SOCIAL MEDIA USE, POLITICAL EFFICACY AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AMONG YOUTH DURING THE 2016 CAMPAIGN

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines social media use among youth during the 2016 election. Using an email survey administered to undergraduate students at East Carolina University, participants were asked questions about their social media use, political efficacy, and political participation. Based on the literature it was hypothesized that there will be increased political efficacy and increased political participation among youth as a result of social media use and exposure. This study found that there were some statistically significant positive associations between social media use and political participation, and social media use and political efficacy among youth.

INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to discover whether or not using social networking sites was associated with political efficacy and political participation among youth during the 2016 presidential campaign. During election seasons, social networking sites are frequently used to discuss opinions about political candidates and issues. New and interactive social media has contributed to more online political discourse over the years (Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010). The growth of social media has allowed for a greater platform for political interaction. The Pew Research Center found that Americans use the Internet for political news and discourse because it makes it easier to connect with other citizens who have similar political views. The Internet also opens citizens up to a larger source of opinions and viewpoints (Smith, 2011).

Americans are using the Internet and social networking sites at increasingly high rates. The Pew Research Center reported that 69 percent of Americans use some form of social media, and that 86 percent of people aged 18-29 had at least one social media site in 2016 (Pew Research Center, 2017). With the majority of the population using social networking sites, social networking sites could be used as a great tool for engaging people in politics. However, past research on social media's effect on increased political efficacy and political participation in regards to young voters in particular has been somewhat divisive. There has been evidence that shows that using social networking sites to obtain political news has had a positive effect on political efficacy and political participation among young voters, while there has also been evidence that shows the negative effects, or no effect at all.

With social media, Internet, and technology use constantly growing, it is important to explore the current effects it could have on youth voters. This age group is attempting to form their own opinions for the first time in social and political environments. It is important to

understand what drives college-aged students to vote and engage them in political discourse and participation (Niemi and Hanmer, 2010). The 2016 campaign in particular utilized social media in unique ways to involve potential voters. This past election cycle allowed for social media to become more interactive and grow as a medium for sharing political information. With social media growing in campaigns, citizens have more access to political information, which can help them become more politically informed. Politically informed citizens, and specifically youth voters, may be more likely to trust and participate in politics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A major aspect of political campaigns is appealing to voters who are not involved in the political process. Younger voters are known to have less political knowledge than the older population and have higher levels of apathy toward traditional forms of political activity, which contributes to lower voter turnout for this age group (Albrecht, 2006). This lack of political knowledge and interest has become of great concern for political candidates who are trying to win as many votes as possible (Kaid, McKinney, and Tedesco, 2007). This has been a recurring trend for decades, with young people being less likely to participate in politics, belong to a political party, or be concerned with politics (Quintelier, 2007). Additionally, youth voters are notorious for having a lower sense of political efficacy. There are two types of political efficacy: internal political efficacy and external political efficacy. Internal political efficacy is defined as an individual's belief about their ability to understand and to actively participate in politics (Niemi, Craig, and Mattei, 1991). External political efficacy is the belief that the government will respond to one's demands (Craig, Niemi, Silver, 1990). Political efficacy is an important determinant of whether or not a person will participate in political activities (Gil de Zuniga, Jung and Valenzuela, 2012).

Some scholars were hopeful that the rise of the Internet would encourage higher levels of political efficacy and political participation. Since the technology boom took off in the late 1990s and early 2000s, campaigns have used the Internet to engage potential voters. Although it took several election cycles to grow in popularity for campaign use, the Internet has been used as a resource for democracy and reaching out to voters by making politics more inclusive and providing citizens with an easier way to interact. Social networking sites are now widely being

used by politicians to reach a large number of voters in a quick and cost-efficient manner (Mitra, 2001).

Social networking sites give young voters the opportunity to expose themselves to an abundance of political opinions. Being exposed to these opinions could help grow personal interest and knowledge of politics. Interactive social networking sites, like Facebook and Twitter, offer users the chance to expand their form of political engagement (Vitak et al., 2011). Young adults have began using traditional news sources less and relying more on online media to obtain political information (Kohut, 2008). Additionally, young adults widely recognize social media sites as a possible source of political news. Young adults often rely on these sites to obtain news (Baumgartner and Morris, 2009).

Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign was one of the first campaigns that empowered voters through social media (Gibson, 2009). Obama was credited with producing drastically increased voter turnout in 2008 through his social networking efforts (Kahne and Middaugh, 2012). Additionally, research found that social media during the 2008 presidential campaign significantly affected the political knowledge and behaviors of young voters (Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010). In the years following the 2008 election, using social networking sites for political purposes has continued to grow. The 2012 presidential campaign focused on engaging voters through a stronger social media presence. Obama and Romney both used social networking sites as a pivotal part of their campaigns with hopes of encouraging citizens to become involved in the political process (Dalton-Hoffman, 2012). Has social media fulfilled its promise in terms of increased political engagement? Findings are mixed.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) claimed that social network users' main purpose for using social media was to connect with friends and acquaintances and for entertainment purposes, not for

obtaining political content or for political participation. However, political news and information can be found on social networking sites and users have the opportunity to encounter that information. Alternatively, several scholars make the argument that social networking sites can lead to information seeking, and that they can provide an avenue for voters to learn more about political candidates (Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer, and Bichard, 2009). Therefore, social media could be seen as a tool for increasing knowledge about political candidates and could lead to higher levels of political participation. Valenzuela, Park, and Kee (2009) found there were positive associations between using a social networking site and increased youth engagement with civic and social affairs, although the associations were small. This suggests that social networking sites may not be the most effective method for involving youth in democracy (Valenzuela, Park, and Kee, 2009).

Lee (2006) also found some indeterminate evidence on social media and Internet use's effect on political efficacy. Although Lee found that visiting online news sites increased political efficacy, his research also found that visiting the websites of public agencies had a negative effect on external political efficacy of college students. He concluded that some political cynicism might develop as a result of obtaining political information via the Internet (Lee, 2006). Others have found similarly indeterminate results (Ancu and Raluca, 2009; Bode, 2016; Groshek and Dimitrova, 2011; Gil de Zuniga, Molyneux, and Zheng, 2014).

There is some evidence that using social networking sites for political purposes does not increase political efficacy. Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) found that using social media for political campaign information was not significantly correlated with increased political efficacy or political involvement, but that attention to traditional Internet sources positively influences political. They concluded that using social media to obtain political content could help encourage

political participation and increased political efficacy by creating the perception of being engaged with politics, but that some types of content may counteract this effect. For example, content on social media that has a negative message or a strong political partisan message may discourage followers and therefore decrease political efficacy (Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010). This study also concluded that using social media to seek information about politics did not have a significant effect on political efficacy and political involvement during the 2008 election.

Many other scholars have also found that social media use may not have a significant relationship to increased political participation. Vergeer (2012) found that there is no empirical evidence that shows a rise in voter turnout due to increased social media use. A 2009 study by Ancu and Cozma explored why social media users visited the MySpace profiles of 2008 primary candidates, finding that users visited profiles because they wanted social interaction with other like-minded people. Visiting the MySpace profile of political candidates did not have any relation to voters' political efficacy, or interest and involvement in political campaigns.

Often, social media users' feed consists of things they are interested in or people they are friends with. Prior (2005) found that social media users are skilled at finding content they prefer. He argued that people who enjoy political news use social media to obtain that news, but that people who enjoy social media for entertainment use it for that purpose. These findings suggest that people who use social media for political information are already interested in politics. Additionally, Baumgartner and Morris (2009) found that people who use social networking sites to obtain news prefer news that is in line with their prior political views. Social media users tend to explore information that coincides with their own opinions.

Baumgartner and Morris (2009) also found little evidence that showed a relationship between social networking sites and increased political participation, knowledge, or engagement.

Baumgartner and Morris' study focused on using social networking sites for political uses during the 2008 presidential primaries. Their study concluded that many youth receive political news from social networking sites, but that this news doesn't contribute to their political knowledge or political discourse. Additionally, Similar to Vitak et al.'s findings, Baumgartner and Morris found that social media users were more likely to participate in online forms of political activity, such as blogging or forwarding a political e-mail, rather than a high-intensity form of political activity, such as voting. Although some research has shown that young people consider the Internet and social media as a form of news, the Pew Research Center found (2011) that television news is still the most important medium for political campaign news, which could suggest that social media may not be largely viewed as a resourceful took for obtaining political campaign news and information about candidates.

