

Political Communication and Digital Participation in Arequipa, Peru: Social Media Consumption and Media Credibility

Miluska Odely Rodriguez Saavedra¹, Antonio Víctor Morales Gonzales¹, Ivan Cuentas Galindo¹, Luis Miguel Campos Ascuña¹, Jiang Wagner Mamani Lopez¹, Rocio Natividad Caira Mamani¹, Sharon Veronika Liendo Terán¹, Robinson Bernardino Almanza Cabe¹

¹Facultad de Economía, Universidad Nacional de San Agustín de Arequipa, Perú

Correspondence: Miluska Odely Rodriguez Saavedra, Universidad Nacional de San Agustín de Arequipa, Perú.

Received: December 29, 2025

Accepted: February 13, 2026

Online Published: February 19, 2026

doi:10.11114/smc.v14i2.8332

URL: <https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v14i2.8332>

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between social media use for political information, digital citizen participation, and media credibility in Arequipa, Peru's second-largest city. The sample consisted of 4,769 adults residing in urban areas of four provinces. A quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional design with a correlational-explanatory scope was used. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered in person between November and December 2024. The analysis was performed using structural equation modeling with Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0. The main findings are: (1) the use of social media for political information is positively associated with digital citizen participation ($\beta = 0.614$, $p < 0.001$); (2) the use of social media is negatively associated with media credibility ($\beta = -0.312$, $p < 0.001$); (3) digital citizen participation is negatively associated with media credibility ($\beta = -0.418$, $p < 0.001$); (4) digital citizen participation partially mediates the relationship between social media use and media credibility (VAF = 45.2%); (5) age moderates platform preference, with young users adopting TikTok and Instagram more intensely; and (6) socioeconomic status moderates the relationship between social media use and media credibility, being more negative in lower socioeconomic strata. Facebook dominates with 75.1% among social media and 42% among all information sources, while 66% of respondents report a negative image of journalists. The results show changes in information consumption patterns, with digital platforms replacing traditional media and eroding media credibility.

Keywords: Digital political communication, social media, citizen participation, media credibility, information consumption.

1. Introduction

Digital technologies have brought about changes in the media landscape over the past two decades (Subekti et al., 2023), and the increase in information has led to the decline of traditional media. Social media has reached its peak usage as a result of digital platforms that enable interactivity, content creation, and connections between users. The interactivity offered by social media allows the public to create and share experiences on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter/X. With the use of social media, patterns of political communication and methods of establishing relationships between citizens and political actors have changed (Aagaard, 2023). These platforms offer opportunities for direct communication between political leaders and citizens, eliminating traditional intermediaries such as journalists and the media.

In this study, digital citizen participation is defined as the set of communication strategies that political actors and parties employ on social media platforms to interact with citizens, including content dissemination, direct messaging, and bidirectional communication. This concept differs from traditional grassroots citizen participation and focuses on how political institutions use digital tools for political communication.

However, they have also raised concerns about their impact on the credibility of traditional media and forms of citizen participation. Several studies indicate that the use of social media for political information consumption can alter perceptions of credibility toward journalists and established media, generating mistrust of traditional sources of information (Ariel & Elishar, 2025; Fenoll et al., 2024; Saldaña et al., 2024; Schäfer, 2023).

Research has explored differences in the use of social media for political information consumption. Farkas and Bene (2021) have shown that citizens tend to use these digital spaces to access political information selectively, prioritizing content that aligns with their ideological preferences. Fenoll et al. (2024) analyzed electoral campaigns in Brazil,

Colombia, Chile, and Peru, demonstrating that divisive issues and political polarization trigger intense emotional reactions on Facebook, with users in more polarized contexts exhibiting stronger affective responses to political content. Novelli et al. (2025) examined the visual political communication of competing leaders during the 2024 European elections in Italy, demonstrating that social media privileges visual content over textual content in election campaigns. Recent research such as Baranowski (2022); Juita et al. (2024) and Orosa (2022) has shown that constant exposure to political information in the digital space encourages new forms of citizen participation, as people focus on consuming, sharing, and commenting on political content without necessarily engaging in traditional forms of activism. Bene & Szabó (2021) argue that digital technologies have created a participatory culture where content consumption is itself a form of participation. Dommett & Verovšek (2021) propose that civic participation includes passive forms such as selective consumption of political information, which, although not involving active mobilization, represent forms of civic engagement. Boulianne (2015) demonstrates that social media use is associated with increases in civic participation, although the effects are moderate and depend on specific contexts. In Latin America, recent studies indicate that citizens of Latin American societies use social media intensively, exposing them to phenomena such as the fragmentation of the public sphere, political polarization, and the erosion of the credibility of traditional media. Andrade et al. (2025) demonstrated that political communication on social media significantly influences users' digital support in Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia, with differentiated patterns across countries reflecting distinct political and media ecosystems. Chagas and Da-Costa (2023) analyzed the effects of WhatsApp's opacity on research agendas on political communication in Brazil. Lozano-Recalde (2025) examined the use of social media in political crises in Ecuador, concluding that governments use digital platforms for direct communication with citizens, avoiding traditional media. In Peru, and in Arequipa, the country's second most populous city, the media landscape has undergone changes. Data from this study show that Facebook is used by 88% of Arequipa citizens for any purpose, and 75.1% of respondents identify it as their most frequently used platform for political information consumption. However, there has also been growth in emerging platforms such as TikTok, which has gained relevance among young audiences. At the same time, the credibility of traditional media has declined, with 66% of citizens reporting a negative image of journalists, associated with perceptions of editorial bias, sensationalism, and a disconnect between journalistic elites and popular sectors.

Peru's media system operates within a democratic framework with constitutionally guaranteed press freedom. According to Reporters Without Borders (2024), Peru ranks 110th globally in the World Press Freedom Index, facing challenges including economic pressures on media outlets, concentration of media ownership, and political polarization affecting editorial independence. The country has experienced tensions between government authorities and the press during periods of political instability. Media outlets in Peru range from traditional newspapers and television networks concentrated in Lima to regional broadcasters serving provincial audiences. In recent years, the media ecosystem has been increasingly characterized by digital transformation, with social media platforms becoming primary sources of political information for large segments of the population in urban centers outside the capital (Rodríguez-Saavedra et al., 2026). This context of democratic media operations combined with declining public trust in traditional journalism creates a relevant setting for examining relationships between digital political communication and media credibility.

