Date Received: 6 February 2025 Revised: 3 June 2025 Accepted: 21 June 2025

**Paper Type:** Original Research

### **Abstract**

**Aim/Purpose:** Given the scarcity of studies that have specifically examined Facebook and TikTok's impact on youth political engagement, this exploration aimed to determine the frequency of use among first-time voters. It also examined their purposes for using Facebook and TikTok, as well as the level of influence these social media platforms have on their voting preferences.

**Introduction/Background:** In an era of digital campaigns and elections, this study examined the political preferences of first-time voters to address the research gap on the impact of Facebook and TikTok on youth political engagement. Political culture and Facebook/TikTok usage vary widely, underscoring the need for localized research to guide future studies and political communication in the Philippines. Few studies have examined these major social media platforms, especially for younger voters and political material.

This study revealed that many young voters believe that Facebook and TikTok influence their decisions, providing crucial quantitative data on first-time voters' political activity on Facebook and TikTok. Social media platforms educate, engage, and develop communities, and the study describes how material on these platforms has inspired young users to join in political debates and activities. TikTok's creative expression makes political discussions more accessible and engaging for younger viewers, increasing political understanding and mobilization. It also stresses the importance of media literacy programs to protect young people from misinformation. This study fills a research gap in youth engagement through social media and provides actionable insights for political communication techniques to reach young voters. This research is vital in addressing social media concerns and obstacles related to electoral campaigns.

**Methodology:** Descriptive survey research was used to measure 380 first-time voters' frequency of Facebook and TikTok use, along with the purpose and influence level of such usage on voting preferences. These first-time voters resided in Maasin City, Southern Leyte, Philippines, were registered to vote in automated midterm National and Local Elections, were 18 years old or above, and had active accounts on Facebook and TikTok. They were selected through a snowball sampling technique; identified respondents referred other qualified first-time voters. A structured online questionnaire through Google Forms was developed by reviewing the relevant literature. Five-point Likert-type scales measured the frequency and agreement of respondents with the study's objectives. Cronbach's alpha, computed to verify reliability, was .88 for the fifteen statements, indicating excellent internal consistency. The data were analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions and mean scores; MANOVA and Tukey post hoc tests were conducted to test the study's hypotheses.

**Findings:** First-time voters "always" used Facebook and TikTok; Facebook was "always" used as a communication medium, while TikTok was "often" used for this purpose. Both platforms frequently served as channels for social connection, civic involvement, and political participation. Facebook and TikTok were "influential" in the voting preferences of first-time voters. Moreover, evidence revealed statistically significant differences in how frequently Facebook (Wilks' Lambda = .664,  $F(380) = 21.23$ ,

$p < .0005$ ) and TikTok (Wilks' Lambda = .868,  $F(380) = 6.87$ ,  $p < .0005$ ) were used by first-time voters, the purpose of such usage, and its level of influence on their election preferences. Using Tukey's HSD post hoc test, the results underscored the significant role of more frequent Facebook use in influencing political preferences in elections, highlighting the importance of social media exposure and engagement for aspiring and career politicians.

**Contribution to Society:** The research empirically substantiated Agenda-Setting, Social Identity, and the Bandwagon Effect theories within contemporary electoral participation, thus enhancing existing knowledge. It showed that first-time voters were especially susceptible to social media's influence, emphasizing the need to understand how these platforms shaped political preferences and motivated new voters. Political campaigns could adapt material for younger audiences on Facebook and TikTok to increase civic engagement, election participation, and possibly lead to better informed and more interested voters. As information sources and political discourse platforms, social media can change young voters' engagement with democracy and behavior.

**Recommendations:** Since first-time voters are vital to electoral success, politicians seeking reelection or leadership roles should develop Facebook and TikTok tactics. National and municipal governments should collaborate on providing non-partisan voter information through Facebook and TikTok for first-time voters. Students and youth who are no longer in school must be taught to critically evaluate political content online by educational institutions and through community extension services.

**Research Limitations:** This study was conducted in Maasin City; regional cities and neighboring municipalities may yield responses that reflect their distinct socio-economic conditions, social media usage, and lifestyles. Gathering data via Google Forms may also have affected respondent answers. The survey may change or shift the perspectives of the concepts under study if deepened with qualitative responses. Referral sampling may also produce a biased sample that does not accurately represent the inclusion criteria.

**Future Research:** Future researchers could investigate the changing influence of Facebook and TikTok on electoral behavior, emphasizing the efficacy of engagement techniques on political campaigns and electoral success, and focusing on gender or specific age groups. Future studies on the long-term impacts of social media on youth political behavior should also be initiated.

**Keywords:** *Philippine elections, first-time voter preferences, social media*

## Introduction

Social media is increasingly shaping global elections, influencing voter behavior and political discourse; the use of platforms like Facebook and TikTok has altered the political activities of countries. Studies have shown that while social media platforms can increase political awareness, they can also be used to spread misinformation, thus weakening electoral trust (Allcott et al., 2024). Social media platforms influence campaign strategy and younger voters as elections approach (Ausat, 2023).

Since 2020, Facebook and TikTok have had a growing impact on worldwide elections. TikTok is a powerful tool for political engagement among younger generations, notably Generation Z. TikTok outperforms other social media platforms in shaping political beliefs and motivating users to participate in online and traditional political activities (Karimi & Fox, 2023). According to Cervi and Marín-Lladó (2021), Spanish political parties have relied on it for unilateral promotion of politicization, and Peruvian candidates exclusively used it for politainment (Cervi et al., 2023). TikTok users organized to produce content on racial justice and climate change during the 2020 U.S. presidential election, demonstrating the platform's ability to combine entertainment and politics (Sugihartono, 2024).

