The Effect of Social Media on Voter Behavior: The Sample of Kayseri Province

Avşar Aslan[a], Enderhan Karakoç[b], Onur Bekiroğlu[c]

Abstract

Today, social networking platforms today are a dominant communication environment which enable the creation of instant, interactive and material. Social networking is used for effectively and efficiently interacting with electorate, especially during election processes, through campaign activities. Social networking may have a major effect on political actors' behaviors and election behavioural trends. In this aspect, in this study aimed to reveal the effect of social media on voter behavior, a survey application was conducted with 1231 people in the province of Kayseri. As a result of the research, it was seen that the effect of social media on the voters differed significantly according to gender, marital status, age, education and income status, residence, purpose of use and relevance to the political agenda.

Keywords: Social media, political communication, voter behavior, political participation.

INTRODUCTION

Digital media and networks are viewed as one of the prominent priorities of scientific science in the context of political campaigns. In the other hand, literature reviews appear to concentrate on evaluating the usage of multimedia without taking qualitative considerations into consideration (Rossini et al.2017: 1). Social media and social networking sites have brought about a marked change in the way young voters learn and follow things about politics (Hermida 2017: 76). It is possible to read this change as a specific reflection of the general digital transformation process in the field of politics and political communication. This reflection in the field of politics and political communication; Online or online political campaign in political communication literature (Bimber and Davis 2003; Lilleker 2013: 190; Barberá et al.2015: 1; Meriç 2017: 25), web campaign (Foot and Schneider 2006: 4), digital propaganda (Sparkes-Vian 2018; Bjola 2018: 305), internet campaign (Sparkes-Vian 2015: 57), policy 2.0 (Campante, Durante and Sobbrio 2018: 1094), digital political marketing (Maarek 2014: 13) and computerized propaganda (computational propaganda) (Woolley and Howard 2019; Arnaudo 2017; Bolsover and Howard 2017: 273). Despite these different nomenclatures, this phenomenon points to the characteristics of systematic and planned communication activities and shows efforts in the political field in the new media ecosystem dominated by the digital transformation of the internet the internet itself and social media.

In this study, the role and functionality of social media in the context of political communication and voter behaviors were examined, and the effects of social media on voters in the formation of political opinions and party preferences were examined within the scope of the field research conducted in the sample of Kayseri Province.

Raise of Social Network in the Politics Communication

The word; "The vehicle is the message" suggested by Canadian communication theorist Marshall McLuhan. The process of influencing and transforming the human life of electronic communication technologies indicated by its formulation (Altun 2006: 41) has reached its peak with social media in today's world. So much more those social networks and the pages of social networks control both constructive and negative contact and social and political engagement.

The benefits of social media are used routinely within a strategic context in the modern digital world, political campaigns and communication research, especially in the USA, that is the foundation for this phenomenon (Rossini et al.2018: 245). So much so that contemporary election campaigns prepared by political parties and actors focus and invest more and more on social network sites as an alternative channel to

[a.]*Near East University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Communication, Doctoral Student North Cyprus,* avsar38aslan@gmail.com
[b.] *Selçuk University, Faculty of Communication, Department of Radio, Television and Cinema, Konya/Turkey*
[c.] *Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Communication, Department of Journalism, Samsun/Turkey*

traditional media to spread political information. This relatively new approach brings the integration of political actors and parties into dialogical and non-hierarchical environments and a significant change in the campaign experience, while also gaining visibility into the ideas and political views emerging from virtual social interactions (Rossini and Leal 2012). In other words, the social contexts, modes of interaction and organizational practices of the parties and interlocutors in the political communication process undergo a remarkable change in the digital transformation process (Chadwick and Stromer-Galley 2016: 283-284). One of the first examples of such a campaign was realized in the campaign of Barack Obama during the 2008 presidential elections in the USA. The campaign succeeded in directly involving people in the processes of campaigning, creating excitement and disseminating information about the candidate, and digital communication technologies also played an important role (Stromer-Galley 2014: 1).

The idea that vast amounts of data called 'big data' can be used very functionally during the political campaign processes and relation with digital technology can allow voting goals called micro targeting, that is another significant choice that justifies increasing social mediation in the communication of politics. Newman (2017: 36-38, 42) statesd that microtargeting, which refers to segmentation of voters not only according to socio-demographic data, but according to their broader individual characteristics, tastes, interests and shares, was used in an advanced and effective manner in 2008 and 2012 campaigns. In this process, the main dynamic that differentiates Obama's political campaign model has been conducting in-depth studies based on the use of big data.

Another point where social media and digital technologies can potentially open more space is that they can enable a bottom-up and people-centered policy by using technology as much as possible, rather than a top-down, money-focused and television advertising-centric approach in politics (Trippi 2012).

Micro-targeting of voters may also exist in a derogatory way of electoral fields and systems. It is concerned with the constructive and harmful use of social media and emerging technology, under which privacy and human autonomy may be infringed. Ward (2016: 133) indicated that during the 2016 US Presidential Elections, they witnessed the development of ethically dubious methods of political persuasion built through personal data

collected over social network sites without the consent of users. The company used digital data to manipulate voters in the Cambridge Analytica Scandal, which matched the negative use of social media, big data and digital technologies in the context of political communication, the company used digital data to manipulate voters. The Cambridge Analytica Scandal left its mark on both political communication and the new media and communication ecosystem as an ethically problematic example of how cyber warfare can also work as an information warfare focused on influencing political campaigns and operations (Wilson 2019: 587).