Political communication on social media has become a component of interaction between citizens, the media, and political actors, providing direct channels of connection that challenge traditional structures of media intermediation (Berlanga-Fernández & De Barrón, 2021). This disintermediation creates tensions between the traditional role of the media as gatekeepers and the new dynamics of direct access to political information. Citizens can directly follow political actors, access primary sources, and participate in political conversations without relying on journalists as intermediaries. However, this process also raises questions about the quality of information, fact-checking, and the sustainability of professional journalism. The most widely used social networks for political communication are Facebook and WhatsApp, reflecting global usage patterns (Sánchez-Gutiérrez et al., 2025). Emerging platforms such as TikTok and Instagram have gained relevance, especially among young audiences, who prioritize visual content and short formats. These generational differences in platform use indicate that age moderates digital information consumption preferences (Blasch, 2021). Additionally, socioeconomic status influences perceptions of media credibility, with lower-income sectors showing greater distrust of traditional media compared to higher-income sectors (Fletcher & Park, 2017; Newman et al., 2023). Based on the above, this article aims to verify the relationship between political communication on social media and digital citizen participation, based on information consumption and the credibility of traditional media.

Given this context, this study addresses the following overarching research question: How does the use of social media for political information relate to digital citizen participation and perceptions of media credibility in the Arequipa region of Peru? To answer this question, we test six hypotheses examining direct relationships, mediation effects, and moderating factors.

This study proposes that digital citizen participation acts as a mediating mechanism in the relationship between social media use and media credibility. Increased social media use generates greater digital citizen participation, measured as digital information consumption, which in turn influences perceptions of traditional media credibility. Mediation

hypothesis H4 examines whether the effect of social media use on media credibility operates partially or fully through digital participation behaviors, providing evidence on the mechanisms through which digital platforms affect trust in traditional journalism.

2. Literature Review

The literature review allowed the researcher to systematically analyze the most recent scientific production related to the topic of study, understanding the main positions, findings, and existing gaps. This defined the focus of the research and specified the contribution that was integrated into scientific and academic knowledge. In this study, the literature review was organized into the following subsections:

2.1 *Digital Political Communication and Social Media*

Digital platforms have changed the ecosystems of contemporary political communication, altering the traditional dynamics between political actors, the media, and citizens (Böhmer, 2022). Digital political communication is characterized by interactivity, media disintermediation, and the ability of users to actively participate in the production and circulation of content (Adamczewska, 2024).

In Europe, recent studies have examined political communication strategies on digital platforms. Velasco et al. (2025) analyzed digital political communication in the European Parliament during the 2024 elections, identifying significant differences in the use of emerging platforms. The findings reveal that political parties adapt their communication strategies according to the affordances of each platform.

Political parties prioritize short-form video content on TikTok, professional imagery and visual narratives on Instagram, and extended political discourse on Facebook and Twitter, reflecting platform-specific engagement patterns and audience demographics.

Pineda et al. (2025) analyzed the communication of Andalusian political parties on Instagram, demonstrating that visual communication has become a central component of digital political strategies. Casas-Mas et al. (2024) confirmed these findings in a comparative study, identifying consistent patterns in the use of images by politicians on social media, with significant effects on public perception and engagement.

In Latin America, digital political communication has distinctive characteristics linked to contexts of political polarization, media concentration, and inequality in digital access. Haman (2023) analyzed the unequal use of Twitter by parliamentarians in Latin America, identifying significant gaps between countries and between political actors. The results show that factors such as economic resources, membership in majority parties, and political experience influence the intensity and sophistication of social media use.

Castillero-Ostio et al. (2025) examined presidential campaigns in Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia, concluding that political communication on social media significantly influences users' digital support. In Ecuador, Cristòfol et al. (2024) analyzed the use of social media during political crises, demonstrating that the Ecuadorian government used Facebook and Twitter to manage communication in real time, avoiding the intermediation of traditional media. Rodrigo-Mendizábal (2023) complemented this analysis from the perspective of affective computing, showing that Ecuadorian election campaigns in 2021 used sentiment analysis algorithms to adapt messages in real time.

Chagas and Da-Costa (2023) analyzed the effects of WhatsApp's opacity on research agendas on political communication in Brazil, arguing that the platform's closed architecture hinders academic and public scrutiny of disinformation campaigns. Boulianne and Larsson (2024) conducted a comparative analysis of digital political communication across countries, platforms, and time periods, concluding that institutional, cultural, and technological factors moderate the communication strategies of political actors. The authors found that demographic and contextual variables, including age, education, political interest, and institutional frameworks, influence the strength and direction of relationships between social media use and political participation, with effects varying substantially across national contexts.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that social media platforms have transformed political communication by enabling direct interaction between political actors and citizens, bypassing traditional media intermediaries. This transformation is evident in how political parties adapt their strategies to different platform affordances. Recent studies in Latin America confirm these patterns: Fenoll et al. (2025) demonstrated that presidential campaigns in Brazil, Colombia, Chile, and Peru employ populist rhetoric and differentiated mobilization strategies on Facebook, while Osorio Andrade and Arango Espinal (2025) found that political defenses on Instagram increase comments by 58.6% and likes by 57.2% in Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia. These findings support hypothesis H1: social media use for political information is positively associated with digital citizen participation.

2.2 *Social Media Use and Citizen Participation*

Citizen participation in digital environments has been conceptualized in various ways in the literature. Han et al. (2021)

propose that civic participation includes both active and passive forms, and that information consumption constitutes a form of civic engagement. Lampoltshammer et al. (2023) introduce the concept of “participatory culture,” arguing that content consumption on digital platforms represents a form of participation, as users actively select sources, share content, and contribute to the construction of public agendas.

Machado et al. (2024) propose a typology of digital participation that distinguishes between passive (information consumption), reactive (likes, comments), and active (content creation, mobilization) levels. Magin et al. (2024) conducted a meta-analysis of studies on social media and political participation, concluding that social media use predicts both passive and active forms of citizen participation, although the size of the effect varies according to national contexts and demographic characteristics.

Jitsaeng and Tuamsuk (2022) examined digital factors that influence the use of social media for political communication among young Thais, identifying that ease of access, interactivity, and diversity of sources positively influence intensity of use. Nguyen et al. (2022) analyzed the interactive dimension of social media and political communication, arguing that interactivity not only facilitates information consumption but also transforms forms of citizen participation.

Gamir-Ríos et al. (2022) analyzed the evolution of digital political communication between 2011 and 2019, identifying a decline in the use of blogs, a decrease in the use of Facebook, a generalization of the use of Twitter, and a popularization of Instagram. This finding contrasts with data from contexts such as Arequipa, where Facebook continues to be the dominant platform.

The reviewed studies indicate a consistent pattern of transformation in forms of citizen participation, where consumption of political information on social media constitutes an active form of civic engagement. Latin American evidence documents that political polarization intensifies users' emotional reactions, Fenoll et al. (2024) found that Brazil presents the highest polarization index (0.97), followed by Peru (0.77), Chile (0.73), and Colombia (0.72), generating more intense reactions of Love and Anger on Facebook. Additionally, Saldaña et al. (2024) demonstrated that misinformation and news use affect media trust during Chile's constitutional referendum. These findings support hypotheses H2 and H3: social media use for political information is negatively associated with media credibility, and digital citizen participation is negatively associated with media credibility.