On the other hand, investigations have found that Facebook has struggled to control misleading political adverts, especially during crucial election seasons (Global Witness, 2022; Ortutay, 2024). Political advertising produces emotions which are sometimes commercialized, and may result in fake news on Facebook (Cano-Orón et al., 2021). Since Facebook advertising is widely employed in political

campaigns, modern communication strategies increasingly rely on it, which presents intriguing questions regarding the need for social media disinformation regulation (Cano-Orón et al., 2021). The interaction between these platforms and electoral processes shows that they can change political discourse and engagement worldwide (Dad & Khan, 2023).

Facebook and TikTok have changed Philippine politics and voter behavior, especially during the 2022 presidential election. Facebook, already a major political medium, was used for disinformation efforts. This strategy became popular under former President Rodrigo Duterte and has continued under incumbent President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. Research shows that hired trolls and influencers drive much political communication on social media, fostering misinformation (Arugay, 2022). TikTok, which excels at reaching younger voters, was used to sanitize the Marcos family's history to appeal to users who had not lived under martial law (Pierson, 2022). According to experts, this combination of channels promotes deception, hurting conventional media and making media literacy initiatives harder (Asia Centre, 2022; Ausat, 2023). The 2022 elections showed how social media algorithms can propagate misinformation, influencing public opinion and elections (Arugay, 2022; Quitzon, 2021).

Nevertheless, Facebook and TikTok significantly influence young voters in the Philippines by enhancing political engagement and awareness among Generation (Gen) Z. A study found that 81% of Filipino Gen Zers prefer social media for political discussions, with platforms like TikTok providing quick, engaging content that addresses social issues and motivates political participation (Cadayday et al., 2024). TikTok's format allows for creative expression, enabling users to share their views on political matters in a relatable manner, thereby fostering community engagement (Karimi & Fox, 2023; Ngilangil, 2022). Furthermore, 70% of young voters reported that Facebook influenced their voting decisions, highlighting the platform's role in shaping political attitudes through trusted content and peer interactions (Arugay, 2022). These platforms not only serve as spaces for information dissemination, but also empower young Filipinos to actively participate in the democratic process.

Understanding the influence of Facebook and TikTok on first-time voters is key to understanding youth politics and winning political campaigns. These platforms dominate the digital world and transmit political information, affecting voting preferences. Social media can help first-time voters who lack electoral experience become politically active. As Facebook and TikTok become increasingly incorporated into first-time voters' civic life, evaluating their consequences can indicate how youth participate in democracy. These linkages illuminate the electoral climate and offer ways to educate and engage future generations.

## **Literature Review**

Reviewing literature and studies on Facebook and TikTok's influence on first-time voters' political preferences is essential to understand how these dominant social media platforms shape youth political behavior in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Extracting information about Facebook and TikTok is crucial because they serve as primary venues for online election campaigns, offering unique content formats and algorithms that affect political information exposure and engagement among first-time voters, who are a critical demographic for democratic participation. Anchoring this review with theories such as Agenda-Setting, Social Identity, and the Bandwagon Effect provides a robust framework to analyze how these platforms influence voters' perceptions, group affiliations, and the tendency to conform to popular political trends.

Despite growing research on TikTok's political impact globally and Facebook's longstanding role in political communication, there remains a notable gap in studies specifically addressing these dynamics within the Philippine context, where political culture and social media usage patterns may differ significantly, highlighting the need for localized research in this area. This research gap underscores the importance of this study, which reviews existing literature and empirical studies and informs political communication strategies in the Philippines.

### ***Theoretical Underpinnings***

The influence of social media on voters' preferences during elections has been the subject of extensive research, leading to the development of several theories that explain this phenomenon. One key theory is the Agenda-Setting Theory, which posits that media outlets, including social media platforms, shape public perception by highlighting specific issues while downplaying others (Neuman et al., 2014; Maxwell & Donald, 1972). This selective exposure can shift voter priorities and preferences as they become more aware of topics emphasized online (Neuman et al., 2014). For instance, a recent study indicated that social media platforms amplify partisan messages, which can significantly alter voter perceptions and encourage alignment with particular political parties or candidates based on the issues that dominate online discussions (Fujiwara et al., 2024).

Social Identity Theory posits that individuals draw a portion of their identity from their affiliations with various groups, including political associations (Hogg, 2016). Social media fosters conditions that enable users to interact with like-minded people, reinforcing their opinions and preferences through echo chambers. This effect may result in heightened polarization, as users predominantly encounter content that corroborates their perspectives, while opposing viewpoints are relegated. Studies indicate that this process reinforces established preferences and can galvanize voters to engage in elections driven by group identity and shared values (Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2019).

Lastly, the Bandwagon Effect Theory describes how individuals are influenced by the perceived popularity of a candidate or idea, often seen in social media trends. Users may feel compelled to conform to this majority view as they see others expressing support for a particular candidate or political position, thereby altering their preferences (Henshel & Johnston, 1987). This effect is particularly pronounced in environments where engagement metrics, such as 'likes' and 'shares', serve as indicators of popularity, creating a feedback loop that can rapidly shift public opinion (Alhaimer, 2023; Carney, 2022).

Collectively, these ideas clarify that social media functions not just as a medium for information distribution, but also actively influences voter preferences through exposure, identity reinforcement, and social influence mechanisms.

### ***Facebook and TikTok as Social Media Platforms***

Facebook and TikTok exemplify two divergent paradigms within the social media environment, each possessing distinct advantages and user demographics. As of late 2024, Facebook continues to be the most extensively utilized platform worldwide, with over 3 billion active members (Ali, 2024). Its wide reach across various age demographics renders it an effective instrument for marketers aiming to engage a large audience (Sajid et al., 2024). TikTok has swiftly garnered popularity, boasting almost 1.69 billion users, especially among younger demographics (Goldman, 2024). The algorithm facilitates the dissemination of viral material and fosters creative expression via short-form videos. The elevated engagement level establishes TikTok as a vibrant platform for trendsetting and influencer marketing, attracting marketers that aim to reach younger customers, who prefer interactive and visually stimulating content (Kemp, 2024).