Network Situations of Participation and Political Approach

Social network networking has sparked a significant paradigm change, changing and transforming the essence of public or private spaces and the connections and experiences of individuals (Swigger 2013: 589-590). The rapid growth in the use of social networking sites and the dominance of digital media in the field of communication reveal that the meaning of political participation that mediates society should also be rethinked (Fenton and Barassi 2011: 179). In parallel with this, social media and social network sites have become a common communication tool that is used extensively by parties, political actors and the public in political communication and that can connect these social elements. Social media plays a central role in the dissemination of political knowledge, especially during the election campaign process (Alperin et al.2018: 646).

The data-driven campaign, which has been conducted on social media since Obama's 2008 US Presidential Election campaign, achieved a significant status after both the 2012 and 2016 Presidential Elections. The data-driven campaign includes two main features. The first of these is targeting, the other is to decide which messages will go to which potential voters during the campaign and to test this. It is also of fundamental importance to evaluate the success of messages against rivals in such social media campaigns and to use the knowledge to improve content development and to aim more (Baldwin-Philippi 2017: 627-628).

The second component is the modes of political engagement and conduct adopted by people and electors through social contact and social networking sites. Partisan interaction across social media is commonly said to have increased. Social networks and blogs serve as a networking tool,

where individuals and young people in particular are able to communicate politically. As the policy in social media is diverse, the reasons for participating in it differ. The rapid access to current developments and news with political content on social media has brought into question the role of attention to traditional news sources in the process of political participation (Macafee 2013: 2766). While the Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street protests, the developments over Obama's victory in the 2008 and 2012 Presidential Elections suggest a strong correlation between social media and political participation, social media has the potential to halt or even reverse patterns of political inequality. (Xenos et al. 2014: 151-152). On the other hand, in the early years of social media, inquiries have also been made on the relative value of "cliktivism" as a form of digital activism in the face of real political participation such as street protests (Datton 2020: xxvi). Although some studies have obtained findings on positive effects on political outcomes such as political effectiveness and social capital, it can be said that the existing literature on the political utility of social media in general offers different and mixed evidence (Kushin and Yamamoto 2010: 609).

The examination of social media, political engagement and political conduct: results include a meaningful correlation between social media and political involvement, constructive incentives, working alongside mediation variables and no meaningful relationships. In a study examining the 2010 and 2011 elections in the Netherlands (Effing et al.2011: 29-30, 32), it was found that social media did not significantly affect voting behavior during local elections, but when that politicians exhibited greater social media participation in most political parties during national elections it was seen that it received relatively more votes.

A study analysing the 2008 American Presidential Election (Cogburn and Mathilde-Vasquez 2011: 189-190) found that the campaign created a nationwide virtual organization, motivating 3.1 million individual participants and mobilizing a grassroots movement of more than 5 million volunteers. It has been determined. In this context, it can be said that the Obama campaign has been used by going beyond social networks educating the public, raising money to mobilize the grassroots game, and increasing political participation.

In a study conducted by (Halpern et al.2017: 320, 330) explain the separate ways in which political posts on Facebook and Twitter can influence individuals 'participation in political activities, collective activity (capacity to achieve collective goals with other people) and internal activity (individuals' feelings about their capacity to participate in politics), two types of effects were focused on. In a study conducted on an adult population in Chile in 2013, it was found that the frequent use of Facebook and Twitter was conducive to higher participation levels through different efficiency measures. Accordingly, while Facebook has an important effect on collective activity, Twitter's effect is on internal activity.

In another study realized by (Hyun and Kim 2015: 328, 332-333), it was investigated whether three different types of news activity, namely, news tracking and dissemination, and political conversations through social media had different and interactive relationships on political participation. As a result of the study, it was seen that political conversations on social media were positively associated with political participation. Accordingly, political conversations and speeches on social media contribute to the increase of political participation. On the other hand, activities such as news acquisition, follow-up and dissemination have been found to be unrelated or have a weak relationship with participation.

A research by De Zúñiga et al. (2014: 612) investigating the influence of social media on political speech and participation found the clear impact on political participation and on political expression on the editorial impacts of social media usage on offline political activity and on political participation. They determined that. The same study revealed that the use of social media for social interaction didn't have a direct effect on people's political participation, but rather an indirect effect through citizens' political expressions of themselves.

Another form of political participation that social networking sites have concentrated on is manifested as online political expression. Online political expression as a form of political media usage has a widespread use, especially among young adults. In this context, in a study (Yamamoto et al. 2015: 880, 884) on the effects of the use of political media based on online political expressions on political participation in the sample of university students, online political expression; It has been demonstrated that mobile applications with political content, traditional offline-online media and social media increase their effects on political participation.

Another study on the 2008 US Presidential Elections (Bode 2012: 352, 361) focused on how certain behaviors provided personalized

information, created community engagement and generated social capital on Facebook affect users' political participation decisions. In the research, it was found that Facebook usage intensity had a positive relationship with voting behavior, while it had a negative relationship with the time spent on Facebook. In other words, in order to be motivated to participate in the election or to encourage any kind of political participation, one must be intensely involved in the Facebook network and community, beyond spending superficial time on the social networking site.

