



## The Role of Twitter in Mobilizing Voter Turnout During Local Elections

Ayu Anggraini<sup>1</sup>, Wikra Ardiansyah<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Communication Studies, Universitas Halu Oleo

\*Corresponding Author: Ayu Anggraini

E-mail: [ayuanggrainiii@gmail.com](mailto:ayuanggrainiii@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

*This paper aims to explore the role of Twitter in voter mobilization in local elections. The research is based on a mixed-methods design in which, quantitative and qualitative analysis is incorporated to give a broad picture. The quantitative aspect included content analysis of 3,000 tweets, related to the election, and a questionnaire of 500 respondents to quantify the influence of Twitter as a source of political information and the voting intention. The qualitative element involved in-depth interviews with politicians, campaign parties and voters and a case study of a mayoral race in a large city in Indonesia. The results show that influencer endorsements produced the best engagement even though they were not frequently used, whereas direct calls to action were also effective. According to the survey, the majority of the respondents used Twitter as their primary political source regularly and got motivated to vote because of their interactions online. The importance to real-time interaction, influencer support was noted in interviews as the way to improvement campaign visibility and voter turnout. The case study also showed that voter turnout had escalated greatly in cases where Twitter was highly used. On the whole, the results highlight the usefulness of Twitter as a strategic communication means of voter mobilization and the promotion of democracy.*

## INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, social media has helped redefine political campaigning approaches and population mobilization. Twitter is one of the many social media platforms that has become a key element in political communication where both politicians and campaign teams are able to have real time discussions with the people. Twitter is one of the appropriate sources to cover and collect support due to such qualities as hashtags, retweets, and the possibility to follow and communicate with such influential people as influencers.

The political campaigns are managed differently now due to the swift development of digital communications. Tv, radio, and printed media were the traditional sources of a campaign, reaching the voters. But since the internet and social media, the sharing of information is more decentralized and can be more interactive and personal based. Twitter has a unique microblogging structure, and it can be distinguished since such

a format provides quick sharing and interaction. Twitter is also used by politicians and campaigns to express their statements, address the questions of voters, and attract on their sides. These platforms are very influential in shaping the opinion and behavior of the masses because of the viral nature and the real-time feature (Lin et al., 2021).

Local elections are the elections that usually have less media coverage and passion of people or voters, than national elections do. The situation with voter mobilization in local elections is quite different. According to research by McDonnell (2020), voter apathy during local elections may result in a drop in the turnout with subsequent implications on the legitimacy and efficacy of elected representatives. With the help of the means of social interaction (such as Twitter), this gap can be overcome, as immediate communication with the voters is possible, and timely release of information can be announced here, creating a feeling of belonging to the rules. The current research relies on the increase in research on the role of the social media in the field of politics, especially focusing on the abilities of Twitter regarding the local elections (Bright et al., 2020).

In particular, local elections offer an interesting background around which social media could be studied (Skogerbo & Krumsvik, 2015). Local elections are associated with low voter turnout unlike national elections, which darkens the process of democracy. In a study conducted by Glovin (2021), it is imperative that including voters in local elections is essential in making representative government and community participation. Thus, information on how Twitter can be used to improve voter involvement and turnout in local elections will be of great benefit to democracy participation and campaign strategy (Opeibi, 2019).

The influence that a specific social media platform such as twitter has on voter turnout particularly during local elections has not been well comprehended since it has been already researched on the role of social media in influencing the turnout of voters (Kofi Frimpong et al., 2022). The current study is going to fill this gap because it will answer the questions of whether Twitter will be effective in increasing voter turnout in a local election scenario, and which personalities will be the most successful, the most favorable possibilities in terms of content and strategies.

Despite the potential of Twitter in political mobilization being glorified, a study that breaks down this type of contribution towards voter turnout in local elections is still required. The issue here is that the specifics of translation of different aspects of the Twitter usage into voter participation and engagement have not been thoroughly studied (Van Vliet et al., 2020). Among them is the fact that previous research studies found out that the content posted on social media might significantly influence the choice of voting (Kofi Frimpong et al., 2022). Nonetheless, little is known on what particular forms of Twitter content (e.g. informative tweet, call-to-action message, interactive thread) works best towards encouraging local voters to take part in elections. To enhance the efficacy of their message, campaign teams may learn more about what constitutes a good Twitter content (Son et al., 2019).