In the Philippines, social media usage is particularly pronounced, with the country ranking fourth worldwide in terms of social media penetration (Kemp, 2024). As of 2024, Filipinos spent an average of nearly three hours daily on social media platforms, significantly higher than the global average (Kemp, 2024). Facebook continues to dominate the landscape, with around 100 million users accessing it regularly (Ali, 2024). At the same time, TikTok has emerged as the fastest-growing platform, gaining over 43 million users aged 18 and above in 2023 alone (Zeng & Kaye, 2022). The rise of social commerce is notable, with platforms like Facebook Marketplace facilitating direct sales to consumers, while TikTok's engaging format enables brands to connect with younger audiences effectively. The strong community-oriented culture in the Philippines drives this engagement, as social media serves not only as a source of entertainment, but also as a vital tool for communication among families and friends, especially those separated by distance due to overseas work opportunities (Kemp, 2024).

### ***Online Campaigns for Elections***

Political candidates increasingly leverage Facebook and TikTok to engage voters and shape their campaigns. Facebook remains a dominant force in political advertising, allowing candidates to run targeted ads that reach specific demographics. Meta, the parent company of Facebook, emphasizes transparency and equal opportunity in political advertising, enabling smaller parties to participate in the electoral process. This strategy is complemented by an ads library that allows users to see the political ads being run, which aims to enhance accountability and trust in the platform's political discourse (Locus, 2024). However, the effectiveness of these ads can be undermined by the spread of misinformation, as evidenced by investigations revealing that both Facebook and TikTok have struggled with moderating misleading content in political ads (Ortutay, 2024; Global Witness, 2024).

Conversely, TikTok has emerged as a powerful tool for reaching younger voters. Political efforts using TikTok to target a younger audience through digital activism are crucial (Moir, 2023). The platform's unique format allows for creative and engaging content that can quickly disseminate political messages. Studies indicate that TikTok can significantly influence political attitudes and motivate users to participate in online and traditional political engagement forms (Karimi & Fox, 2023; Chen, 2022). Despite its potential, TikTok has faced criticism for its political content handling; it has banned paid political advertisements, but has still allowed misleading information to circulate through user-generated content (Ortutay, 2024; Zamora-Medina et al., 2023). As TikTok grows in popularity, its role in shaping political narratives and mobilizing young voters will likely expand, making it a critical battleground for future campaigns (Karimi & Fox, 2023).

### ***First-Time Voters of the Twenty-First Century***

First-time voters in the 21st century exhibit distinct qualities shaped by their unique social and technological environments. This demographic is characterized by a high level of engagement with social media platforms, which serve as primary sources of political information and community interaction. Platforms like Facebook and TikTok have become instrumental in mobilizing young voters, with a significant percentage relying on these channels for election-related content (Abdu et al., 2017; Alizen et al., 2024; McClain, 2024). Kopti (2023) found that 68% of first-time voters in the 2018 United States elections obtained information from social media, compared to only 23% who relied on traditional methods. This shift highlights a generational preference for digital engagement over conventional media, leading to increased political participation among youth. Furthermore, the accessibility of information on social media has empowered young voters to express their political opinions and engage in civic activities, fostering a culture of activism and informed voting behavior (CIRCLE, 2023; Foster & Markiewicz, 2023).

Social media's influence extends beyond mere information dissemination. Facebook and TikTok actively shape the preferences of young voters. The decentralized nature of news delivery on these platforms allows users to curate their political content, leading to a more personalized and diverse news experience (Foster & Markiewicz, 2023). The online environment enhances political literacy and encourages discussions around critical issues, making politics more relatable to young audiences (Leuci, 2024). Notably, TikTok has emerged as a powerful tool for political engagement, with creative content that resonates with younger users, often driving viral movements and encouraging voter registration campaigns (CIRCLE, 2023). However, this landscape is not without challenges. Concerns about misinformation and the overwhelming volume of political content can lead to fatigue among users. As such, while social media catalyzes increased voter turnout among first-time voters, it also necessitates critical engagement with the information shared within these digital spaces (Leuci, 2024).

Hence, to systematically examine these relationships, this study tested the following hypotheses, which assess whether the frequency of Facebook and TikTok use significantly affected first-time voters' purpose of use and voting preferences.

## Hypotheses

$H_{01}$ : No significant differences exist between the frequency of Facebook use by first-time voters and the mean scores of their purpose of use, or Facebook's level of influence on voting preferences.

$H_{02}$ : No significant differences exist between the frequency of TikTok use by first-time voters and the mean scores of their purpose of use, or TikTok's level of influence on their voting preferences.

## Methodology

### Research Design

Descriptive survey research is crucial in understanding populations and their characteristics, providing valuable insights for decision-making and policy development. In this study, this design was used to measure first-time voters' Facebook and TikTok use, the purpose of such use, and its level of influence on their voting preferences.

### Population and Sample

The population and sample consisted of first-time voters aged 18 years or above who resided in Maasin City, Southern Leyte, Eastern Visayas, Philippines. First-time voters may have participated in the 2023 Barangay (village) Elections, but not in the country's upcoming automated midterm National and Local Elections. They had active accounts on Facebook and TikTok. When the inclusion criteria were met, respondents were selected through referral sampling. Respondents identified by the researcher were asked to refer and recruit other first-time voters who met the inclusion criteria, resulting in reaching the target sample size, which was 380.