In another study (Housholder and LaMarre 2015: 138-139) in which the data of the Pew Research Center for the 2010 American Elections were analyzed by combining the campaign interviews, it was questioned whether the social media expectations on the campaign side and whether they were met on the public side. As a result of the research, it was found that affiliation with a campaign on social media platforms dramatically increases the likelihood of voters being included in key political participation outcomes. Similarly, it was concluded that participating in a campaign via social media significantly and positively predicted the decision to vote.

In a comprehensive meta-analysis study focusing on digital media and participation in civic and political life (Boulianne 2018: 1-3, 15-16), it was pointed out that there is a clear positive relationship between digital media usage and participation in civic and political life. While the first studies on the subject found a weak but positive relationship; More recent studies have revealed strong and positive correlation coefficients. The rise of social networking sites, more interactive websites and online tools to facilitate political engagement such as Change.org and similar sites seem to be influential in this substantial positive relationship between the use of digital media and participation in civic and political life.

FIELD RESEARCH
RESEARCH METHOD

In this study conducted with quantitative research method, descriptive survey model was used. Within the scope of the research, a questionnaire was applied on 1231 voters who were selected with the appropriate sampling method in Kayseri. In selecting the sample to be the most 15th populous city of Kayseri in Turkey 15, is the 3rd largest city in Central Anatolia, and factors such as having a significant number of voters are taken into account in terms of population density (I https://www.nufusu.co / province / kayseri-nufusu,

2020; https://www.sabah.com.tr/secim/31-mart-2019-yerel-secim-sonuclari/kayseri/ili-yerel-secim-sonuclari, 2020).

The data were acquired through a five-point Likert type questionnaire developed by the researcher. In the analysis of the data, in order to determine whether the effect of social media networks on voters shows a statistically significant difference according to certain socio-demographic variables, t-test analysis for unrelated (independent) samples shows whether the effect of social media networks on the voter shows a statistically significant difference according to the ages of the voters. One-way analysis of variance was used to determine, and LSD test was used to determine which group or groups the difference originated from.

Correlationship analysis was used to calculate the degree of linear intercourse using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Since a particular variable or indicator influences the correlation coefficient measured for the two variables, a multiple regression model has been used to test it. Confirmatory factor analysis was applied in order to see the consistency of the study in evaluating the impact of social media components on politicians. SPSS for Windows version22.0 package program was used for statistical analysis and $p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses suggested within the scope of the research are as follows:

H1: The impact of social media networks on voters differs according to gender.

H2: The impact of social media networks on voters differs according to marital status.

H3: The effect of social media networks on voters differs according to age.

H4: The impact of social media networks on voters differs according to income.

H5: The effect of social media networks on voters differs according to education level.

H6: The effect of social media networks on voters differs according to the place they live in.

H7: The effect of social media networks on voters differs according to the purpose of using social media.

H8: The effect of social media networks on voters differs according to the social media tool used.

H9: The impact of social media networks on voters differs according to their status of following the political agenda.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From 1231 people participating in the study; 52% (634) are men, 48% (597) are women; 80% of them are married while 20% are single. Among the participants, the young population in the 18-24 age range is 6%, with the highest rate of 31% being in the age group 46 and over. In terms of educational status, the least rate is primary education graduates with 5%, while the vast majorities have high school and undergraduate education levels.

Table 1. **Sociodemographical Features of Participants**

Gender	%	N	Marital Status	%	n
Male	52	634	Marred	20	286
Female	48	597	Single	80	985
Age	*%*	*N*	*Education Status*	*%*	*n*
18-24	6	80	Primary	5	64
25-31	13	166	Secondary	6	80
32-38	23	282	High School	28	345
39-45	26	319	Associate Degree	15	183
46 and over	31	384	Bachelor	32	389
			Master Degree	14	170
Residence	*%*	*n*	*Income Status*	*%*	*n*
Town	3	39	0-1603	12	146
District	24	290	1604-2599	19	228
City Center	73	302	2600-3599	17	208
			3600-4599	22	265
			4600-5599	31	384
Political Party Membership	*%*	*n*			
Yes	34	416			
No	66	815			

The largest proportion of the participants according to their income level is 31% with an income of 4600-5599 TL. It is noteworthy that 12% is from the lowest income group. According to the findings, the rate of people who have political party membership is 34% (416 people), while the majority (66%) do not have party membership. While the majority of the participants live in the city center with 73% (902 people), the smallest settlement is the town with 3%.

Table 2. **Use of Social Media and Political Thought / Interest and Trust in Party**

Usage Purpose	%	n	Frequently used	%	n
Talk-Friendship	17	210	Facebook	57	703
Education	4	52	Twitter	8	94
Commerce-Shopping	4	47	Youtube	4	46
Following News and Agenda	67	830	Instagram	18	219
Politicial	7	92	Other	14	169
Usage Period	*%*	*n*	*Interest for policy agenda*	*%*	*n*
Half an hour	13	164	Less	4	45
1 Hour	27	334	Litte	11	141
2 Hours	26	324	Interested	39	485
3 Hours	16	196	Much	20	242
4 Hours and over	17	213	Too much	26	318
Factors that Determine / Influence Thoughts on Politics	*%*	*n*	*Factors Providing Trust in the Party*	*%*	*n*
Family-Relative	17	212	Party President	31	378
Friends	8	98	Party Ideology	30	368
News, book, television	39	479	Party Projects	30	368
Meeting, demonstration, congress	19	236	Party Members	1	15
Social Media	17	206	Party Community	8	102

From people participating in the study; 67% use social media for news and agenda follow-up, 17% for chat-friendship, 4% for education, and again 4% for trade-shopping. However, the use for political purposes, which is the subject of the study, is 7%. Political motivations can be predicted to be an important predictor of the rate of following the news and agenda. This can function for the purpose of both following the political agenda and gaining knowledge and using the knowledge gained from it in traditional interaction environments. While 26% of the users use social media for 2 hours, the number of users using the social media for 4 hours or more is substantial.