Second, opinion formers have considerable impact in the creation of social media opinion. Within the scenario of elections, the influencers are capable of endorsing a candidate, posting compelling content, and stimulating voters to cast their ballots (Yang & Kang, 2021). The research will target to identify key influencers in the local elections and their impacts to the voters. It may assist campaigns to develop better engagement plans by understanding how they can be leveraged to influence the actions of voters based on the impact of the influencers (Goodwin et al., 2023).

Third, adding Twitter to the overall campaign plan does not imply a number of messages. This ought to be in an intelligent manner of timing, handling of individuals during campaigns and contact with electorate. This work would demonstrate the

optimal practice of the use of twitter in local election campaigns and they would be demonstrated in a manner that would inculcate some enlightenment to the political strategists and candidates and they could utilize it.

With these arguments in mind, this paper will help in increasing the awareness of the future of twitter in local elections, and practical suggestions on how to increase the number of voters and their turn up on the social media during elections. The proposed research is supposed to become a kind of an eye-opener as to the effect of Twitter on voting patterns within the framework of which the further organization of political campaigns and the tools aimed at increasing the participation of citizens in a democratic society in the local areas are going to be detailed.

## **METHODS**

The research design used in this study will be the mixed-methods research design to provide a thorough investigative study of the existence and contribution of Twitter in voter mobilization during local elections. The study will incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to assess the effects of Twitter on voters not only in the quantifiable context but also in the context it is experienced by the users of the site after interacting with the political content. The twitter content analysis and voter surveys are the two major approaches involved in the quantitative component. The content analysis will require a systematic gathering and data sorting of political tweets made during the time of the elections in order to determine such patterns, subjects, and kinds of messages that are more engaged than others. There will be special focus on tweet design (e.g. text, hashtag, retweet), messaging plans and frequency. At the same time, voter survey questionnaires will be used in a structured manner to evaluate the perceived impact of Twitter exposure to the voting will of the individuals, their degree of political interest, and tendency of voting in the nearest election in the region.

In parallel to these results, the qualitative part is going to involve rich interviews of a few selected Twitter users and the case study analysis of several local campaigns that have extensively used Twitter. The interviews will explore users' motivations, interpretations, and emotional responses to political messaging on the platform. Case studies will provide a detailed look at how political actors craft Twitter strategies, and how these strategies are received and reshaped by audiences in different local contexts. Integration of the two strands will be achieved through data triangulation, allowing for the cross-validation of findings and the development of a more holistic understanding of Twitter's role in the electoral process. This mixed-methods approach ensures both breadth and depth of analysis quantifying the extent of Twitter's influence while also illuminating the underlying mechanisms through which it operates.

This design is intended to provide evidence-based insights that can inform the development of more effective digital political strategies. By combining multiple sources of data and methodological perspectives, the study seeks to enhance the validity, reliability, and practical relevance of its conclusions for stakeholders engaged in democratic participation and digital campaign planning.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Twitter Content Analysis**

Data was collected from 3,000 tweets related to local elections during the campaign period using specific hashtags, keywords and official accounts of candidates and political parties. Analysis was carried out using SPSS to determine the type of content that was most effective in mobilizing voters.

Table 1. Types of Content that are Most Effective in Voter Mobilization

<b>Tweet Content Type</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Mean Engagement</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Election Information	1,200	40.0%	150.25	30.50
Call to Action	900	30.0%	200.75	45.80
Interaction with Voters	600	20.0%	180.50	40.25
Influencer Endorsements	300	10.0%	250.00	50.75

This table shows that, for tweets containing information related to election dates, polling station locations, and voting procedures, the average engagement for this type is 150.25 with a standard deviation of 30.50. For tweets inviting voters to come to the polling station and exercise their right to vote, the average engagement was 200.75 with a standard deviation of 45.80. For tweets in the form of replies or direct conversations with voters, the average engagement is 180.50 with a standard deviation of 40.25. As well as tweets from influencers who support certain candidates or parties, the average engagement is 250.00 with a standard deviation of 50.75.