### Research Instrument

A structured online questionnaire through Google Forms was developed by reviewing relevant works of literature. Five-point Likert-type scales measured the frequency and agreement of respondents with the study's objectives. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: first, the use and purpose of Facebook and TikTok among first-time voters, and second, the levels of influence exerted by Facebook and TikTok content on their voting preferences. Cronbach's alpha was computed to verify the instrument's reliability; the score for 15 statements was .88, which reflected excellent internal consistency.

## Results

### Frequency of Social Media Use

Table 1 displays the use of Facebook and TikTok by first-time voters through a frequency distribution.

**Table 1** Facebook and TikTok Use (N = 380)

	Facebook		TikTok	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Always (online)	208	55	223	59
Several times a day	100	26	101	26
Once a day	26	7	30	8
One or two times a week	17	4	23	6
Rarely	29	8	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

Facebook and TikTok play a significant role in the daily activities of first-time voters. A majority of first-time voters "always" use Facebook and TikTok, as shown in Table 1. A smaller number use both platforms "several times a day". However, the least frequent Facebook use is "one or two times a week", while "rarely" was the least frequent category for TikTok use.

### **Purpose of Social Media Use**

Table 2 shows the purpose of Facebook and TikTok use by first-time voters in terms of means and their interpretations.

**Table 2 Purpose of Facebook and TikTok (N = 380)**

	Facebook		TikTok	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
Communication Medium	4.28	Always	4.03	Often
Social Connection	4.06	Often	3.78	Often
Civic Involvement	3.75	Often	3.77	Often
Political Participation	3.78	Often	3.75	Often
All of the Above	4.11	Often	3.95	Often
Aggregate Mean	<b>4.00</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>Often</b>

*Legend. Always (4.21–5.00); Often (3.41–4.20); Sometimes (2.61–3.40); Rarely (1.81–2.60); Never (1.00–1.80).*

Table 2 reveals that first-time voters expressly agreed that they “always” use Facebook as a communication medium. This can mean they use it to converse with friends and/or reach out to strangers for discussion, inquiry, and the like. Facebook users have exhibited a greater propensity to share, like, and comment on interactive party posts (Koc-Michalska et al., 2021). These findings are crucial for comprehending the mechanisms by which social media campaigns affect voters and election results, as follower responses, especially sharing, enhance the exposure of party communications through indirect or two-step communication flows (Koc-Michalska et al., 2021). Parties can ascertain the elements of a ‘successful’ Facebook campaign and enhance communication reach based on such results (Koc-Michalska et al., 2021).

However, the majority of first-time voters “often” use TikTok as a medium of communication. This shows how TikTok has penetrated the communication landscape, enabling first-time voters to connect effectively with political material, fostering a more politically informed and active youth demographic. Moreover, in contemporary digital politics, identity-related matters and emotional appeal attributes may be vital during electoral campaigns as parties vie for voter attention (Blassnig et al., 2021).

First-time voters “often” employ both platforms for social connection, civic involvement, and political participation. This conveys their purpose of organizing and posting photos, videos, and/or other files in order to boost their personal egos and/or gain emotional support among friends or followers (social connection). Facebook and TikTok help first-time voters invite possible collaborations for civic welfare content or projects, encourage greater participation of online community members (civic involvement), and express political opinions on current trends and issues and/or assert political influence online (political participation). The tailored political content on these platforms enhances political awareness among youth, promotes community engagement, and enables them to connect with peers and articulate their views more freely (Ausat, 2023; Yahaya et al., 2024).

### **Social Media Influence on Voting Preferences**

Table 3 presents the agreement of first-time voters about the levels of influence of Facebook and TikTok on their voting preferences through their coded responses, mean scores, and interpretations.

Facebook and TikTok are “influential” on first-time voters’ preferences, as shown in Table 3. First-time voters agreed that the content of these social media platforms exerted an influence on their political preferences in the context of elections, thus motivating them to favor one candidate over another. Their engagement with social media platforms, trust in news disseminated via social media, political party activity on these platforms, the prevalence of false political news, and optimism toward the current political climate influence political decision-making (Rathi et al., 2021). A solitary ‘Facebook like’ can forecast voting behavior, illustrating the capacity of social media data to anticipate electoral results (Yahaya et al., 2024). TikTok influences, engages, educates, and entertains the young through dialogue, news, and engagement persistently (Karimi & Fox, 2023). As Ausat (2023) claimed, social media, like Facebook and TikTok, facilitate the dissemination of knowledge and the discourse

on subjects that influence society. These platforms influence public opinion and impact the views and choices of individuals. While social media plays a role, other factors (e.g., family, peers, and traditional media) may also contribute to voting preferences.

**Table 3** Facebook and TikTok's Level of Influence (N = 380)

Indicators	Facebook		TikTok	
	Mean	Inter.	Mean	Inter.
Its political content is more engaging than traditional news sources.	3.87	Influential	3.88	Influential
My voting preferences have been influenced by the political messages I encountered in it.	4.04	Influential	3.80	Influential
I often rely on its influencers to provide information about political candidates and issues.	3.94	Influential	3.88	Influential
The entertaining nature of its content makes me more interested in political topics.	3.98	Influential	3.77	Influential
It significantly impacts young voters' decisions like me.	3.82	Influential	3.78	Influential
Seeing friends and peers discuss politics in it influences my political opinions.	3.77	Influential	3.67	Influential
It helps me understand the political landscape better than other social media platforms.	3.91	Influential	3.82	Influential
Its political advertisements make me more likely to vote in elections.	3.84	Influential	3.74	Influential
Its algorithm promotes content that aligns with my political beliefs.	3.84	Influential	3.74	Influential
I have changed my mind about a political issue after viewing its content.	3.82	Influential	3.77	Influential
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>Influential</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>Influential</b>

*Legend.* Response (Res.): Strongly Agree (5); Agree (4); Slightly Agree (3); Disagree (2); Strongly Disagree (1); Interpretation (Inter.): Highly Influential (4.21–5.00); Influential (3.41–4.20); Somewhat Influential (2.61–3.40); Slightly Influential (1.81–2.60); Not at All Influential (1.00–1.80).