While Facebook is the most used social media platform by the participants, Instagram comes second. When we look at the 2020 Digital wearesocial Turkey report the most used social networking sites as YouTube, Instagram, Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter are ranked (https://datareportal.co 2020). This data set of terms such as Kayseri, Turkey appears to exhibit differences across the table from outside to use Instagram.

While it is seen that the majority of the responses given about "being interested in politics" are not political party members, it is seen that among those who are interested are closely related to the politics of the country. In this case, it can be said that the participants hold politics in an important position in their lives, but do not prefer situations such as political party membership, direct field of activity and responsibility. On the other hand, the fact that the use of social media for political purposes is 7% while the ratio of being related to politics is 75% can be interpreted from two perspectives. The first is to follow politics-related issues through other communication tools. The other is that political motivations have an important place in using social media to follow news and agenda.

It is monitored that 58% of the participants marked the options of meeting, rally and congress with newspaper, book and television regarding the factors determining the opinions about politics. As can be seen in the characteristics of the demographic variables in this study, considering that it is done with a group with a high level of education, it is an important detail that individuals direct their political views as a result of more intellectual activities. 25% of the participants in total stated that the factors that determine their opinions on politics are family, relatives and friends. Another point that draws attention here is that the social media variable has a 17% (206 people) slice in determining and influencing political views. Yet, the same participant group stated that they use social media tools for political purposes with a rate of 7% (92 people) in their answer to the item of purpose of use. It is an interesting finding in terms of the research that individuals who do not prefer to use social media for political purposes are affected by the same social media from the same point of view. On the other hand, it can be thought that using social media with the motivation of following news and agenda also has an effect as a mediating factor in this context. It has been observed in the study of de Zúñigavd. (2014: 612) that the editorial use of social media has direct effects on offline political

participation.

Considering the findings regarding the answers given by the participants to the question prepared for the factors affecting the feeling of trust in the political party, it can be said that the results expected from an educated group were obtained. So much so that party projects (30%) and political party ideology, (30%) together represent the 60%.

The responds given to the question set, which includes the participants' influence from social media, their use of social media for political purposes, and their opinions and attitudes about social media and politics, also reveal significant findings. These findings contain important reference points for the impact of social media on voter behavior in the Kayseri example. According to this; While the rate of the participants who think they are affected by the political content is approximately 22% (I agree + I totally agree), the rate of those who do not agree with this view (I do not agree + completely disagree) is 64%. While the rate of those who think that statements made through social media networks affect the vote during the election period is 17%, the rate of those who think that they do not is 74%. While 52% of the participants stated that they regularly follow the political party, party or community through social media networks, 39% stated that they do not follow the political party, party or community regularly on social media. "The social network sharing of the political party or party to whom I am a party affects my vote." 32% of the participants agreed, 59% disagreed. While the rate of those who participated in the question of entering into discussion on the social network was 27%, the rate of those who opposed this view was 65%. While the rate of those who follow the political agenda on social media is 71%, the rate of those who do not follow the political agenda through social media is 24%. The rate of those who agreed that they were affected by the news seen on social media was 37%, while the rate of those who disagreed was 51%. While the rate of those who agree with the opinion that social media is a guide for which party to vote for, is 10%, while the rate of those who say the opposite is 85%.

The rate of those who share a political situation is 34%, the rate of those who agree with this opinion at a moderate level but do not declare whether they agree / disagree is 7% and the rate of those who disagree is 59%. The rate of those who state that they use social media networks to get information about political parties is 46%, while the rate of those who state that they do not use them otherwise is 43%. 34% of the respondents agree with the opinion that social media networks

increase the interest of the participants in politics, while 55% express the opposite view. While 31% of the respondents responded positively to the situation of showing more interest in politicians using social media networks, 57% of the participants reported negatively. While the rate of the participants who stated that they shared their political views through social media networks was 41%, 52% of them stated that they did not share their political views through social media networks. When looking at the rate of sharing the posts of the politicians with whom they show interest on social media, 43% of the participants stated that they shared this way; 48% declared that they did not.

While the rate of participants promoting political party candidates in social media networks is 35%, the rate of those who do not is 54%. 40% of the respondents stated that they were promoting politicians on social media networks in order to find more supporters of the political view they support, while 40% stated that they did not. The rate of positive answers given to the question of social networks showing their belonging to their political views is 36%, and the rate of those who respond negatively is 51%.

While 48% think that the social media profiles of political party candidates are effective on the elections, 39% have the opposite opinion. While

37% of the respondents said "I agree" to the statement regarding the state of agreeing to the judgment that social media networks help them to make a choice among political party candidates, 51% of them do not agree with this view. Accordingly, it can be said that more than half of the participants do not attribute this level of impact to social networks when the level of "preference" or "decision making" beyond interacting with voters. In the case of agreeing with the judgment that social media networks allow to recognize political party candidates, 64% said "I agree" and 25% "disagree". In this case, it is seen that the participants attribute a significant role to social networks in the process of "getting to know" political actors by the voters.