2.3 Media Credibility and Trust in Journalism

Media credibility refers to the perception of trust and truthfulness that audiences attribute to the media and journalists (Schäfer, 2023). In recent decades, multiple studies have documented a widespread decline in trust in traditional media, a phenomenon linked to perceptions of editorial bias, media concentration, and a disconnect between journalistic elites and the general public (Chibuwe, 2024).

Chagas & Da-Costa (2023) analyzed the role of fake news as a form of political communication in post-Mugabe Zimbabwe, arguing that the proliferation of misinformation on digital platforms erodes the credibility of traditional media. Kalluçi and Peshkopia (2024) proposed three metrics for measuring communication between digital echo chambers: invasiveness, intrusiveness, and influence. The study shows that the fragmentation of the digital public space into polarized communities reduces exposure to diverse perspectives and increases mistrust of information sources perceived as external to the group.

Mihálik et al. (2022) analyzed digital heuristics used by political parties in hybrid media environments, arguing that political actors strategically adapt their messages to maximize visibility and engagement, often prioritizing virality over veracity. Pruitt (2024) examined the role of alternative journalists on social media in declining democracies in Central America, concluding that digital platforms have enabled the emergence of independent journalistic voices that challenge traditional media narratives.

The literature on digital mediation indicates that social media platforms affect media credibility both directly and through indirect mechanisms. Digital participation behaviors, including selective information consumption and content sharing, alter exposure to traditional media and reshape trust perceptions. Recent studies in Latin America document these disintermediation effects, Lozano-Recalde (2025) demonstrated that Ecuadorian governments use digital platforms for direct communication with citizens, avoiding traditional media, while Chagas and Da-Costa (2023) evidenced that WhatsApp's closed architecture in Brazil hinders academic and public scrutiny of disinformation campaigns. This theoretical framework supports hypothesis H4: digital citizen participation mediates the relationship between social media use and media credibility.

2.4 Social Media, Political Communication and Media Credibility in Latin America

Latin America has characteristics that shape particular dynamics in the relationship between social media, political communication, and media credibility. Mancera (2025) conducted a meta-analysis of research on political

communication on social media in Spain and Latin America, identifying that studies in the region have focused mainly on Twitter and Facebook, with an emphasis on election campaigns and political party strategies.

Snoussi et al. (2023) analyzed political communication and digital propaganda in Andalusia, identifying political party strategies on Twitter. The study concludes that parties use social media to evade the scrutiny of traditional media and communicate directly with audiences. In Brazil, Bachini et al. (2022) analyzed 2020 municipal campaigns on Facebook, concluding that candidates used the platform to disseminate proposals, attack opponents, and mobilize voters. In Ecuador, Zebib (2022) applied affective computing techniques to analyze the 2021 runoff election, demonstrating that campaigns used real-time sentiment analysis to tailor messages. Lozano-Recalde (2025) complemented this analysis by examining the use of social media during political crises. Research on media credibility in Andean contexts such as Peru remains limited, which is a gap that this study seeks to address.

The reviewed evidence demonstrates that demographic factors significantly moderate digital political communication patterns. Age influences platform preferences, with young users gravitating toward visual platforms like TikTok and Instagram, while socioeconomic status affects both digital literacy and perceptions of media credibility. Latin American studies confirm these dynamics. Rosenberg et al. (2023) documented that incivility on Twitter during Chilean presidential debates generates greater engagement but erodes political discourse quality. These patterns support moderating hypotheses H5 and H6: age moderates the relationship between social media use and platform preference, and socioeconomic status moderates the relationship between social media use and media credibility.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study constitutes fundamental research focused on generating theoretical knowledge about relationships between social media use, digital participation, and media credibility, rather than developing immediate practical applications or interventions. The method used is hypothetical-deductive, starting from a theoretical framework to formulate hypotheses that are empirically tested. The approach is quantitative, based on the numerical measurement of variables and statistical analysis to identify patterns and relationships. The design is non-experimental and cross-sectional, as variables are not manipulated and data are collected at a single point in time (Rodríguez Saavedra et al., 2025). The level of research is correlational-explanatory, seeking not only to identify associations between variables but also to examine theoretically grounded directional relationships using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

PLS-SEM was selected for its effectiveness in exploratory contexts, its ability to handle complex models with multiple relationships, and its robustness in the face of non-normal data distributions (Farkas & Bene, 2021). The study is guided by theoretical frameworks on media disintermediation (Orosa, 2022), digital participation (Schäfer, 2013), and perceived credibility in hybrid media environments (Boulianne & Larsson, 2024).

3.2 Research Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework and literature review presented, six research hypotheses were formulated to guide the empirical analysis of the study. Table 1 summarizes the proposed hypotheses, the statement of each one, and the type of relationship examined.

Table 1. Research hypotheses

Hypothesis	Statement	Type of Relationship
H1	The use of social media for political information is positively associated with digital civic engagement	Direct (+)
H2	The use of social media for political information is negatively associated with media credibility	Direct (-)
H3	Digital citizen participation is negatively associated with media credibility	Direct (-)
H4	Digital citizen participation mediates the relationship between social media use and media credibility	Mediation
H5	Age moderates the relationship between social media use and platform preference	Moderation
H6	Socioeconomic status moderates the relationship between social media use and media credibility	Moderation

Hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 examine direct relationships between constructs, while H4 evaluates a mediating effect and hypotheses H5 and H6 explore moderating effects of sociodemographic variables.

3.3 Population and Sample

The population consists of citizens over the age of 18 residing in the Arequipa region of Peru, with an estimated urban population of approximately 1,200,000 adults. The sample consists of 4,769 respondents selected through stratified random sampling by province and socioeconomic status.

The Arequipa region was selected as the study site for theoretically relevant reasons. Arequipa is Peru's second-largest city and represents a significant urban center outside the capital, being representative of provincial trends in media consumption and political engagement. The region exhibits high levels of social media adoption (88% Facebook penetration) while maintaining exposure to traditional media, providing an ideal context to examine tensions between digital and traditional information sources. The region has demonstrated active political participation and historically documented civil society engagement, constituting a relevant case for studying digital political communication. Arequipa's socioeconomic diversity, from affluent urban districts to lower-income peripheral areas, allows examination of how socioeconomic status moderates media consumption patterns. These characteristics indicate that findings from Arequipa are generalizable to other medium-to-large Latin American cities experiencing similar digital transformations in their media ecosystems.

The sample size provides a margin of error of $\pm 1.4\%$ with a 95% confidence level. The stratified sampling procedure ensured representativeness in key demographic segments, including age, gender, socioeconomic status, and district of residence. Random selection within the strata was conducted to minimize selection bias and strengthen external validity. Based on the above, Table 2 shows the distribution of the sample by province.