#### ***Difference of Means for Frequency of Facebook Use by First-Time Voters, Their Purpose of Use, Its Level of Influence on Their Voting Preferences***

Table 4 shows the differences in means of purpose and level of influence on the use of Facebook using a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA).

**Table 4** Multivariate Tests of Means of Use of Facebook, Purpose, Level of Influence

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Wilks' Lambda	.062	2828.618	2.000	374.000	.000
Facebook	Wilks' Lambda	.664	21.227	8.000	748.000	.000

A One-Way MANOVA test was conducted to determine if there were differences in the frequency of Facebook use among first-time voters, their usage purpose, and its level of influence on their voting preferences. The multivariate tests revealed a significant effect on the frequency of Facebook use on the combined dependent variables (Wilks' Lambda = .664,  $F(380) = 21.23$ ,  $p < .0005$ ). This result means that there were statistically significant differences between the frequency of Facebook use, the purpose of Facebook use, and its level of influence on their voting preferences.



**Table 5** *Post Hoc Test for Significant Difference Between Purpose and Influence Level of Facebook*

Dependent Variable	(I) Facebook	(J) Facebook	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
FP_Ms	Rarely	Once or twice a week	-.140	.205	.952
		Once a day	-.724*	.181	.001
		Several times a day	-.990*	.142	.000
		Always	-1.476*	.133	.000
	Once or twice a week	Rarely	.14	.205	.952
		Once a day	-.577*	.209	.048
		Several times a day	-.843*	.176	.000
		Always	-1.328*	.169	.000
	Once a day	Rarely	.724*	.181	.001
		Once or twice a week	.577*	.209	.048
		Several times a day	-.266	.148	.375
		Always	-.752*	.140	.000
	Several times a day	Rarely	.990*	.142	.000
		Once or twice a week	.843*	.177	.000
		Once a day	.266	.148	.375
		Always	-.486*	.082	.000
	Always	Rarely	1.476*	.133	.000
		Once or twice a week	1.328*	.169	.000
		Once a day	.752*	.140	.000
		Several times a day	.486*	.082	.000
FLI_Ms	Rarely	Once or twice a week	-.003	.230	1.000
		Once a day	-.437	.204	.204
		Several times a day	-.533*	.160	.008
		Always	-.906*	.150	.000
	Once or twice a week	Rarely	.003	.230	1.000
		Once a day	-.434	.235	.349
		Several times a day	-.531	.198	.059
		Always	-.903*	.190	.000
	Once a day	Rarely	.437	.204	.204
		Once or twice a week	.434	.235	.349
		Several times a day	-.096	.166	.978
		Always	-.469*	.157	.025
	Several times a day	Rarely	.533*	.159	.008
		Once or twice a week	.531	.198	.059
		Once a day	.096	.166	.978
		Always	-.373*	.092	.001
	Always	Rarely	.906*	.150	.000
		Once or twice a week	.903*	.190	.000
		Once a day	.469*	.157	.025
		Several times a day	.373*	.092	.001

*Legend.* FP\_Ms means Facebook Purpose Means, FLI\_Ms means Facebook's Level of Influence Means.

Using Tukey's HSD post hoc test, the frequencies of Facebook usage which had significant differences in the purpose and level of influence of Facebook could be precisely identified. Table 5 above shows that among first-time voters who use Facebook "Always", the usage purpose was statistically significantly different and higher than for the following categories of users: "Rarely" ( $p < .0005$ ), "Once or twice a week" ( $p < .0005$ ), "Once a day" ( $p < .0005$ ) and "Several times a day" ( $p < .0005$ ). The table also shows that among those who use Facebook "Rarely", their usage purpose was statistically different and lower among those who used it "Once a day" ( $p = .001$ ) or "Several times a day" ( $p < .0005$ ), though not for usage "Once or twice a week" ( $p = .0952$ ). The purpose of Facebook use was also significantly different between those who used it "Once or twice a week" or "Once a day" ( $p = .048$ ), and those who used it "Once or twice a week" and "Several times a day" ( $p < .0005$ ).

Moreover, the level of Facebook influence on the voting preferences of first-time voters who use Facebook “Always” was significantly different and higher than those who use it “Rarely” ( $p < .0005$ ), “Once or twice a week” ( $p < .0005$ ), “Once a day” ( $p = .025$ ), or “Several times a day” ( $p = .001$ ). The results also showed a significant difference in the level of Facebook influence between those who use Facebook “Rarely” and “Several times a day” ( $p < .008$ ).

The results inferred that the most significant differences can be found between “Always” and all the other frequencies of Facebook use for the dependent variables: the purpose of Facebook use, and the level of influence of Facebook on voting preferences. These findings underscore the significant role of more frequent Facebook use in developing purposes for Facebook use and influencing political preferences in elections, highlighting the importance of social media exposure and engagement for aspiring and reelection-seeking politicians.

#### ***Difference of Means for Frequency of TikTok Use by First-Time Voters, Their Purpose of Use, and Its Level of Influence on Their Voting Preferences***

Table 6 shows the difference in means of purpose and level of influence on the use of TikTok using MANOVA through SPSS.

**Table 6** *Multivariate Tests of Means of Purpose and Level of Influence to the Use of TikTok*

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Wilks' Lambda	.226	640.173 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	374.000	.000
TikTok	Wilks' Lambda	.868	6.870 <sup>b</sup>	8.000	748.000	.000

A One-Way MANOVA test was conducted to determine if there were differences in the frequency of TikTok use among first-time voters, their usage purpose, and its level of influence on their voting preferences. The multivariate tests revealed a significant effect of the frequency of TikTok use on the combined dependent variables (Wilks' Lambda = .868,  $F(380) = 6.87$ ,  $p < .0005$ ). This outcome means that there were statistically significant differences between the frequency of TikTok use, the purpose of TikTok use, and its level of influence on their voting preferences.