However, several studies have concluded that using news sites on the Internet and social media increases political efficacy. Citizens with a high level of political efficacy report higher levels of involvement with politics (Austin et al., 2008). Kenski and Stroud (2006) found that the Internet could increase political efficacy among voters because it allows users to engage with public officials on a more personal level and enables citizens to hold public officials accountable. Social media also allows citizens to easily access information about politics and politicians, which increases levels of internal political efficacy (Kenski and Stroud, 2006). Prior research has shown that using social networking sites for political information purposes was positively related to increased political efficacy and political participation, since frequent updates give users the feeling that they are more engaged with a candidate (Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010).

Several studies have also found the positive effect that social media can have on political participation. Social media has been shown to encourage political participation by giving the

public a wider network of advertisements, discussion, and expression of opinions dealing with politics (Loader and Mercea, 2011). The Internet and social media are democratizing forms of communication that provide more access to political information, which brings voters into the political process. Social networking sites are considered a unique type of online public sphere, a sociotechnical medium that encourages and facilitates civic discourse and debate (Robertson, Vatrapu, and Medina, 2010).

Vitak et al. (2011) found that higher levels of political activity on Facebook produced high levels of offline political participation. Sharing a politically charged status or "liking" a political candidate's Facebook page significantly predicted the likelihood of someone volunteering for a political organization or signing a petition about a political issue. The intensity of Facebook use and what political material users see on Facebook is a major factor of political participation. Vitak et al.'s findings posed a complex relationship between social media use and political participation, showing that social media use did increase levels of political participation, but that the degree of political participation was relatively low. For example, social media users reported being more likely to watch a debate, which is seen as a low-intensity form of participation, rather than volunteering for a political organization, which is seen as a high-intensity form of participation. Overall, Vitak et al.'s study found a positive correlation between using Facebook for political purpose and general political participation.

Social media has been used as a tool to bring the unengaged and uninformed public into politics. Bekafigo and McBride (2013) found that social networking sites, such as Twitter, have the possibility of bringing the politically unengaged into politics. This study also found that people who are already politically involved and partisan use social media for offline political participation, which has the effect of being encountered by the politically uninformed (Bekafigo

and McBride, 2013). This study found that social media helps bridge the divide between the politically informed and politically uninformed by broadening the medium through which political information is shared (from Bekafigo and McBride, 2013).

In conclusion, findings about the relationship between social media use and political engagement (i.e., political efficacy and political participation) are mixed. However because some previous research (Baker and de Vreese, 2011; Bode, 2012; Boulianne, 2015; Gibson and Cantijoch, 2013) has found a positive relationship, and because the use of social networking sites for political purposes has been on the rise for the past two election cycles, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Social media use among young people is positively related to internal political efficacy.

H2: Social media use among young people is positively related to external political efficacy.

H3: Social media use among young people is positively related to political participation.

DATA AND METHODS

Data were collected from a Web-based survey of college students from February to March 2017. The survey was approved through the Internal Review Board and the Survey Review and Oversight Committee. To obtain the sample, the registrar's office at East Carolina University was contacted with a request of a list of undergraduate student e-mail addresses. A sample of 10,000 undergraduate students was invited to participate in the survey through an e-mail invitation. The email included a brief introductory paragraph and asked students to participate in research being conducted on social media use, political efficacy, and political participation. Students were informed that their participation was voluntary and that the survey would take between 2 and 5 minutes to complete. E-mails were sent to the entire sample on February 24, 2017. An e-mail reminder was sent to students on March 3, 2017 and the survey was closed on March 17, 2017. A total of 1,640 students responded to the e-mail survey, resulting in a response rate of 16.4 percent. Because young people are defined in this study as college students aged 18-24, I dropped 269 participants from the dataset that were above the age of 24. This resulted in a final "N" of 1,371. A complete list of original survey questions can be found in the Appendix.