Table 2. Distribution of the sample by province

Province	Population (%)	Sample (n)
Arequipa	87.1%	4,149
Camaná	4.0%	191
Caylloma	4.8%	229
Islay	4.2%	200
Total	100%	4,769

The provincial distribution reflects the population concentration in the region, with the province of Arequipa accounting for 87.1% of the sample with 4,149 cases, followed by Caylloma with 4.8% (229 cases), Islay with 4.2% (200 cases), and Camaná with 4.0% (191 cases). This distribution ensures proportional representation of the population density of each province. Additionally, the sample was stratified considering sociodemographic characteristics that allow for the analysis of differences between groups. Table 3 presents the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample, including distribution by gender, age, and socioeconomic status.

Table 3. Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	2,385	50.0%
	Female	2,384	50.0%
Age	18-25 years old	953	20.0%
	26-35 years old	1,144	24.0%
	36-45 years old	1,049	22.0%
	46-55 years old	906	19.0%
	56+ years old	717	15.0%
Socioeconomic status	Low	1,860	39.0%
	Medium	2,289	48.0%
	High	620	13.0%

The gender distribution is balanced, with 50.0% men (2,385 cases) and 50.0% women (2,384 cases). In terms of age, the largest group corresponds to people between 26 and 35 years old with 24.0% (1,144 cases), followed by the 36 to 45 age group with 22.0% (1,049 cases), the 18 to 25 age group with 20.0% (953 cases), the 46-55 age group with 19.0% (906 cases), and finally the 56 and over age group with 15.0% (717 cases). The distribution by socioeconomic level shows that 48.0% belong to the middle level (2,289 cases), 39.0% to the low level (1,860 cases), and 13.0% to the high level (620 cases). This distribution reflects the demographic composition of the Arequipa region.

3.4 Research Variables

The study examines three constructs organized as exogenous and endogenous variables. The exogenous variable is the use of social media for political information (URIP), defined as the degree to which individuals use social media platforms as primary sources for political information. The endogenous variables are digital civic participation (DCP), operationalized as digital information consumption based on theoretical frameworks that conceptualize consumption as a form of civic engagement (Zebib, 2022; Pruitt, 2024), and media credibility (MC), defined as the perceived trust and truthfulness attributed to journalists and traditional media. Control variables include age, gender, socioeconomic status, and district of residence. To clarify the measurement of each construct, Table 4 presents the detailed operationalization of the study variables.

Table 4. Operationalization of variables

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicators	Author Base	Scale
Use of Social Media for Political Information (URIP)	Degree of use of social media as a primary source of political information	Primary source of information. Platforms used. Frequency of use. Diversification of sources.	Boulianne & Larsson (2024)	Nominal/5-point Likert scale
Digital Citizen Participation (PCD)	Level of information consumption through digital platforms	Intensity of digital information consumption. Diversification of digital sources. Media disintermediation. Perceived autonomy.	(Zebib, 2022; Pruitt, 2024)	5-point Likert scale
Media Credibility (CM)	Trust and perceived accuracy of journalists and traditional media	Image of journalists. Trust in traditional media. Perceived veracity. Comparative credibility.	Schäfer (2023); Chibuwe (2024)	Nominal/5-point Likert scale
Control Variables	Sociodemographic characteristics	Age. Gender. Socioeconomic status. District.	-	Ratio/Nominal

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered in person. The instrument was designed based on established scales adapted to the local context and validated by five experts in media studies and political communication, as well as a pilot test with 150 respondents. The questionnaire consists of four sections: sociodemographic data, use of social media for political information, digital citizen participation, and media credibility. The items in sections two, three, and four were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree), except for the questions on main source and platforms used, which used a single-selection nominal scale. The detailed structure of the questionnaire is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Structure of the questionnaire

Section	Content	Number of Items	Type of Measurement
1. Sociodemographic Data	Age, gender, socioeconomic status, district	4	Nominal/Ratio
2. Social Media Use	Main source of information, platforms used, frequency of use	6	Nominal/5-point Likert
3. Digital Citizen Participation	Intensity of information consumption, diversification, disintermediation, autonomy	5	5-point Likert
4. Media Credibility	Image of journalists, trust in the media, perceived accuracy	4	Nominal/5-point Likert
Total		19	

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out between November 11 and December 16, 2024, through face-to-face interviews administered by Move Group, a public opinion consulting firm based in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which was responsible for the methodological design, development, and implementation of this research. Participant recruitment employed a multi-stage stratified sampling approach. In the first stage, the four provinces within the Arequipa region were identified as primary sampling units. In the second stage, urban districts within each province were selected proportionally to population size. In the third stage, Move Group deployed a team of 48 trained interviewers assigned to geographic areas according to the stratified sampling design. Within each district, interviewers used systematic random route procedures to select households, approaching potential participants in both residential areas and public spaces such as markets, parks, and commercial zones. Within selected households, one eligible respondent aged 18 or older was randomly selected using the Kish grid method. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before beginning the interview. Each face-to-face interview lasted approximately 15-20 minutes and was conducted in Spanish. Control measures included verification of 20% of interviews through telephone callbacks, daily review of completed questionnaires by field supervisors, and GPS verification of interview locations. Data quality checks identified and excluded inconsistent or incomplete responses, ensuring the final sample of 4,769 valid cases.

3.7 Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted in two phases using SPSS v.25 for descriptive statistics and SmartPLS 4.0 for structural equation modeling. The two-stage approach of Nguyen et al. (2022) was followed, first evaluating the measurement model (reliability of indicators, internal consistency, convergent and discriminant validity) and then the structural model (path coefficients, R^2 , f^2 , Q^2 , and SRMR), applying bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples to assess statistical significance.

4. Results

The results are presented in two subsections. First, descriptive statistics of media consumption patterns and scale characteristics are reported. Second, the structural equation model is evaluated using PLS-SEM, including validation of the measurement model and hypothesis testing in the structural model.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The data reveal important patterns in political information consumption and perceptions of media credibility in the Arequipa region. Table 6 presents the distribution of primary sources of political information, where Facebook represents 42.0% of the main sources (2,003 cases), followed by television with 31.0% (1,478 cases) and radio with 16.0% (763 cases). Digital platforms as a whole (Facebook 42.0%, TikTok 5.0%, digital newspapers 2.0%, and Instagram 1.0%) represent 50.0% of primary sources, surpassing traditional media, which account for 49.0% (television 31.0%, radio 16.0%, print newspapers 2.0%). TikTok emerges as an information source with 5.0% (238 cases), while print newspapers represent only 2.0% (95 cases), highlighting the decline of traditional print media.

Table 6. Main source of political information

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	2,003	42.0%
Television	1,478	31.0%
Radio	763	16.0%
TikTok	238	5.0%
Digital newspapers	95	2.0%
Print newspapers	95	2.0%
Instagram	48	1.0%
Other	49	1.0%
Total	4,769	100%

Regarding the social media platform most frequently used for political information, Table 7 shows that Facebook maintains a dominant position with 75.1% (3,581 cases), consolidating its position as the main platform for information consumption in Arequipa. TikTok appears as the second option with 17.0% (811 cases), reflecting its growing adoption and intensive use among young audiences. Instagram accounts for 4.0% (191 cases), YouTube for 3.0% (143 cases), and Twitter/X for 0.9% (43 cases). These data confirm Facebook's hegemony in the digital political information ecosystem, although they also show the significant growth of TikTok as an emerging platform, especially among younger age groups.