Tukey's HSD post hoc test can specifically identify which frequencies of TikTok usage significantly affected its usage purpose and level of influence. Table 7 shows that the purpose of TikTok use by first-time voters who used TikTok “Always” was statistically significantly different and higher than among the following user categories: “Once or twice a week” ( $p < .0005$ ), “Several times a day” ( $p < .003$ ), “Rarely” ( $p < .014$ ), and “Once a day” ( $p < .023$ ). It also significantly differed between “Once or twice a week” and “Several times a day” ( $p = .003$ ).

Furthermore, the level of TikTok influence on the voting preferences of first-time voters who use TikTok “Once or twice a week” was significantly different and higher than those who use TikTok “Several times a day” ( $p < .001$ ) and “Always” ( $p < .0005$ ).

The results indicated that the most substantial differences existed between “Always” and all other frequencies of TikTok usage for the goal of TikTok engagement. Nevertheless, regarding TikTok's impact on voting preferences, individuals who utilized the platform “Once or twice a week” exhibited the most pronounced variation. These findings highlight how increased TikTok usage may affect the rationales for its use. Nonetheless, the impact on political preferences during elections exhibited minor variations based on TikTok usage frequency. Nevertheless, this underscores the significance of social media visibility and interaction for aspiring and incumbent politicians seeking reelection.

**Table 7** *Post Hoc Test for Significant Difference between Purpose and Influence Level of TikTok*

Dependent Variable	(I)TikTok	(J) TikTok	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
TP_Ms	Rarely	Once or twice a week	-.470	.492	.875
		Once a day	-1.013	.486	.228
		Several times a day	-1.137	.470	.112
		Always	-1.483*	.466	.014
	Once or twice a week	Rarely	.470	.492	.875
		Once a day	-.544	.222	.105
		Several times a day	-.667*	.185	.003
		Always	-1.013*	.176	.000
	Once a day	Rarely	1.013	.486	.228
		Once or twice a week	.544	.222	.105
		Several times a day	-.123	.167	.947
		Always	-.469*	.1560	.023
	Several times a day	Rarely	1.137	.470	.112
		Once or twice a week	.667*	.185	.003
		Once a day	.123	.167	.947
		Always	-.346*	.096	.003
	Always	Rarely	1.483*	.467	.014
		Once or twice a week	1.013*	.176	.000
		Once a day	.469*	.156	.023
		Several times a day	.346*	.096	.003
TLI_Ms	Rarely	Once or twice a week	-.023	.495	1.000
		Once a day	-.540	.488	.803
		Several times a day	-.757	.472	.497
		Always	-.916	.468	.290
	Once or twice a week	Rarely	.023	.495	1.000
		Once a day	-.517	.223	.143
		Several times a day	-.737*	.186	.001
		Always	-.893*	.177	.000
	Once a day	Rarely	.540	.488	.803
		Once or twice a week	.517	.223	.143
		Several times a day	-.217	.168	.695
		Always	-.376	.157	.117
	Several times a day	Rarely	.757	.472	.497
		Once or twice a week	.734*	.186	.001
		Once a day	.217	.168	.695
		Always	-.160	.097	.465
	Always	Rarely	.917	.468	.290
		Once or twice a week	.893*	.177	.000
		Once a day	.376	.157	.117
		Several times a day	.160	.097	.465

Legend. TP\_Ms means TikTok Purpose Means, TLI\_Ms means TikTok's Level of Influence Means.

## Discussion

First-time voters acknowledged Facebook and TikTok as influential in shaping their electoral preferences. They affirmed the influence of social media in affecting their political preferences, validating the expanded predictions of theories about Agenda-Setting, Social Identity, and Bandwagon Effect. The results elucidated the prevalent utilization of these platforms as means of communication, social connectivity, civic engagement, and political participation. Notably, Facebook and TikTok exerted statistically significant differences on the purpose and level of influence on first-time voters who used these platforms.

Facebook and TikTok are recognized as significant platforms, and their frequent usage indicates that these social media platforms function not just as information sources, but also as essential arenas for civic engagement and political conversation. This research demonstrated that first-time voters are

especially vulnerable to social media influence, perhaps resulting in a more polarized and engaged electorate. These platforms enable swift distribution of information, frequently in a more accessible format for younger users, so they greatly influence voter mobilization initiatives (Cadayday et al., 2024). First-time voters are not simply passive consumers, but become active participants. This dynamic suggests that social media might effectively engage first-time voters by delivering customized information that is aligned with their values and interests, hence increasing their participation in the democratic process (Kopti, 2023). It also reflects the need to heighten their social media literacy to eliminate their acceptance of misinformation and the spread of disinformation, as Facebook and TikTok have failed to block harmful disinformation, according to Global Witness (2024).

Social media, particularly Facebook and TikTok, play a role in shaping the voting preferences of first-time voters. The statistically significant differences established indicate that the frequency of use on these platforms is not just a matter of engagement, but influences the purposes for which first-time voters utilize these platforms, be it for information dissemination, social interaction, or entertainment. As first-time voters increasingly turn to these platforms, the implications for electoral engagement are profound (Yahaya et al., 2024). Tailored content designed to inform and educate young voters can significantly affect their political perceptions and participation. This implies the importance of Facebook's and TikTok's role for aspiring politicians through their digital political campaigns, though it does not automatically translate to their political success (Chen, 2022). By recognizing these platforms as powerful tools for political communication, candidates and campaigners can develop strategies that effectively engage first-time voters, potentially transforming their interactions into informed voting behaviors that enhance democratic participation. This emphasizes the need for stakeholders in the electoral process to leverage social media effectively to reach and resonate with first-time voters.