For this study, the main independent variable of interest is social media use. Social media use was measured by asking respondents the frequency of using social networking sites to obtain political information through the question, "How often do you use a social networking site to obtain political information?" (0=never, 1=sometimes, 2=frequently, 3=always). Respondents were also asked how frequently they encounter political information on a social networking site through the question, "How often do you encounter political information on a social networking site?" (0=never, 1=sometimes, 2=frequently, 3=always).

The dependent variables measured in this study are political efficacy and political participation. Both measures of political efficacy were asked using questions taken directly from the American National Election Study (see www.electionstudies.org/nesguide/gd-index.htm). External political efficacy was measured by asking three questions, the first of which was, "How often can you trust the government in Washington to do what is right?" (1=none of the time, 2=some of the time, 3=most of the time, 4=just about always). The second question asked, "Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of the people?" (1=few big interests, 2= benefit of all, 3= don't know/depends), which was recoded as 1=few big interests, 2=don't know/depends, and 3=benefit of all. A third asked, "Do you think that the people in government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?" (1=a lot, 2=some, 3=not very much, 4=don't know), which was recoded as 1=a lot, 2=some, 3=not very much, and missing data=don't know. Internal efficacy was measured by how strongly one agrees or disagrees with the following two statements: "Public officials don't care much what people like me think." (1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neither agree not disagree, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree), and "People like me don't have any say about what the government does (1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree). Both external and internal efficacy are coded such that lower values correspond with lower levels of efficacy.

Political participation was first measured by asking the respondents whether or not they voted in the 2016 presidential election. Response choices included 1=yes, 2= no, and 3=I was not old enough to vote, which were recoded as 1=yes, 0=no. The response choice, "I was not old enough to vote" was recoded as missing data. Another measure of political participation asked, "Which of the following have you done in the past 12 months? Check all that apply: written or

called a politician at the state, local, or national level; written a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine, or called a live radio or TV show to express a political opinion; written a blog post to express a political opinion; written a Facebook post to express a political opinion; written a Tweet to express a political opinion; forwarded a political e-mail to another person." For each activity, a "1" was assigned if they participated and a "0" was assigned if not. Responses were then added to form an index.

Political and demographic variables are controlled for in the analysis as well. Partisan identification was measured by responses to the question, "What is your party identification?" (1=strong Democrat, 2=Democrat, 3=Independent or leaning Democrat, 4=Independent or undecided, 5=Independent or leaning Republican, 6=Republican, 7=strong Republican). This variable was recoded into two dummy variables, Democrat (which included the choices "strong Democrat," "Democrat," and "Independent or leaning Democrat; 0=no 1=yes), and Republican ("strong Republican," "Republican," and "Independent or leaning Republican; 0=no 1=yes).

Similar to party identification, political ideology was measured by asking, "What are your ideological political views?" (1=very liberal, 2=liberal, 3=moderate or leaning liberal, 4=moderate or undecided, 5=moderate or leaning conservative, 6=conservative, 7= very conservative). This variable was also recoded into two dummy variables, Liberal ("very liberal," "liberal," and "moderate or leaning liberal"; 0=no, 1=yes), and Conservative (very conservative, 2= conservative, 3=moderate or leaning conservative; 0=no, 1=yes).

Participants' primary source of news was measured by responses to the question, "What is your primary source of news?" (1=social networking sites, 2=television news programs, 3=newspaper, 4=podcast/radio news, 5=online news sites). This variable was then recoded into 3 dummy variables: SNS, Primary News (0=no, 1=yes), TV, Primary News (0=no, 1=yes), and

Web, Primary News (0=no, 1=yes). Demographic questions included age (as entered by respondents), gender (0=male, 1=female), and race (1=White, 2=Black, 3=Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin, 4=American Indian, 5=Asian, 6=Other), which was then recoded into a dummy variable, (0=White, 1=other).

ANALYSIS

Regression analysis was used to test the relationship between social media use and political participation, and the relationship between social media use and political efficacy among youth voters. A number of analyses yielded insignificant results. A total of 14 models were run, with statistical significance for the main independent variable being found in only six of the models. All models in which my primary independent variables achieved statistical significance are included in the tables. Table 1 shows the relationship between the effects of using social networking sites to obtain political information on political efficacy and political participation.