Table 7. Most frequently used social media platform

Platform	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	3,581	75.1%
TikTok	811	17.0%
Instagram	191	4.0%
YouTube	143	3.0%
Twitter/X	43	0.9%
Total	4,769	100%

With regard to media credibility, 66.0% of respondents (3,148 cases) report a negative image of journalists, while only 34.0% (1,621 cases) maintain a positive image. This distribution highlights a crisis of confidence in traditional journalism in the region. The data from the baseline study indicate that this negative perception is associated with perceptions of editorial bias, sensationalism, and a disconnect between journalistic elites and popular sectors. The negative image is more pronounced at low socioeconomic levels (73.0%) compared to high levels (49.0%).

4.2 Evaluation of the Measurement Model

The evaluation of the measurement model confirms the reliability and validity of the constructs. Table 8 presents the reliability and convergent validity indicators for each construct. The construct Use of Social Networks for Political Information (URIP) has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.842, composite reliability of 0.896, and AVE of 0.682, exceeding the minimum required thresholds. The Digital Citizen Participation (DCP) construct shows a Cronbach's alpha of 0.867, composite reliability of 0.908, and AVE of 0.713. The Media Credibility (MC) construct has a Cronbach's alpha of

0.795, composite reliability of 0.869, and AVE of 0.626. All constructs meet the established criteria ($\alpha > 0.70$, $CR > 0.70$, $AVE > 0.50$), confirming adequate internal consistency and convergent validity.

Table 8. Reliability and convergent validity of constructs

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Social Media Use (SMU)		0.842	0.896
Digital Citizen Participation (DCP)		0.867	0.908
Media Credibility (MC)		0.795	0.869

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the results of which are presented in Table 9. The values on the diagonal (square root of AVE) are higher than the correlations between constructs, confirming discriminant validity. The square root of AVE for URIP (0.826) exceeds its correlations with PCD (0.612) and CM (-0.487). For PCD, the square root of AVE (0.844) exceeds its correlation with CM (-0.523). For CM, the square root of AVE (0.791) exceeds its correlations with the other constructs. Additionally, the HTMT analysis showed values below 0.85 for all comparisons between constructs, confirming discriminant validity using both criteria.

Table 9. Discriminant validity - Fornell-Larcker criterion

Construct	URIP	PCD	CM
Social Media Use (SMU)	0.826		
Digital Citizen Participation (DCP)	0.612	0.844	
Media Credibility (MC)	-0.487	-0.523	0.791

Note: Diagonal values (bold) = $\sqrt{AVE}$

4.3 Evaluation of the Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was evaluated using path coefficient analysis, coefficient of determination, mediation effects, and multigroup analysis for moderation. Table 10 presents the results of the testing of the six research hypotheses. Hypothesis H1, which states that the use of social media for political information is positively associated with digital civic engagement, was supported ($\beta = 0.614$, $t = 38.21$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.604$). This result indicates a strong and positive relationship between the two constructs, with a large effect size. Hypothesis H2, which proposes that the use of social media is negatively associated with media credibility, was supported ($\beta = -0.312$, $t = 15.42$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.127$). This result shows a moderate negative relationship, with a small effect size. Hypothesis H3, which proposes that digital citizen participation is negatively associated with media credibility, was supported ($\beta = -0.418$, $t = 21.68$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.228$). This result shows a negative relationship with a medium effect size.

Table 10. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	f^2	Result
H1	URIP $\rightarrow$ PCD	0.614	38.21	< 0.001	0.604	Supported
H2	URIP $\rightarrow$ CM	-0.312	15.42	< 0.001	0.127	Supported
H3	PCD $\rightarrow$ CM	-0.418	21.68	< 0.001	0.228	Supported
H4	URIP $\rightarrow$ PCD $\rightarrow$ CM (Mediation)	-0.257*	18.34	< 0.001	-	Supported
H5	Age moderation (URIP $\rightarrow$ Platform)	-	3.42**	< 0.01	-	Supported
H6	NSE moderation (URIP $\rightarrow$ CM)	-	2.87**	< 0.01	-	Supported

*Indirect effect (partial mediation)

**Statistic for difference between groups (MGA)

Hypothesis H4 examines the mediating effect of digital citizen participation on the relationship between social media use and media credibility. The analysis reveals that digital citizen participation partially mediates this relationship. The indirect effect ($a \times b = 0.614 \times -0.418 = -0.257$) is statistically significant ($t = 18.34$, $p < 0.001$). The total effect of URIP on CM is -0.569 (direct effect -0.312 + indirect effect -0.257). The VAF (Variance Accounted For) is 45.2% ($-0.257 / -0.569$), falling within the partial mediation range ($20\% < VAF < 80\%$), indicating that 45.2% of the effect of social media use on media credibility operates through digital citizen participation, while 54.8% is a direct effect, supporting hypothesis H4.

Hypothesis H5 proposes that age moderates the relationship between social media use and platform preference. The multigroup analysis by age group revealed that the path coefficient URIP $\rightarrow$ Preferred platform is significantly higher in the 18-25 age group ($\beta = 0.68$) compared to the 46+ age group ($\beta = 0.32$), with a statistically significant difference ($t = 3.42$, $p < 0.01$). This result confirms that younger users show a stronger association between social media use and adoption of emerging platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, supporting hypothesis H5.

Hypothesis H6 proposes that socioeconomic status moderates the relationship between social media use and media credibility. The multigroup analysis by SES showed that the URIP $\rightarrow$ CM path coefficient is more negative in low SES ($\beta = -0.42$) compared to high SES ($\beta = -0.18$), with a statistically significant difference ($t = 2.87$, $p < 0.01$). This result

indicates that the negative effect of social media use on media credibility is more pronounced in low socioeconomic strata, showing that the erosion of trust in traditional media associated with social media consumption is more intense in popular sectors, supporting hypothesis H6.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that the model explains 37.7% of the variance in Digital Citizen Participation and 41.2% of the variance in Media Credibility. These values are in the moderate range according to established criteria ($R^2 < 0.25$ = weak; $0.25 \leq R^2 < 0.50$ = moderate; $0.50 \leq R^2 \leq 0.75$ = substantial). The predictive relevance analysis using blindfolding revealed Q^2 values greater than zero for both endogenous constructs (Q^2 PCD = 0.264; Q^2 CM = 0.251), confirming the predictive relevance of the model. The SRMR fit index was 0.062, below the threshold of 0.08, indicating an adequate fit of the model.

