

Summary

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Summary College Summary The article, " Social Media Use for News and Individuals' Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Political Participation " aims at investigating whether social networks such as Facebook have made any contribution in informing the public and making the public participate in discussions related to political and social issues in the society. The research question was whether the use of social network services may influence the democratic space in the society, by keeping individuals in the society updated and in place to contribute to important developments that affect their lives.

The variables under investigation were the social capital and public engagement in public affairs, both of which are necessary in strengthening the responsiveness of civil societies and political institutions. These factors are necessary in maintaining healthy democracies in the society. The research method was a direct survey using online questionnaires; respondents were asked questions regarding the use of social networks to obtain news and the effects that the news obtained had on their knowledge and participation in political issues. To increase the response rate, a monetary incentive was used; participants were entered in a draw where they could win monetary prizes. The variables under investigation were social capital, offline political participation, civic participation, social demographic variables, use of media news, use of social networks for news and general social network use. In each variable, respondents were asked questions regarding their behaviors in using social networks and the effects that these had on the respondents.

The research revealed that public use of news in social networks had a direct

effect in increasing the social capital significantly. In other words, the use of social networks to keep up with news on issues affecting the community had a positive effect on the social capital. Moreover, the research revealed that the use of social network sites for news improved public participation in the society, which led to increased participation in political discussions, online and offline. As such, people who get informed through social sites tended to participate more in issues affecting the community, with such participation leading to new information seeking behavior.

The researchers recommended the investigation of the effects of the socio-economic characteristics of the communities in which respondents live. This will lead to an understanding of the extent to which social economic differences may affect the use of social networks and its effectiveness in improving participation in political and social issues, in the community.

Reference

Gil de Zuniga, H., Jung, N. & Valenzuela, S. (2012). Social Media Use for News and Individuals' Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Political Participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 17, 319-336. doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2012.01574.x