Regarding whether the messages given on social media are more effective on voter preferences, 29% of the participants share the opinion that they are not effective and 51% of them share the opinion that it is. While 51% of the respondents stated that the active use of social media networks by politicians and political parties has a positive effect on the elections, 33% of them stated a negative opinion. While 18% of the participants stated that they believed the news about politicians on social media networks, 59% stated that they did not believe the news about politicians on this channel.

Table 3. **Testing of the Hypotheses of the Research**

Dependent Variance	Independent Variances	p<0.05	Acceptance	Rejection
The effecet of the social media on voter differ according to;	Gender	0.00	x	
	Marital status	0.00	x	
	Age	0.00	x	
	Education status	0.00	x	
	Income status	0.00	x	
	Residence	0.00	x	
	Purpose of social media usage	0.00	x	
	Used social media tool	0.164		x
	Following status of the political agenda	0.00	x	

In Table 3, the hypotheses of the research are given in the first column, and the statistical analysis results are given in the other column. Accordingly, it is seen that the effect of social networks on voters

does not differ according to the social media tool used (p> 0.05), and the effect of social media networks on voter behavior differs within the framework of all other independent variables (p <0.05).

Table 4. **The Effect of Social Media on Voter Behavior depending on Gender**

	Gender	n	X	Ss	s.d.	t	P
Social Media Netwoek Effect	Female	208	3,14	0,731	1220	4,662	0,00
	Male	1014	2,91	0,625			

When considering the effect of social media networks on voters according to gender; There is a significant difference between the effect of social

networks on voters and gender (p <0.05). In the study, it was found that the effect of social media on voter behavior is higher in women compared to

men. This finding differs with the findings of some studies in the literature (Nainan et al. 2013: 124; Zaheer 2016: 288). In one of these studies, it was concluded that among university students in Singapore, women were less likely to engage in political discussions and participate in online and offline political activities than men. However, it has been determined that news consumption on social media platforms contributes to political

participation by both men and women. In another study conducted on university students in Pakistan, it was observed that men participated more actively in online political activities compared to women, and similarly, men actively participated in offline political activities compared to women. In Bode's (2017: 598) study, it was concluded that gender differences are generally much less common than expected in political participation on social media.

Table 5. **The Effect of Social Media on Voter Behavior by Marital Status**

	Marital Status	N	X	ss	s.d.	t	P
Social Media Network Effect	Married	985	2,84	0,621	1220	12,211	0,00
	Single	237	3,39	0,583			

It was determined that social media networks showed a statistically significant difference according to the marital status of the voter (p <0.05). Accordingly, the effect of social media on the behavior of single voters is greater than that of

married voters. The way singles think this way can also be related to their age. Because as the age level decreases, the use and frequency of social media increases and the possibility of social media to affect the political behavior and participation of young adults also increases.

Table 6. **The Effect of Social Media on Voter Behavior depends on Age**

	Age	N	X	ss	F	p	LSD
	18-24	80	3,16	0,724			3-5
	25-31	158	3,00	0,512			
Social Media Network Effect	32-38	341	2,95	0,660	56,402	0,00	1
	39-45	359	3,30	0,571			
	46 and over	284	2,95	0,650			1

It is seen that the effect of social media networks on voters shows a statistically significant difference according to the age variable. The effect of social media on the behavior of voters between the ages of 18-24 was found to be higher than those between the age group 46 and over and 32-38. In a study conducted during the 2010 Swedish National Election Campaign (Holt et al. 2013: 19), which examines the relationship between media use, age groups, and political participation, it was found that there are significant differences in media use

among age groups. At this point, as Owen (https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/, 2020) points out; young people's technological talents and their interest in innovations offered by this approach to politics give them an advantage in their ability to utilize social media. On the other hand, political speech; is an act in which young people express, explain, and carefully manage their political identity (Ekström 2016: 1) and social media functions as an open communication medium as much as possible, which is effective in the formation of such a picture.

Table 7. **The Effect of Social Media on Voter Behavior According to Income Status**

	Income Level	N	X	ss	F	p	LSD
	0-1603	141	2,81	0,608			3-5
	1604-2599	223	3,30	0,509			
Social Media Network Effect	2600-3599	207	2,74	0,739	51,425	0,00	1-5
	3600-4599	243	3,25	0,539			
	4600-5599	384	2,69	0,579			
	6000 ve üzeri	24	3,38	0,488			1-3

Income level was also a determining factor in the impact of social media on voter behavior. There is a difference between the group with an income level of 0-1603 and the group with an income level

of 2600-3599 and above 4600. It is a remarkable finding that voters with a low-income level think that social media is more effective than people in middle and upper-income groups.

Table 8. **The Effect of Social Media on Voter Behavior depends on Education Level**

	Education Level	N	X	ss	F	p	LSD
	Primary	64	2,47	1,010			3-4
	Secondary	80	2,90	0,841			
Social Media Network Effect	High School	345	3,24	0,513			1-2
	Associate Degree	176	3,19	0,582	41,354	0,00	1-2
	Bachelor	389	2,78	0,613			
	Master Degree	168	2,70	0,386			

The differences on voter behavior according to the education level of social media networks were found to be statistically significant. According to this; There is a large difference between the primary and secondary school group and the high school and associate degree group (p <0.05). Education is generally accepted as one of the strongest predictors of voter participation and behavior. In a study (Smets and van Ham 2013: 345, 348) in which studies on individual voter participation in national elections were examined through meta-analysis, it was found that education was positively associated with individual participation. In another comparative study (Saldaña et al. 2015: 3305, 3314) conducted in the US and UK examples, it was observed that the education variable in the UK was an important predictor of offline political participation. This finding indicates that individuals with more education are more likely to engage in political behavior offline.