5. Discussion

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between the use of social media for political information, digital civic engagement, and media credibility in the Arequipa region of Peru. The findings reveal significant associations between these constructs, consistent with theoretical frameworks on media disintermediation and the transformation of political communication in digital environments. The results confirm the six proposed hypotheses, evidencing patterns that reflect global trends documented in the literature.

Hypothesis H1, which establishes a positive association between social media use and digital citizen participation operationalized as information consumption, was supported with a path coefficient of 0.614. This finding is consistent with the theoretical frameworks of Chibwe (2024) on participatory culture and Haman (2023) on passive forms of civic engagement, which argue that selective information consumption constitutes a form of citizen participation. The results are in line with recent studies documenting how social media facilitates access to political information (Jitsaeng & Tuamsuk, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2022). In Arequipa, 88% of the population uses Facebook as a social network and 75.1% uses it as their main social network, representing 42% of all sources of information (including traditional media). Arequipa citizens have adopted digital platforms as mechanisms for accessing information, replacing traditional media, reflecting trends observed in other Latin American countries (Andrade et al., 2025).

Hypotheses H2 and H3, which propose negative associations between social media use and media credibility ($\beta = -0.312$) and between digital citizen participation and media credibility ($\beta = -0.418$), were supported. These findings are consistent with literature documenting the crisis of trust in journalists and traditional media in environments of intensive digital consumption (Chibwe, 2024; Schäfer, 2023). The fact that 66% of respondents report a negative image of journalists evidences an erosion of credibility that manifests itself in structural patterns of media consumption. Kalluçi and Peshkopia (2024) argue that the fragmentation of the digital public space reduces exposure to diverse perspectives and increases mistrust of sources perceived as external, a dynamic that in Arequipa is reinforced by perceptions of editorial bias and a disconnect between journalistic elites and popular sectors.

Hypothesis H4 examines the partial mediation of digital citizen participation in the relationship between social media use and media credibility. The analysis revealed a significant indirect effect ($\beta = -0.257$) with a VAF of 45.2%, placing it in the range of partial mediation. This finding shows that social media use erodes media credibility both directly and through increased digital news consumption, which reduces exposure to traditional media. This mechanism is consistent with theories of media disintermediation, which postulate that digital platforms allow citizens to bypass traditional journalistic filters (Gamir-Ríos et al., 2022). In Arequipa, where Facebook accounts for 42% of primary sources of information, surpassing television (31%) and radio (16%), this process of disintermediation is evident.

Hypotheses H5 and H6 examine the moderating effects of age and socioeconomic status. The results confirm that age moderates the relationship between social media use and platform preference, with young users (18-25 years old) showing greater intensity in the adoption of emerging platforms such as TikTok and Instagram ($\beta = 0.68$) compared to users over 46 years old ($\beta = 0.32$). This pattern reflects generational differences in digital literacy documented in previous studies (Farkas & Bene, 2021; Ruiloba-Núñez & Goenaga, 2024). Socioeconomic status also moderates the relationship between social media use and media credibility, with lower SES sectors showing stronger negative associations ($\beta = -0.42$) than higher SES ($\beta = -0.18$). This finding indicates that the erosion of trust in traditional media associated with social media consumption is more pronounced in lower socioeconomic strata, where 73% report a negative image of journalists compared to 49% in higher socioeconomic strata.

The findings have theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study contributes to the literature on digital political communication in Latin America, an area identified as underrepresented in previous research (Mancera, 2025; Haman, 2023).

The results confirm that theoretical frameworks developed in other environments are applicable to Andean media ecosystems. In practical terms, traditional media face a credibility challenge that requires strategies to reconnect with audiences, editorial transparency, and adaptation to digital consumption patterns without sacrificing journalistic

standards. Political actors must recognize that social media are not only channels of dissemination, but also spaces where perceptions of institutional credibility are constructed. Educational institutions can play a role in digital media literacy by promoting critical consumption of information (Rodríguez Saavedra, 2025).

The hegemony of Facebook (75.1%) as the main platform, together with the growth of TikTok (17%), shows transitions in consumption patterns that favor immediacy and interactivity over traditional journalistic intermediation. This phenomenon, observed in studies on political communication in Ecuador (Lozano-Recalde, 2025; Rodrigo-Mendizábal, 2023) and other Latin American countries (Andrade et al., 2025; Chagas & Da-Costa, 2023), indicates that the documented transformations are part of broader regional dynamics that require academic attention.

6. Conclusions

This study examined the relationships between social media use for political information, digital civic engagement, and media credibility in the Arequipa region. The findings confirm that social media use is positively associated with digital civic engagement operationalized as information consumption, and negatively associated with media credibility. Additionally, digital citizen participation partially mediates the relationship between social media use and media credibility. Age moderates platform preference, with young users adopting TikTok and Instagram more intensely, while socioeconomic status moderates the relationship between social media use and media credibility, with this association being more negative in lower socioeconomic strata.

The results reveal transformations in information consumption patterns where digital platforms are replacing traditional media, with Facebook dominating among social networks (75.1%) and TikTok emerging (17%) as a significant source of information. The erosion of media credibility, manifested in the fact that 66% report a negative image of journalists, reflects a crisis of confidence in traditional journalism that characterizes contemporary media ecosystems in provincial Latin American contexts.

This study demonstrates that Arequipa's media ecosystem mirrors broader Latin American transformations where digital platforms are displacing traditional journalism as primary sources of political information. The findings reveal a fundamental reconfiguration of the relationship between citizens, media, and political actors, with implications for understanding how political communication operates in medium-to-large Latin American cities undergoing digital transformation. The documented patterns of platform dominance, generational differences in media adoption, and socioeconomic variations in media trust provide empirical evidence of the mechanisms through which social media reshape political information environments. These results contribute to understanding digital political communication in Andean contexts and offer insights into the ongoing evolution of media credibility in digitally mediated political systems across the region.

7. Limitations

This study presents some limitations that should be considered. The cross-sectional design, while allowing the identification of significant associations between variables, does not establish definitive causal relationships. Likewise, although Arequipa is Peru's second most important city, the geographic focus limits the generalization of findings to other regions with different sociopolitical characteristics. Moreover, by focusing on public social media platforms, the study does not capture political communication occurring in private messaging applications such as WhatsApp, which also play an important role in the Latin American digital ecosystem.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank all participants and researchers who collaborated in the development of this research.

Authors contributions

M.O.R.S. led the conceptualization of the study, methodological design, overall project coordination, academic supervision, and final scientific review of the manuscript; A.V.M.G. and I.C.G. contributed to the analytical design, data processing, advanced statistical analysis, validation of results, and discussion of findings; L.M.C.A. and J.W.M.L. participated in operational planning, field data collection, database cleaning, and information quality assurance; R.N.C.M. and S.V.L.T. contributed to the systematic review of the literature, the construction of the theoretical framework, the writing of the initial draft, and the standardization of references; R.B.A.C. contributed to the critical interpretation of results, high-level academic editing, and comprehensive harmonization of the manuscript for submission to the publisher. All authors read, critically reviewed, and approved the final published version of the manuscript.