Table 1. Effects of Using Social Networking Sites to Obtain Political Information on Political Efficacy and Political Participation

	External Efficacy (Waste)	*Internal Efficacy (No Say)*	*Participation (Index)*	*Participation (Vote in 2016?)*
SNS Use for Pol. Info	.05 (.02)*	.16 (.04)***	.46 (.04)***	.05 (.01)***
SNS, Primary News	-.06 (.09)	-.28 (.17)	-.56 (.17)**	-.03 (.06)
TV, Primary News	-.00 (.09)	-.02 (.18)	-.26 (.17)	.03 (.06)
Web, Primary News	-.06 (.09)	.00 (.17)	-.10 (.17)	.01 (.06)
Age	-.03 (.01)*	.03 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.01)*
Gender	.07 (.04)*	-.08 (.07)	-.05 (.07)	.01 (.02)
Race	-.07 (.04)	-.12 (.08)	-.09 (.07)	-.01 (.03)
Republican	-.04 (.05)	.32 (.09)***	.26 (.08)**	.29 (.03)***
Democrat	-.08 (.05)	.12 (.09)	.67 (.09)***	.36 (.03)***
Constant	2.01 (.23)***	2.25 (.44)***	.09 (.42)	.16 (.16)
Adjusted R2	.01	.03	.17	.11
N	1,290	1,351	1,353	1,345

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

The first step in the analysis was to determine whether or not using social networking sites for political information led to an increase in external political efficacy. Table 1 shows that using social networking sites to obtain political information had a statistically significant positive

relationship with external political efficacy. The second step in the analysis was to determine whether or not using social networking sites was associated with an increase in internal political efficacy. Table 1 shows that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between using social networking sites to obtain political information and internal political efficacy. The last step in the analysis was to determine whether or not using social networking sites was associated with to an increase in political participation. Table 1 shows a statistically significant positive relationship between using social networking sites to obtain political information and both measurements of political participation.

Table 2 presents the findings of the analyses exploring the relationship between encountering political information through social networking sites on political efficacy and political participation.

Table 2. Effects of Encountering Political Information through Social Networking Sites on Political Efficacy and Political Participation

	External Efficacy (Big Interests)	*Participation (Index)*
Encounter Pol. Info SNS	-.07 (.03)*	.27 (.04)***
SNS, Primary News	-.16 (.14)	-.35 (.17)*
TV, Primary News	-.05 (.14)	-.22 (.17)
Web, Primary News	-.23 (.14)	.01 (.17)
Age	-.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Gender	-.03 (.06)	-.09 (.07)
Race	-.09 (.06)	-.04 (.08)
Republican	.23 (.07)**	.24 (.09)**
Democrat	-.16 (.07)*	.77 (.09)***
Constant	2.52 (.36)***	.03 (.44)
Adjusted R2	.06	.1
N	1,352	1,352

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

First, the relationship between encountering political information through social networking sites and external political efficacy was analyzed. Table 2 shows that encountering

political information through social networking sites has a statistically significant negative relationship with external political efficacy. For internal efficacy, there was no statistically significant relationship found between using social networking sites to obtain political information and internal political efficacy. Lastly, I analyzed the relationship between encountering political information through social networking sites and political participation. Table 2 shows that using social networking sites to obtain political information had a statistically significant positive relationship with the political participation index. However, there was no statistically significant relationship between encountering political information through social networking sites and voting in the 2016 election.

DISCUSSION

Although the analyses slightly support the hypotheses, the results were more disappointing than expected. Only one variable out of three that measured external political efficacy showed a statistically significant positive relationship with using social networking sites to obtain political information. Furthermore, only one variable out of two that measured internal political efficacy showed a statistically significant positive relationship with using social networking sites to obtain political information. Additionally, it was disappointing that the only statistically significant relationship between external political efficacy and encountering political information on social networking sites was a negative relationship. There was no other statistically significant positive relationship between any measurement of external or internal political efficacy and encountering political information on social networking sites. The results are somewhat promising for the political participation index, with both measurements of social media use showing a statistically significant positive relationship.

It is to be noted that no other variable reached statistical significance across the models, with the partial exception of party identification. However, this was to be expected since strong partisans are typically more politically interested. Moreover, most of the tests run were not very conservative. Citizens that use social networking sites for political purposes are most likely already politically involved people, which could explain the positive relationship. Encountering political information through social networking sites was a more conservative measurement of social networking sites use, however, there was no positive relationship to be shown between political efficacy and political participation.