Table 9. **The Effect of Social Media on Voter Behavior depends on Residence**

	Residence	n	X	ss	F	P
	Town	30	3,13	0,952		
Social Media Network Effect	District	290	2,68	0,696	34,763	0,00
	City Center	902	3,03	0,597		

It is seen that there is a significant difference between the place of residence and the effect of social media on voter behavior (p <0.05). According to this; There is a difference between the group living in the town and the group living in the city center. In a study (Koiranen et al. 2019, https://link.springer.com/) examining the changing usage patterns of social media use in Finland between 2008 and 2016, it was stated that the place of residence or region was an important variable and those living in rural areas used social media. It was seen that the group with the lowest probability was using it.

Table 10. **The Effect of Social Media on Voter Behavior According to the Prpose of Using**

	Purpose of Using Social Media	n	X	ss	F	p	LSD
	Talk, Friendship	210	3,25	0,665			2-4
	Education	52	2,93	0,464			1-3-5
Social Media Network Effect	Commerce, Shopping	47	3.08	0,620	20,776	0,00	
	Political	85	3,16	0,420			
	Following the New and Agenda	828	2,85	0,647			

A significant difference emerged between the purpose of using social media and the effect of social media on voter behavior (p <0.05). In the groups that differ according to the LSD test, there are differences between the group that uses social media for education and the group that follows the conversation, friendship, trade, shopping and news, agenda. Likewise, there was a difference between the group using social media for chat and friendship and the user group using it for educational and political purposes.

Table 11. **The Effect of Social Media on Voter Behavior by Social Networking Site**

	Social Media Tool	n	X	ss	F	P
	Facebook	698	3,01	0,625		
	Twitter	94	3,32	0,499		
Social Media Network Effect	Youtube	46	3,02	0,626	51,611	0, 164
	Instagram	215	3,04	0,637		
	Other	169	2,37	0,494		

According to Table 11, it can be said that the social media platform has no effect on the political opinion of the voters (p> 0.05). Accordingly, it can be assumed that the participants did not make a

detailed and technical distinction in the context of the functionality and characteristics of social media and discussed the effect of social media on voter behavior through a general evaluation.

Table 12. **The Effect of Social Media on Voter Behavior According to Following the Political Agenda**

	Following Status	N	X	ss	F	p	LSD
Social Media Network Effectt	I am very interested	306	2,50	0,669			3
	I am quite interested	242	2,71	0,474			
	I am intersted	485	3,26	0,486	107,610	0,00	1
	I am less interested	141	3,25	0,530			
	I am very little interested	48	2,93	0,881			

A significant difference emerged between following the political agenda and the effect of social media on voters (p <0.05). According to Table 12, it is seen that this difference occurs between "those who are very interested" and "those who are concerned" with politics. In another study (Arklan 2016: 634), it was seen that the increase in the level of interest in politics increased the opinion that the issues in social media have an impact on the political attitudes of the voters. Accordingly, it has been determined that individuals with a high level of interest in politics are more likely to believe that the issues in social media are effective on political attitudes.

RESULT

When reviewed; in terms of the relationship between social media, political participation and political behavior; In general, the importance of social networks has been emphasized or discussed as an important factor in predicting political participation for a long time (Bode, 2012: 354).

In that research, analyzing the effects of social media on voter behaviour in the example of the province of Kayseri, participants' viewpoints and assessments demonstrated the impact of social media on the democratic sphere, electoral process and perception and behavior in general. In this context, as one of the most striking results, it can be pointed out that more than half of the participants do not attribute this level of influence to social networks when it comes to dimensions such as making choices and making decisions beyond the interaction between political actors and voters through social media.

In this frame, social media play an important role in issues such as candidate recognization, constructive use by political actors and political parties of social media to manipulate elections and whether message conveyed through these platforms is more successful in voting. However, it

is seen that the participants predominantly make negative statements on issues such as the social networks showing their political views and affiliation, whether they are affected by political content, the effect of the statements made on social media during the election period, or whether social media is a guiding party in the decision of which party to vote. Accordingly, participants exhibit participatory behavior with different forms of political participation through social network sites, follow political actors and the agenda through social media, increase their interest in politics through social media, but when transitioning from awareness and information level to opinion and behavioral level questions as they are more cautious. At this point, it can be argued that cognitive processes such as selective perception, selective exposure and remembering, which are important determinants of traditional media usage habits, play an active role on social network sites. At the same time, this issue can be considered as a subject that is open to be scrutinized as a reflection of the effects of social media that mostly seeps into the opinion and behavior of the voters at the "reinforcement level".

As regards socio-demographic variables, it was calculated that, according to sex, marital status, age, education and income status, place of residence, intent of use of social media as well as political agenda, the observed influence from social network voting differs significantly. There were not major variations in voting activity among the participants in the social networking site used.

As a consequence; this allows social media to politicize voting conduct in various ways and provides various resources and possibilities relative to the conventional media at the level of attitude and viewpoint. This basis, which is directly related to the orientation and motivation of the voters, can affect voter behavior with a reinforcement level, as well as providing a flow to advanced dimensions

such as opinion formation and being a part of a political building process.