### **Voter Survey**

The survey was conducted on 500 respondents to measure how often they use Twitter for political information and its influence on voting intentions.

Table 2. Voter Survey

<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>Very Often</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Using Twitter for political information	35% (175)	30% (150)	20% (100)	10% (50)	5% (25)	3.80	1.05
Motivated to vote because of Twitter	40% (200)	25% (125)	20% (100)	10% (50)	5% (25)	3.90	1.12

As I mentioned above, in the table above, it can be seen that most of the respondents (65 per cent) tend to use Twitter frequently or extremely frequently to access political information. Standard deviation is 1.05 and mean value of average respondent is 3.80. Up to 65 percent of the respondents were inspired to vote due to their twitter activity. The standard deviation is 1.12 and there being an average of 3.90 among the respondents.

Based on the findings of the Twitter content analysis, it is possible to note that the engagement rate of the influencer endorsement type of content (250.00) is the highest though such percentage is the lowest (10%). This indicates that despite the lack of significant number of influencer tweets, they are very effective in voter mobilization. Engagement is also very high with the calls to action (200.75), and this means that messages that ask voters directly to take action are also highly effective.

According to survey findings, the majority of survey participants turn to Twitter to seek political information and the activity on it encourages them to vote. The average score achieved in the two survey questions shows a strong percentage that means that Twitter is impactful in the choice of the voters. All in all, these quantitative data

indicate that Twitter can be used effectively in the area of voter mobilization, and certain content and influencers contribute to the greater voter turnout.

### **Political Communication via Twitter**

Participants also highlighted the role of consistency and content quality in maintaining voter engagement on Twitter.

*“I try to post regularly on Twitter during the campaign period so that voters don’t forget about my program and stay engaged with my updates.”*

This statement indicates that consistency in posting plays an important role in maintaining voter awareness and engagement. Regular exposure to campaign messages helps reinforce candidate visibility and keeps voters connected to ongoing political narratives.

Participants emphasized that emotional appeal in content also influences how messages are received by the public.

*“Tweets that include emotional messages or real-life issues tend to get more attention and responses from voters.”*

This response suggests that emotionally resonant content is more effective in attracting public engagement. It reflects how voters are more responsive to messages that feel relatable and relevant to their daily lives.

Some voters noted that credibility and authenticity are key factors in determining whether they trust political content on Twitter.

*“I am more likely to trust tweets that feel genuine and not overly scripted, especially when candidates respond personally to comments.”*

This statement highlights the importance of authenticity in digital political communication. Personalized and unscripted interactions increase perceived credibility and strengthen voter trust.

Participants also pointed out that excessive or repetitive content can reduce engagement and create negative perceptions.

*“Sometimes I feel overwhelmed when candidates post too frequently with similar messages, so I tend to ignore them.”*

This response indicates that overexposure and repetitive messaging may lead to audience fatigue. It suggests that effective communication strategies should balance frequency with content variation to maintain audience interest.

This response suggests that Twitter functions as a highly effective channel for the rapid dissemination of information, enabling messages to spread quickly across diverse networks and reach a wide audience in real time. The platform’s design characterized by concise messaging, hashtag amplification, and algorithm-driven visibility allows information to gain traction efficiently, particularly during fast-moving events or campaigns. Furthermore, it underscores the strategic importance of Twitter in engaging younger, digitally active voters, who tend to rely on social media as a primary source of news and political updates. By leveraging interactive features such as retweets, replies, and trending topics, organizations and political actors can not only distribute information but also foster two-way communication, shape public discourse, and build stronger connections with this key demographic group.

## Campaign Strategy and Digital Engagement

Participants from campaign teams emphasized the importance of structured digital strategies, including hashtags, influencer collaboration, and interactive communication, to enhance campaign visibility and credibility.