This study was conducted in the expectation of finding a positive relationship between social media use and political efficacy and political participation among young people. Although

several positive relationships were found between the variables, the results were not strong. This study showed that the potential for using social networking sites to engage youth in the political process may be unrealized. However, data from this study did find that youth frequently use social networking sites and that many consider social networking sites as a primary source of news. This implies that campaigns may not be effectively utilizing social media to engage youth voters.

Further research on this topic could focus on exploring different types of social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat, and the impact they have on political engagement among youth. These social media applications added new features throughout the election cycle that helped to engage citizens in politics, so exploring the effects that they had on political participation could be beneficial. Future research could also focus on other universities or a different region to get a better sample of the population. It would be interesting to survey non-college aged youth students as well, and compare their political participation levels and sense of political efficacy to college students.

Another avenue of research related to this topic would be how using social networking sites for political information affected different types of political involvement, such as watching a political debate versus volunteering for a political campaign. This study only listed several broad types of participation, so a larger and more specific scale may produce different results. Distinguishing between online and offline participation would be an interesting addition to the research as well. A youth that heavily uses social media may be more likely to participate in online political communication verses offline political participation. This could help politicians tailor their campaigns to effectively encourage political engagement among youth.

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APPENDIX A- SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1: How often can you trust the government in Washington to do what is right?

1. None of the time
2. Some of the time
3. Most of the time
4. Just about always

Q2: Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of the people?

1. Few big interests
2. Benefit of all
3. Don't know/depends

Q3: Do you think that the people in government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?

1. A lot
2. Some
3. Not very much
4. Don't know

Q4: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Public officials don't care much what people like me think.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Q5: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: People like me don't have any say about what the government does.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Q6: Did you vote in the 2016 presidential election?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I was not old enough to vote

Q7: Which of the following have you done in the past 12 months? Check all that apply.

1. Written or called a politician at the state, local, or national level.

2. Written a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine, or called a live radio or TV show to express a political opinion.
3. Written a blog post to express a political opinion.
4. Written a Facebook post to express a political opinion.
5. Written a Tweet to express a political opinion.
6. Forwarded a political e-mail to another person.

Q8: How often do you use a social networking site?

1. Every day
2. 5-6 times a week
3. 3-4 times a week
4. 1-2 times a week
5. Sporadically
6. Never

Q9: How often do you use a social networking site to obtain political information?

1. Never
2. Sometimes
3. Frequently
4. Always

Q10: How often do you encounter political information on a social networking site? (Ex: See a friend post a politically opinionated Facebook status or Tweet, see a political news article shared on Facebook or Twitter, etc.)

1. Never
2. Sometimes
3. Frequently
4. Always

Q11: What is your primary source of news?

1. Social networking sites
2. Television (broadcast and cable) news programs
3. Newspaper
4. Podcasts/radio news
5. Online news sites

Q12: Do you follow political candidates on social networking sites?

1. Yes
2. No

Q13: Enter your age:

Q14: Identify your gender:

1. Male
2. Female

Q15: Identify your race/ethnicity:

1. White
2. Black
3. Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
4. American Indian
5. Asian
6. Other

Q16: What is your party identification?

1. Strong Democrat
2. Democrat
3. Independent or leaning Democrat
4. Independent or undecided
5. Independent or leaning Republican
6. Republican
7. Strong Republican

Q17: What are your ideological political views?

1. Very conservative
2. Conservative
3. Moderate or leaning conservative
4. Moderate or undecided
5. Moderate or leaning liberal
6. Liberal
7. Very liberal

APPENDIX B- IRB APPROVAL LETTER

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office
4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** · **www.ecu.edu/irb**

Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: Kathryn Stanley
CC:
Jody Baumgartner
Date: 1/30/2017
Re: UMCIRB 16-002267
Did Social Media Use Increase Political Efficacy and Political Participation Among Youth During the 2016 Election?

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 1/30/2017. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category #2.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

The UMCIRB office will hold your exemption application for a period of five years from the date of this letter. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond this period, you will need to submit an Exemption Certification request at least 30 days before the end of the five year period.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.