REFERENCE

[1] Alperin, J. P. vd. (2018). Politicians & the Public: The Analysis of Political Communication in Social Media. *ASIS&T Annual Meeting 2018*.

[2] Altun, F. (2006). *M. McLuhan ve J. Baudrillard'ın Medya Kuramlarının Karşılaştırmalı Çözümlemesi.* Doktora Tezi.İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi.

[3] Arklan, Ü. (2016). Sosyal Medyanın Siyasal Amaçlı Kullanımı: Ağ Kuşağının Kullanım Alışkanlıkları Üzerine Bir Araştırma. *e-Gifder,* 4(2): 618-657.

[4] Arnaudo, D. (2017). Computational Propaganda in Brazil: Social Bots During Elections". *Computational Propaganda Research Project,* Working Paper, 8.University of Oxford.

[5] Baldwin-Philippi, J.(2017). The Myths of Data-Driven Campaigning. *Political Communication,* 34(4): 627-633.

[6] Barberá, P. (2015). TweetingFromLeftto Right: Is Online Political Communication More Than an EchoChamber? *PsychologicalScience,* 1-12.

[7] Bimber, B. and Richard, D. (2003). *Campaigning Online: The Internet in U.S. Elections.* New York: Oxford University Press.

[8] Bjola, C. (2018). The Ethics of Countering Digital Propaganda. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 32(3): 305-315.

[9] Bode, L. (2012). Facebooking It to the Polls: A Study in Online Social Networking and Political Behavior. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics,* 9(4): 352-369.

[10] Bode, L.(2017). Closing the gap: gender parity in political engagement on social media. *Information, Communication & Society,* 20(4): 587-603.

[11] Bolsover, G. and Philip, H. (2017). Computational Propaganda and Political Big Data: Moving Toward A More Critical Research Agenda. *Big Data*, 5(4): 273-276.

[12] Boulianne, S. (2018). Twenty Years of Digital Media Effects on Civic and Political Participation. *Communication Research,* 1-20.

[13] Campante, F., Ruben, D., and Francesco, S. (2018). Politics 2.0: The Multifaceted Effect of Broadband Internet on Political Participation. *Journal of the European Economic Association,* 16 (4): 1094-1136.

[14] Chadwick, A. and Jennifer, S.-Galley (2016). Digital Media, Power, and Democracy in Parties and Election Campaigns: Party Decline or Party Renewal?. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 21(3): 283-293.

[15] Cogburn, D. L., Fatıma, K., and Espinoza,V. (2011). From Networked Nominee to Networked Nation: Examining the Impact of Web 2.0 and Social Media on Political Participation and Civic Engagement in the 2008 Obama Campaign. *Journal of Political Marketing,* 10: 189-213.

[16] Datton, W.(2020). Introduction to A Research Agenda for Digital Politics. (Ed. William H. Dutton). *A Research Agenda for Digital Politics,* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

[17] de Zúñiga, H. G., Logan, M., and Pei, Z. (2014). Social Media, Political Expression, and Political Participation: Panel Analysis of Lagged and Concurrent Relationships. *Journal of Communication,* 64: 612-634.

[18] Effing, R., Jos van, H., and Theo, H. (2011). Social Media and Political Participation: Are Facebook, Twitter and YouTube Democratizing Our Political Systems?. (E. Tambouris, A. Macintosh, H. De Brujin), *IFIP International Federation for Information Processing 2011,* ePart 2011, LNCS 6847: 25-35.

[19] Ekström, M. (2016). Young people's everyday political talk: a social achievement of democratic engagement. *Journal of Youth Studies,* 19(1): 1-19.

[20] Fenton, N. and Veronica, B. (2011). Alternative Media and Social Networking Sites: The Politics of Individuation and Political Participation. *The Communication Review,* 14: 179-196.

[21] Foot, Kirsten A. and Steven, M. S. (2006). *Web Campaigning*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

[22] Halpern, D., Sebastián, V., and James E. K. (2017). We Face, I Tweet: How Different Social Media Influence Political Participation through Collective and Internal Efficacy. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication,* 22: 320-336.

[23] Hermida, A. (2017). *Herkese Söyle. Sosyal Medya'da Neden Paylaşımda Bulunuruz.* (Çev. Ahmet A. Sabancı). İstanbul: Kafka, Epsilon Yayınevi.

[24] Holt, K. (2013). Age and the effects of news media attention and social media use on political interest and participation: Do social media function as leveller?. *European Journal of Communication,* 28(1): 19-34.

[25] Housholder, E. and Heather, L. L. (2015). Poitical social media engagement: Comparing campaign goals with voter behavior. *Public Relations Review,* 41: 138-140. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-turkey (Erişim Tarihi: 02.07.2020).

https://www.nufusu.com/il/kayseri-nufusu
(Erişim   Tarihi: 03.07.2020).
https://www.sabah.com.tr/secim/31-mart-
2019-yerel-secim-sonuclari/kayseri/ili-yerel-
secim-sonuclari (Erişim Tarihi: 03.07.2020).

[26] Hyun, K. D. and Jinhee, K. (2015). Differential
     and   interactive   influences   on   political
     participation by different types of news
     activities and political conversation through
     social media. *Computers in Human Behavior,* 45:
     328-334.

[27] Koiranen, I. vd. (2019). Changing patterns of
     social media use? A population-level study of
     Finland. *Universal Access in the Information
     Society,*   https://link.springer.com/
     article/10.1007/s10209-019-00654-1,
     (05.07.2020).