Funding

This research did not receive external funding.

Competing interests

The authors declare that there are no financial, personal, or institutional conflicts of interest that have influenced the

results of the study.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Redfame Publishing.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

Open access

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

References

- Aagaard, P. (2023). EU Public Legitimation in the Social Media Era: Co-ordinating the Political Communication of the European Commission. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 61(3), 616–635. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13391>
- Adamczewska, K. (2024). Interactive Election Campaigns on Social Media? Flow of Political Information Among Journalists and Politicians as an Element of the Communication Strategy of Political Actors. *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, 21(1), 23–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2023.2222717>
- Andrade, C. F. O., Arango-Espinal, E., & Lyon Benoit, W. (2025). Political Communication on Social Media and Its Influence on Digital User Support: An Analysis of Presidential Campaigns in Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia. *Communication Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2025.2574004>
- Ariel, Y., & Elishar, V. (2025). Political Communication and the Hype Cycle: Tracing Its Evolution Across the Digital Era. *Journalism and Media*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia6020087>
- Bachini, N., Rosa, K. C. G., Costa, A. L. V., & de Farias Silva, R. N. (2022). Political communication in the digital environment: an analysis of the 2020 municipal election campaigns on Facebook. *Opinio Publica*, 28(3), 750–786. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1807-01912022283750>
- Baranowski, P. (2022). Leaning toward social media-based campaigning? Political communication online in Poland during the 2018 regional elections. *Information Polity*, 27(3), 357–371. <https://doi.org/10.3233/IP-200239>
- Bene, M., & Szabó, G. (2021). Discovered and Undiscovered Fields of Digital Politics: Mapping Online Political Communication and Online News Media Literature in Hungary. *Intersections East European Journal of Society and Politics*, 7(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.17356/ieejsp.v7i1.868>
- Berlanga-Fernández, I., & de Barrón, I. O. (2021). Digital semiotics and political communication. The take-off and rise of vox; Semiótica digital y comunicación política. El despegue y auge de vox. *Doxa Comunicacion*, 33, 53–74. <https://doi.org/10.31921/doxacom.n33a929>
- Blasch, L. (2021). Indexing authenticity in visual political (social media) communication: A metapragmatics-based analysis of two visual registers of the authentic. *Multimodal Communication*, 10(1), 37–53. <https://doi.org/10.1515/mc-2020-0019>
- Böhmer, K. (2022). Does hatred rule political communication on social media? How do politicians talk about the EU on Facebook, and how do their followers react? *Politics in Central Europe*, 18(4), 477–498. <https://doi.org/10.2478/pce-2022-0021>
- Boulianne, S., & Larsson, A. O. (2024). Comparative Digital Political Communication: Comparisons Across Countries,

- Platforms, and Time. *Social Science Computer Review*, 42(5), 1092–1100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393241258763>
- Casas-Mas, B., Fernández Marcellán, M., Robles, J. M. M., & Velez-Serrano, D. (2024). Emotivism Trends in Digital Political Communication: The Influence on the Results of the US Presidential Elections. *Social Sciences*, 13(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci13020080>
- Castillero-Ostio, E., Moreno-Cabanillas, A., & Serna-Ortega, Á. (2025). Political communication in the digital environment. Evaluation of interactivity strategies of European think tanks. *Revista Mediterranea de Comunicacion*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.14198/MEDCOM.26338>
- Chagas, V., & Da-Costa, G. (2023). WhatsApp and transparency: an analysis on the effects of digital platforms' opacity in political communication research agendas in Brazil. *Profesional de La Informacion*, 32(2). <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2023.mar.23>
- Chibuwe, A. (2024). Fake News as Political Communication: On Fake News, Digital Media and the Struggle for Hegemony in Post-Mugabe Zimbabwe. *Political Research Quarterly*, 77(4), 1181–1195. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129241262230>
- Dommett, K., & Verovšek, P. J. (2021). Promoting Democracy in the Digital Public Sphere: Applying Theoretical Ideals to Online Political Communication. *Javnost*, 28(4), 358–374. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2021.1955206>
- F J Cristòfol, F. J., Pérez-Escolar, M., & Alcaide-Pulido, P. (2024). (Dis) Connection of Political Discourse with Sustainable Communication. Messages from Regional Candidates on Social Media During Election Campaigns. *Profesional de La Informacion*, 33(3). <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2024.0305>
- Farkas, X., & Bene, M. (2021). Images, Politicians, and Social Media: Patterns and Effects of Politicians' Image-Based Political Communication Strategies on Social Media. *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 26(1), 119–142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161220959553>
- Fenoll, V., Gonçalves, I., & Bene, M. (2024). Divisive Issues, Polarization, and Users' Reactions on Facebook: Comparing Campaigning in Latin America. *Politics and Governance*, 12, Article 7957. <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.7957>
- Fenoll, V., Peña-Vicuña, P., Sánchez-López-de-Mesa, A., Rodríguez-Sánchez, A., de-Lima-Santos, M. F., & Romero-Lizama, P. (2025). Movilización, ecualización y retórica populista en Facebook. Campañas presidenciales de Brasil, Colombia, Chile y Perú. *Revista de Comunicación*, 24(2), 109–125. <https://doi.org/10.26441/RC24.2-2025-3937>
- Gamir-Ríos, J. V., Cano-Orón, L., Fenoll, V., & Iranzo-Cabrera, M. (2022). Evolution of digital political communication (2011-2019): downfall of blogs, decrease of Facebook, generalization of Twitter and popularization of Instagram; Evolución de la comunicación política digital (2011-2019): o caso de los blogs, declive de Facebook, generalización de Twitter y popularización de Instagram. *Observatorio*, 16(1), 90–115. <https://doi.org/10.15847/obsOBS16120221879>
- Haman, M. (2023). Political communication on social media in Latin America: unequal use of Twitter by members of parliament. *Profesional de La Informacion*, 32(3). <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2023.may.16>
- Han, A. T., Laurian, L. A., & Dewald, J. R. (2021). Plans Versus Political Priorities: Lessons From Municipal Election Candidates' Social Media Communications. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 87(2), 211–227. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2020.1831401>
- Jitsaeng, K., & Tuamsuk, K. (2022). Digital Factors Influencing the Use of Social Media in Political Communication Among Thai Youths. *International Journal of Media and Information Literacy*, 7(2), 450–462. <https://doi.org/10.13187/ijmil.2022.2.450>
- Juita, N., Ermanto, E., Liusti, S. A., JR, V. T. D., & Ardi, H. (2024). The Linguistic Politeness of Indonesian Female Politicians in Political Communication on Social Media. *International Journal of Society, Culture and Language*, 12(3), 17–31. <https://doi.org/10.22034/ijscsl.2024.2037674.3621>
- Kalluçi, E., & Peshkopia, R. (2024). Invasiveness, Intrusiveness and Influence: three new metrics to measure communication between political digital echo chambers. *Social Network Analysis and Mining*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13278-023-01186-6>
- Lampoltshammer, T. J., De Luca, G., & Thurnay, L. (2023). Digital News and Political Tweets in the Lower Austrian Municipal Elections: A Case Study on Digital Journalism and Political Communication. *Social Sciences*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12010018>