*“Using trending hashtags helps our campaign content appear in wider conversations, making it easier for people to discover our messages even if they don’t follow our official account.”*

This statement indicates that leveraging trending hashtags is an effective strategy for increasing content discoverability beyond existing follower networks. By embedding campaign messages within broader public discussions, political actors can benefit from increased algorithmic exposure and organic reach. This strategy allows campaigns to penetrate new audience segments and enhances the potential for message diffusion through user interaction, retweets, and hashtag-based searches.

*“We collaborate with influencers who already have strong connections with their followers, so their support feels more natural and convincing.”*

This response highlights the importance of relational trust in influencer-based political communication. Influencers are perceived as more relatable and credible compared to formal political institutions, which makes their endorsements more persuasive. Such collaborations enable campaigns to tap into established communities, where messages are more likely to be accepted, shared, and internalized by audiences due to pre-existing trust.

*“We monitor engagement metrics like retweets, likes, and replies to evaluate which type of content works best during the campaign.”*

This statement suggests that campaign teams rely on data-driven strategies to optimize communication effectiveness. By analyzing engagement metrics, they can identify patterns in audience behavior and adjust their messaging accordingly. This reflects a shift toward more adaptive and evidence-based campaign practices, where digital feedback mechanisms inform strategic decision-making in real time.

*“We try to vary our content format, such as using threads, visuals, and short videos, so the audience does not get bored with repetitive messages.”*

This response indicates that content diversification is essential in maintaining audience interest and preventing engagement fatigue. Different content formats appeal to varied user preferences and enhance the overall attractiveness of campaign communication. By avoiding repetition and introducing variation, campaigns can sustain attention, increase interaction rates, and improve the overall effectiveness of message delivery.

This response further indicates that the incorporation of interactive features such as live discussions plays a crucial role in fostering meaningful two-way communication between political actors and the public. On platforms like Twitter, these features enable real-time engagement, allowing voters not only to receive information but also to respond, ask questions, and express their perspectives directly. Such interactions contribute to a more participatory communication environment, where dialogue replaces one-directional messaging. As a result, this approach enhances public trust, as voters feel acknowledged, valued, and actively involved in the political process. By creating opportunities for direct engagement, political actors can build stronger relationships with constituents, increase transparency, and cultivate a sense of shared ownership in decision-making processes.

## **Voter Motivation and Political Engagement**

Voters reported that Twitter not only provides political information but also increases their motivation to participate in elections and strengthens their emotional connection to the political process.

*“Twitter helped me feel more connected to the election process. I was able to see the debates, opinions, and facts live, which made me more aware of the importance of my vote.”*

This response reflects how real-time access to political information enhances voters' sense of connection to the electoral process. The availability of live discussions, debates, and diverse viewpoints allows individuals to engage more actively with political content, increasing their awareness and understanding of civic responsibilities. This immediacy fosters a sense of inclusion, where voters perceive themselves as part of an ongoing political conversation rather than passive observers.

*“I feel more confident about my voting decision after reading discussions and opinions on Twitter.”*

This statement indicates that exposure to diverse perspectives on Twitter contributes to increased voter confidence in decision-making. By engaging with multiple viewpoints, users are able to evaluate candidates and issues more critically, which supports more informed and deliberate electoral choices.

*“Sometimes I share political posts or retweet campaign messages because I want others to be aware of the election as well.”*

This response suggests that Twitter users are not only passive recipients of information but also active participants in political communication. The act of sharing content reflects a form of digital civic engagement, where individuals contribute to information dissemination and indirectly influence the political awareness of their networks.

*“I feel encouraged to vote when I see many people talking about the election on Twitter.”*

This statement highlights the role of social influence and perceived collective participation in shaping voter behavior. High levels of online discussion create a sense of social momentum, which can normalize and reinforce the importance of voting as a shared civic activity.

*“I sometimes doubt the accuracy of political information on Twitter, so I try to verify it from other sources before making decisions.”*

This response indicates a level of critical awareness among users regarding the reliability of online information. While Twitter facilitates access to political content, it also requires users to actively evaluate credibility. This demonstrates that digital engagement does not automatically translate into trust, but rather involves a process of verification and selective acceptance.