[28] Kushin, M. J. and Masahiro, Y.(2010). Did Social
     Media Really Matter? College Students' Use of
     Online Media and Political Decision Making in
     the 2008 Election. *Mass Communication and
     Society,* 13: 608-630.

[29] Lilleker, D. G. and Karolina, K.M. (2013). Online
     Political Communication Strategies: MEPs, E-
     Representation,   and   Self-Representation.
     Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 10:
     190-207.

[30] Maarek, P. J. (2017). Politics 2.0: New Forms of
     Digital   Political   Marketing   and   Political
     Communication. *Trípodos,* 34: 13-22.

[31] Macafee, T. (2013). Some of these things are not
     like the others: Examining motivations and
     political   predispositions   among   political
     Facebook activity. *Computers in Human
     Behavior,* 29: 2766–2775.

[32] Meriç, Ö. (2017). "Çevrimiçi Siyasal İletişim
     Üzerine Bir Literatür Değerlendirmesi". *Selçuk
     İletişim,* 9(4): 25-39.

[33] Nainan, W., Hao, X., and Cherian, G. (2013).
     Gender   and   Political   Participation: News
     Consumption,   Political   Efficacy   and
     Interpersonal Communication. *Asian Journal of
     Women's Studies,* 19(4): 124-149.

[34] Newman, B. I. (2017). *Siyasette Pazarlama
     Devrimi.* (Çev. Emine Tuğba Kocabıyık). İstanbul:
     Nobel Yaşam.

[35] Owen, D. (2020). The Past Decade and Future of
     Political Media: The Ascendance of Social
     Media.   https://   www.   bbvaopenmind.com
     /en/articles/the-past-decade-and-future-of-
     political-   media-   the-ascendance-of-social-
     media/, (Erişim Tarihi: 08.07.202).

[36] Rossini, P. and Paulo R. F. L. (2012). Online
     Campaigns in the Social Media Era: A Case Study
     of Twitter Use During 2010 Elections in Brazil.

*Paper presented at the 22th World Congress of
Political Science,* July 08 to 14, 2012, Madrid.

[37] Rossini,   P.   (2017).   Social   Media,   U.S.
     Presidential Campaigns, and Public Opinion
     Polls: Disentangling Effects. *#SMSociety'17,* July
     28-30, 2017, Toronto, ON, Canada, 1-5.

[38] Rossini, P. vd. (2018). "Therelationship between
     race competitiveness, standing in thepolls,
     andsocialmediacommunicationstrategiesduring
     the 2014 U.S. gubernatorialcampaigns. *Journal
     of Information Technology & Politics,* 15(3): 245-
     261.

[39] Saldaña,   M.,   Shannon,   C.   Mcgregor   and
     Homero, G. Z. (2015). Social Media as a Public
     Space for Politics: Cross-National Comparison of
     News Consumption and Participatory Behaviors
     in the United States and the United Kingdom.
     International Journal of Communication, 9:
     3304-3326.

[40] Smets, K. and Carolien, H. (2013). The
     embarrassment of riches? A meta-analysis of
     individual-level research on voter turnout.
     Electoral Studies, 32: 344-359.

[41] Sparkes-Vian,   C.   (2015).   *TheEvolution   of
     Propaganda: Investigating Online Electioneering
     in the UK General Election of 2010.* (Philosophy
     of Doctorate), De MontfortUniversity.

[42] Sparkes-Vian, C. (2018). Digital Propaganda:
     TheTyranny of Ignorance. *Critical Sociology,*
     45(3): 393-409.

[43] Stromer-Galley,   J.   (2014).   *Presidential
     Campaigning in the Internet Age.* New York:
     Oxford University Press.

[44] Swigger, N. (2013). The Online Citizen: Is Social
     Media Changing Citizens' Beliefs About
     Democratic Values?. *Political Behavior,* 35: 589-
     603.

[45] Trippi, J. (2012). How Technology Has
     RestoredtheSoul of Politics. https:// www.
     technologyreview.
     com/2012/12/18/84609/how-technology-has-
     restored-the-soul-of-politics/, (Erişim Tarihi:
     28.06.2020).

[46] Ward, K. (2018). Social networks, the 2016 US
     presidential   election,   and   Kantian   ethics:
     applying   the   categorical   imperative   to
     Cambridge   Analytica's   behavioral
     microtargeting. *Journal of Media Ethics,* 33(3):
     133-148.

[47] Wilson, R. (2019). Cambridge Analytica,
     Facebook, and Influence Operations: A Case
     Study and Anticipatory Ethical Analysis. (Ed.
     Tiago Cruz ve Paulo Simoes), *ECCWS 2019
     18thEuropean Conference on Cyber Warfare and
     Security.*

[48] Woolley, S. C. and Philip N. H. (2019). *Computational Propaganda. Political Parties, Politicians, and Political Manipulation On Social Media.* New York: Oxford University Press.

[49] Xenos, M., Ariadne, V., and Brian D. L. (2014). The great equalizer? Patterns of social media use and youth political engagement in three advanced democracies. *Information, Communication & Society,* 17(2): 151-167.

[50] Yamamoto, M., Matthew. J. K,, and Francis, D. (2015). Social media and mobiles as political mobilization forces for young adults: Examining the moderating role of online political expression in political participation. *New Media & Society,* 17(6): 880-898.

[51] Zaheer, L. (2016). Use of Social Media and Political Participation among University Students. *Pakistan Vision,* 17(1): 278-299.