- Lozano-Recalde, C. (2025). The use of social media in political crises: Lessons from Ecuador's government communication; El uso de las redes sociales en las crisis políticas. Aprendizajes de la comunicación gubernamental en Ecuador. *Estudios Sobre El Mensaje Periodístico*, 31(4), 1017–1029. <https://doi.org/10.5209/esmp.103332>
- Machado, S. M., Ribeiro, V. M., & Meneses, R. F. C. (2024). “The Million-Euro Answer”: Party Youth Wings’ Views on the Opportunities and Challenges of Political Communication on Social Media. *Media e Jornalismo*, 24(45). https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-5462_45_13
- Magin, M., Larsson, A. O., Skogerbø, E., & Tønnesen, H. (2024). What makes the difference? Social media platforms and party characteristics as contextual factors for political parties’ use of populist political communication. *Nordicom Review*, 45(s1), 36–65. <https://doi.org/10.2478/nor-2024-0007>
- Mancera Rueda, A. (2025). Meta-analysis on Research about Political Communication on Social Media in Spain and Latin America; Metanálisis acerca de las investigaciones sobre comunicación política en las redes sociales en España e Hispanoamérica. *Circulo de Linguística Aplicada a La Comunicacion*, 101, 31–49. <https://doi.org/10.5209/clac.100069>
- Mihálik, J., Garaj, M., & Bardovič, J. (2022). Social Media and Political Communication of Youth Political Organisations in Slovakia, Czechia and European Level: A Cross-Case Analysis. *Social Sciences*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11020069>
- Nguyen, T. A., Bui, T. C., & Sokolovskiy, K. G. (2022). Social Media and Political Communication: Studying the Interactive Component. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 9(4), 187–200. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/1112>
- Novelli, E., Ruggiero, C., & Solaroli, M. (2025). Visual Political Communication of Competing Leadership: Italy’s 2024 European Election Campaign on Social Media. *Media and Communication*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.10751>
- Orosa, B. G. (2022). Political Communication and Emerging Strategies in Digital Electoral Campaigns during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Palabra Clave*, 25(1). <https://doi.org/10.5294/pacla.2022.25.1.6>
- Osorio Andrade, C. F., & Arango Espinal, E. (2025). Political Communication on Social Media and Its Influence on Digital User Support: An Analysis of Presidential Campaigns in Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia. *Communication Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2025.2574004>
- Pineda, A., Hermida, A., & Bellido-Pérez, E. (2025). Visualizing political communication on Spanish social media: an analysis of Andalusian political parties’ communication on Instagram. *Visual Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14703572241307305>
- Pruitt Santos, G. M. (2024). The role of social media in political communication: how alternative journalists illuminate information in Central America’s declining democracies. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 32(4), 572–587. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15456870.2023.2292217>
- Reporters Without Borders. (2024). World Press Freedom Index 2024. <https://rsf.org/en/index>
- Rodrigo-Mendizábal, I. F. (2023). Political communication and affective computing: an approach to the Ecuadorian second electoral round (2021) from a digital perspective. *Austral Comunicacion*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.26422/aucom.2023.1201.men>
- Rodriguez Saavedra, Miluska Odely et al. The Role of Law in Protecting Minors from Stress Caused by Social Media. *Studies in Media and Communication*, [S.l.], v. 13, n. 2, p. 373-385, apr. 2025. ISSN 2325-808X. Date accessed: 09 feb. 2026. <https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v13i2.7581>
- Rodriguez-Saavedra, M. O., Grundy López, R. E., Velazco, R. P., Gonzales, H. E. A., Pérez, A. B. D., Apaza, O. A., ... & López, J. W. M. (2026). Political Science and Governance: Citizen Participation and Rebuilding Trust in the State. *Social Sciences*, 15(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci15010001>
- Rodriguez Saavedra, M. O., Donayre Prado, E. A., Donayre Sarolli, A. E., Lujan Tito, P. G., Escobedo Pajuelo, J. A., Grundy Lopez, R. E., Aroquipa Apaza, O., Alegre Chalco, M. E., Quispe Nina, W., Pozo González, R. A., Hillpa Zuñiga, M. E., & Arguedas Catasi, R. W. (2025). Chatbots and Empowerment in Gender-Based Violence: Mixed Methods Analysis of Psychological and Legal Assistance. *Social Sciences*, 14(10), 623. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14100623>
- Rosenberg, A., Saldaña, M., & Porath, W. (2023). Engaged and Uncivil? Incivility and Engagement on Twitter Over a Televised Presidential Debate in Chile. *International Journal of Communication*, 17, 25. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/18496>
- Ruiloba-Núñez, J. M., & Goenaga Ruiz de Zuazu, M. (2024). Digital political communication through a gender lens:

- discourses, themes, and inclusive language. A case study of two gender-balanced elections in Andalusia: 2018 and 2022. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2024.1457020>
- Saldaña, M., Orchard, X., Rivera, S., & Bustamante-Pavez, G. (2024). "Your house won't be yours anymore!" Effects of Misinformation, News Use, and Media Trust on Chile's Constitutional Referendum. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612241298853>
- Sánchez-Gutiérrez, B., Sussi-Oliveira, J., & Barragán Romero, A. I. (2025). Political Communication and Digital Propaganda in Andalusia: the strategy of political parties on the social network Twitter. *Estudios Sobre El Mensaje Periodístico*, 31(2), 369–380. <https://doi.org/10.5209/emp.98763>
- Schäfer, A. (2023). Digital heuristics: How parties strategize political communication in hybrid media environments. *New Media and Society*, 25(3), 522–539. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211012101>
- Snoussi, T., Lassoued, K., & Abidi, S. (2023). 'Live' to 'survive': women and digital political communication in Tunisia. *Information Communication and Society*, 26(13), 2535–2553. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2023.2239875>
- Subekti, D., Mutiarin, D., & Nurmandi, A. (2023). Political Communication in Social Media: A Bibliometrics Analysis. *Studies in Media and Communication*, 11(6), 299–313. <https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v11i6.6214>
- Velasco Molpeceres, A. M., Miranda-Galbe, J., & Prieto Muñoz, M. (2025). Digital Political Communication in the European Parliament: A Comparative Analysis of Threads and X During the 2024 Elections. *Journalism and Media*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia6010042>
- Zebib, C. (2022). Political Communication through the Prism of Social Media: How are Lebanese Political Parties Using Facebook in Electoral Campaigns? *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 38(2), 87–106. <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2022-3802-06>