This response reflects how Twitter enhances the sense of political connectedness among users by providing immediate, real-time access to ongoing discussions and up-to-date information. The platform enables individuals to follow political events as they unfold, participate in conversations, and stay continuously informed about issues that matter to them. This constant flow of information not only increases political awareness but also reinforces the perceived importance of civic participation, as users feel more closely linked to the political landscape. Consequently, such real-time engagement fosters a stronger sense of inclusion and belonging, encouraging individuals to view their involvement whether through

discussion, sharing information, or voting as meaningful and impactful within the broader democratic process.

### **Impact on Voter Turnout: Case Study Evidence**

In the mayoral election case study, participants highlighted that intensive use of Twitter contributed to increased voter participation and stronger engagement between candidates and voters.

*“Seeing candidates interact live on Twitter made me feel more valued and heard, which motivated me to go to the polls.”*

This finding indicates that direct interaction on platforms such as Twitter fosters a strong sense of recognition and inclusion among voters. When candidates actively engage with the public through replies, discussions, or live interactions, it reduces the perceived distance between political actors and constituents. This personalized communication enhances emotional connection, which plays a critical role in motivating political participation, including voting behavior.

*“Our campaign team noticed that tweets with direct calls to vote received more engagement and were often shared widely among users.”*

This statement suggests that actionable messaging plays a crucial role in mobilizing voters. Clear and direct calls to action reduce ambiguity and encourage immediate responses from the audience. Such messages are more likely to be shared within networks, increasing their reach and reinforcing collective participation in the electoral process.

*“We used Twitter not only to share information but also to remind people about voting dates and procedures, which helped reduce confusion among voters.”*

This response highlights the informational function of Twitter in supporting voter mobilization. By providing clear and timely information, campaigns can lower barriers to participation, such as uncertainty or lack of knowledge. This contributes to a more informed electorate and facilitates smoother participation in the voting process.

*“I decided to vote because I kept seeing election-related content on Twitter, which reminded me that my participation was important.”*

This statement reflects the role of repeated exposure in shaping voter behavior. Continuous visibility of election-related content reinforces the importance of participation and keeps the election salient in users' minds. This form of passive mobilization can gradually influence individuals to take action.

*“Interacting with voters on Twitter allowed us to quickly understand their concerns and adjust our campaign messages accordingly.”*

This response indicates that Twitter also functions as a feedback mechanism for political actors. By monitoring public responses and engaging in conversations, candidates can adapt their strategies in real time. This responsiveness not only improves campaign effectiveness but also enhances public perception of accountability and attentiveness.

This finding indicates that direct interaction on platforms such as Twitter fosters a strong sense of recognition and inclusion among voters, as individuals feel that their voices are acknowledged and valued by political actors. When candidates or public figures respond to comments, engage in conversations, or address public concerns directly, it creates a more personalized communication experience that reduces the perceived distance between leaders and constituents. This sense of being heard contributes to emotional engagement, which is a crucial factor in shaping political

behavior. As voters develop feelings of connection, trust, and belonging, they are more likely to become motivated to participate in the electoral process. Consequently, such emotional engagement not only strengthens relationships between candidates and the public but also plays a significant role in encouraging active civic involvement, including voting.

The results of the current study support the growing prominence of Twitter as a factor that encourages voter turnout, especially in the case of local elections, where a voter turnout is not as high compared to the national elections. The quantitative findings combined with content analysis and voter surveys prove that Twitter is a lively political space where the types of content and interaction between the reader and the author have a strong bearing on whether citizens cast a vote or not. It is worth noting that influencer endorsed tweets attracted the highest rates of traffic, whereas they were not the most common ones. It is in accordance with Goodwin et al. (2023) who have argued that a “political relational influencer” can build their demand by galvanizing the support of followers with greater success than institutional actors because the influencers are already trusted and relevant to follow among certain segments of the population. The capacity of politicians to communicate with niche segments of society and by doing so that the campaign has high visibility and persuasive capacity is a strength of influencers that is not always available to traditional political communication.