### **Conclusion, Recommendations, and Suggestions for Future Studies**

Politicians pursuing reelection and those aspiring to political leadership must devise strategies for utilizing Facebook and TikTok in their campaigns, as first-time voters play a crucial part in their electoral success. Additionally, national and municipal governments should employ Facebook and TikTok to advance non-partisan voter information initiatives for those who will vote for the first time.

Educational institutions should incorporate and enhance social media literacy, instructing students and out-of-school youth through community extension services about how to critically evaluate online political content. Future researchers should investigate the changing influence of Facebook and TikTok on electoral behavior, emphasizing the effects on various demographics, and the efficacy of engagement techniques in political campaigns and electoral success. Up-country cities and municipalities may contribute different perspectives, given their distinct socio-economic conditions and social media use. Another study focusing on either a specific gender or age group could also be conducted. More studies on the long-term impact of social media on youth political behavior may be initiated in the future.

### **References**

- Abdu, S. D., Mohamad, B., & Muda, S. (2017). Youth online political participation: The role of Facebook use, interactivity, quality information and political interest. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 33, 00080. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20173300080>
- Alhaimer, R. S. (2023). Unveiling the digital persona image: The influence of social media on political candidates' brand personality and voter behaviour in Kuwait. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02420-4>
- Ali, M. (2024, February 4). *Facebook turns 20: How the social media giant grew to 3 billion users*. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/4/facebook-turns-20-how-the-social-media-giant-grew-to-3-billion-users>
- Alizen, A. N., Priamarizki, A., Gendiswardani, R. D. A., Nihru, S. S. N., & Akbar, R. A. M. (2024). *From "FYP" to ballot box: TikTok and Indonesia's 2024 general elections*. Policy Report, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. [https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/PR240626\\_From-FYP-to-Ballot-Box.pdf](https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/PR240626_From-FYP-to-Ballot-Box.pdf)

- Allcott, H., Gentzkow, M., Mason, W., Wilkins, A., Barberá, P., Brown, T., Cisneros, J. C., Crespo-Tenorio, A., Dimmery, D., Freelon, D., González-Bailón, S., Guess, A. M., Kim, Y. M., Lazer, D., Malhotra, N., Moehler, D., Nair-Desai, S., Barj, H. N. E., Nyhan, B., ... & Tucker, J. A. (2024). The effects of Facebook and Instagram on the 2020 election: A deactivation experiment. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 121(21), e2321584121. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2321584121>
- Arugay, A. A. (2022, April 14). *Stronger social media influence in the 2022 Philippine elections*. Fulcrum. <https://fulcrum.sg/stronger-social-media-influence-in-the-2022-philippine-elections/>
- Asia Centre. (2022, May 5). *Disinformation winner of 2022 Philippines presidential election*. <https://asiacentre.org/disinformation-winner-of-2022-philippines-presidential-election/>
- Ausat, A. M. A. (2023). The role of social media in shaping public opinion and its influence on economic decisions. *Technology and Society Perspectives (TACIT)*, 1(1), 35–44. <https://doi.org/10.61100/tacit.v1i1.37>
- Blassnig, S., Udris, L., Staender, A., & Vogler, D. (2021). Popularity on Facebook during election campaigns: An analysis of issues and emotions in parties' online communication. *International Journal of Communication*, 15, 4399–4419. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/17040/3573>
- Cadayday, B. A. R., Jimenez, D. M., & Boiser, S. M. (2024). Role of social media in the political landscape and voting decisions of Gen Zs in the Philippines. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 8(12), 720–730. <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRIS.2024.8120059>
- Cano-Orón, L., Calvo, D., López García, G., & Baviera, T. (2021). Disinformation in Facebook ads in the 2019 Spanish general election campaigns. *Media and Communication*, 9(1), 217–228. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v9i1.3335>
- Carney, K. (2022). The effect of social media on voters: Experimental evidence from an Indian election. *Job Market Paper*, 2022, 1-44. [https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/carney/files/carney\\_jmp.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/carney/files/carney_jmp.pdf)
- Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). (2023, July 18). *How media and supportive local institutions can grow voters*. <https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/how-media-and-supportive-local-institutions-can-grow-voters>
- Cervi, L., & Marín-Lladó, C. (2021). What are political parties doing on TikTok? The Spanish case. *Profesional De La información*, 30(4), e300403. <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2021.jul.03>
- Cervi, L., Tejedor, S., & Blesa, F. G. (2023). TikTok and political communication: The latest frontier of politainment? A case study. *Media and Communication*, 11(2), 203–217. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6390>
- Chen, Y. (2022). Study of political campaign on TikTok. *BCP Education and Psychology*, 7, 310–313. <https://doi.org/10.54691/bcpep.v7i.2680>
- Dad, N., & Khan, S. (2023). Reconstructing elections in a digital world. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 30(3), 473–496. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10220461.2023.2265886>
- Foster, O., & Markiewicz, P. (2023, May 15). *How younger voters will impact elections: How legacy media and social media impact old and young voters*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-younger-voters-will-impact-elections-how-legacy-media-and-social-media-impact-old-and-young-voters/>
- Fujiwara, T., Müller, K., & Schwarz, C. (2024). The effect of social media on elections: Evidence from the United States. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 22(3), 1495–1539. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeea/jvad058>
- Global Witness. (2022, October 21). *TikTok and Facebook fail to detect election disinformation in the US, while YouTube succeeds*. Global Witness Org, 21. <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/digital-threats/tiktok-and-facebook-fail-detect-election-disinformation-us-while-youtube-succeeds/>
- Global Witness. (2024, October 17). *Before US election, TikTok and Facebook fail to block harmful disinformation*. <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/digital-threats/us-election-tiktok-and-facebook-fail-block-harmful-disinformation-youtube-succeeds/>
- Goldman, J. (2024, January 17). TikTok gains favor among Gen Z over Google for searches. *EMARKETER*. <https://www.emarketer.com/content/gen-z-prefers-tiktok-google-searches>
- Henshel, R. L., & Johnston, W. (1987). The emergence of bandwagon effects: A theory. *Sociological Quarterly*, 28(4), 493–511. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.1987.tb00308.x>
- Hogg, M. A. (2016). Social identity theory In S. McKeown, R. Haji, & N. Ferguson (eds), *Understanding peace and conflict through social identity theory* (pp. 3–17). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29869-6\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29869-6_1)
- Karimi, K., & Fox, R. (2023). Scrolling, sipping, and mobilizing: TikTok's influence over generation Z's political behavior. *The Journal of Social Media in Society*, 12(1), 181–208. <https://www.thejsms.org/index.php/JSMS/article/view/1251/627>
- Kemp, S. (2024, February 21). *Digital 2024: The Philippines*. DataReportal. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-philippines>

- Kemp, S. (2024, January 31). *The time we spend on social media*. DataReportal. <https://datareportal.com/social-media-users>
- Kleinnijenhuis, J., Van Hoof, A. M., & Van Atteveldt, W. (2019). The combined effects of mass media and social media on political perceptions and preferences. *Journal of Communication*, 69(6), 650–673. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqz038>
- Koc-Michalska, K., Lilleker, D. G., Michalski, T., Gibson, R., & Zajac, J. M. (2021). Facebook affordances and citizen engagement during elections: European political parties and their benefit from online strategies? *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 18(2), 180–193. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2020.1837707>
- Kopti, A. M. (2023). How can social media improve youth voter engagement? *Honors Projects*. 350. [https://digitalcommons.bridgewater.edu/honors\\_projects/350](https://digitalcommons.bridgewater.edu/honors_projects/350)
- Leuci, T. (2024). *The impact of social media on political communication and voting behaviour: A historical analysis and case studies* [Bachelor's degree thesis, Luiss Guido Carli, Italy]. <https://tesi.luiss.it/id/eprint/40224>
- Locus, S. (2024, October 22). *TikTok, Google to ban paid political ads for Eleksyon 2025*. GMA Integrated News. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/924497/tiktok-facebook-ban-paid-political-ads/story/>
- Maxwell, M., & Donald, S. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187. [https://fbaum.unc.edu/teaching/PLSC541\\_Fall06/McCombs%20and%20Shaw%20POQ%201972.pdf](https://fbaum.unc.edu/teaching/PLSC541_Fall06/McCombs%20and%20Shaw%20POQ%201972.pdf)
- Mcclain, C. (2024, August 20). *About half of TikTok users under 30 say they use it to keep up with politics, news*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/08/20/about-half-of-tiktok-users-under-30-say-they-use-it-to-keep-up-with-politics-news/>
- Moir, A. (2023). The use of TikTok for political campaigning in Canada: The case of Jagmeet Singh. *Social Media + Society*, 9(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231157604>
- Neuman, W. R., Guggenheim, L., Mo Jang, S. A., & Bae, S. Y. (2014). The dynamics of public attention: Agenda-setting theory meets big data. *Journal of Communication*, 64(2), 193–214. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12088>
- Ngilangil, K. M. (2022). TikTok on SNSU students: Engagement and influence. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 7(4), 150–155. [https://mail.ijels.com/upload\\_document/issue\\_files/22IJELS-107202228-Tiktok.pdf](https://mail.ijels.com/upload_document/issue_files/22IJELS-107202228-Tiktok.pdf)
- Ortutay, B. (2024, October 18). *TikTok let through disinformation in political ads despite its own ban*. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/facebook-tiktok-youtube-election-ads-global-witness-8caa6e1217ce4294bcd14cb3dbc6f41d>
- Pierson, D. (2022, May 5). Dictator's son uses TikTok to lead in Philippine election and rewrite his family's past. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2022-05-05/dictators-son-uses-tiktok-to-lead-philippines-election-and-rewrite-his-familys-past>
- Quitzon, J. (2021, November 22). *Social media misinformation and the 2022 Philippine elections*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. <https://www.csis.org/blogs/new-perspectives-asia/social-media-misinformation-and-2022-philippine-elections>
- Rathi, M., Ghosh, A., Kumari, S., Sarkar, A., & Das, A. (2021). Influence of social media on the political choice making: An exploratory study. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(6), 8326–8339. <https://tojqi.net/index.php/journal/article/view/3284/2225>
- Sajid, M., Javed, J., & Warraich, N. F. (2024). The role of Facebook in shaping voting behavior of youth: Perspective of a developing country. *SAGE Open*, 14(2), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241252213>
- Sugihartono, S. (2024, September 19). The power of social media to influence political views and geopolitical issues: TikTok, X and Instagram. *Modern Diplomacy*. <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2024/09/19/the-power-of-social-media-to-influence-political-views-and-geopolitical-issues-tiktok-x-and-instagram/>
- Yahaya, F. Y., Hassan, M. S., Azni, Z. M., Ab Hadi, S. N. I., Allam, S. N. S., & Ibrahim, N. A. N. (2024). Influence of social media on youth voting behaviour: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 8(10), 1198–1207. <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8100101>
- Zamora-Medina, R., Suminas, A., & Fahmy, S. S. (2023). Securing the youth vote: A comparative analysis of digital persuasion on TikTok among political actors. *Media and Communication*, 11(2), 218–231. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6348>
- Zeng, J., & Kaye, D. B. V. (2022). From content moderation to visibility moderation: A case study of platform governance on TikTok. *Policy & Internet*, 14(1), 79–95. <https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.287>