No less significant is the fact that the call to action was also one of the most productive content types in motivating people to take part in the elections. This conforms with the general literature in digital campaigns that denotes that actionable and clear messages are more likely to succeed in the mobilization initiatives. By contrast to an abstract political rhetoric, call to action is performed to reduce the distance, make it feel urgent and immediate to users who move across the high-information social media landscapes. Such findings give empirical credence to the assertion made by Opeibi (2019), who states that Twitter is not merely a hub of information but also an engagement space in which political behavior is not only triggered via a response to interaction, personalization, and socialization.

The qualitative data also show that personal occurrence between the politicians and the voters, more so in the real-time dialogue prods a political closeness and provokes more voter drive. The politicians that have claimed to use Twitter to respond to queries and hold live chats stated that they felt closer to their electorate that eventually reflected at the polls. To a great extent, these results resonate with the findings of Enli & Skogerbo (2013) who point out, the so-called personalization of political communication on such media as Twitter permits politicians to avoid the traditional media filters and establish direct connection with the voters. This online proximity is part of what Vaccari et al. (2015) call a phenomenon of networked political efficacy, when voters feel more empowered and significant in the democratic years because they find themselves closer to political actors.

In addition, the case study of mayoral election in Indonesian indicates the practical effectiveness of strategic use of Twitter towards voter participation wherein there is a 15 percent turnout as opposed to the last cycle. This should be noted in the context of campaigning on social media, which Bright et al. (2020) pointed out as having measurable impact on the results of electoral contests. Nevertheless, even though the statistics demonstrate obvious relationships between Twitter activity and the turnout, it is necessary to take into account confounding factors, i.e., campaign resources, media coverage, and off-line mobilization. According to Auter & Fine (2016), lack of consideration of the extended dynamics of the campaign may become an overstatement of the effects of social media.

Finally, and though many voters claim that they found themselves connected and politically motivated using Twitter, we need to consider such affective reactions critically. Twitter interactions promote the feeling of political inclusion that proves the meta-analysis conducted by Boulianne (2015), indicating that social media usage does play a positive but small role in affecting the degree of political participation. Nevertheless, like Figa Talamanca & Arfini (2022) point out, the semblance of involvement may lead to minimal involvement or the so-called echo-chamber-effect: most of the content that individuals see reflects what they already know instead of discussion. Therefore, through Twitter, even though it is an important mobilization tool, it is only effective when there is genuineness, interactivity, and legitimacy in message in the campaign communication and the issue needs careful and moral planning by political players.

## CONCLUSION

The research has convincing results showing that twitter has a major impact in the mobilization of voter turnout in the local elections. In a mixed-methods design that includes both quantitative systems of content analysis and surveys and qualitative interviews and case studies, the study indicates that strategic Twitter engagements, especially using influencer endorsements, direct call to action, and on time interaction, has the potential to raise awareness, perceived efficacy, and ultimately, political voting. These results help to establish an even broader body of knowledge that social media is not only a venue through which a political message is directed, but rather a platform through which political behavior is crafted, and through which a sense of civic connection is created.

Significantly, the paper notes that quality and authenticity of interaction are the major factors that determine the influence of Twitter among voters. Politicians and campaign teams, which established dialogic communication, listened to voters, and cooperated with trusted figures achieved better turnout stimulation. Nevertheless, this effect is not consistent with different contexts; it is modulated by, among others, the content strategy, digital literacy, and the believability of the messengers. Superficial or tokenistic use of the social media can restrict or even negate the mobilising capability of the same, as the past researchers suggest. Although the paper has indicated that Twitter can be an effective way of engaging more people in the democracy, it has also highlighted that ethical and exclusive digital campaigning should be adopted. Political actors need to take a step forward to gain a minimum of being seen to a position involving the establishment of a relevant interaction capable of empowering the voters and motivating them to be well informed and receptive. The cross-platform comparison and the long-term effects of the social media political involvement on the democratic values and participation tendencies should be a topic of future study. Nevertheless, the present study offers actionable insights for political practitioners: that Twitter, when used strategically and authentically, is not only a broadcasting platform but a mobilizing force in the evolving landscape of electoral politics.

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