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Mass Media Exposure and Political Engagement among Noveleta Electorates: A Descriptive-Correlational Study

¹ Villa Francine Rhayne C, ² Buena Rose Mae, ³ Justo Nathaniel D, ⁴ Makasiar Joshua L, ⁵ Lazaro Bryan Louis G
^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5} Noveleta Senior High School, Noveleta, Cavite, Philippines

Corresponding Author: Villa Francine Rhayne C

Abstract

This study investigates the correlation between mass media exposure and the political engagement of electorates in Noveleta, Cavite. The research objectives encompassed exploring diverse forms of mass media impact on political engagement and assessing levels of political participation, interest, and efficacy. Findings reveal a moderate overall level of political engagement, with a notable prominence of print media and digital platforms, reflecting the evolving media landscape.

Correlation analysis establishes significant associations between political efficacy, political interest, and digital media, indicating their interconnected role in shaping political engagement. However, political participation exhibited nuanced relationships, lacking substantial correlation with other variables. Notably, print media

emerged as a pivotal factor, demonstrating correlations with key political engagement dimensions, particularly political interest, and efficacy. This underscores the enduring influence of traditional media formats in the digital era.

These insights have implications for policymakers, media professionals, and educators, highlighting the need for nuanced strategies that leverage both traditional and digital platforms. The study contributes to an in-depth explanation of the dynamic interplay between media exposure and political engagement, emphasizing the enduring significance of print media in shaping an informed and active citizenry. As media landscapes continue to evolve, these findings provide valuable guidance for fostering effective political communication and citizen participation.

Keywords: Media, Political Engagement, Electorate, Philippines

Introduction

Recent studies have emphasized examining the impact of mass media exposure on citizens' political engagement. Mass media acts as a conduit for knowledge exchange, influencing public opinion, disseminating information, and shaping societal perspectives. The substantial influence of media on public perceptions of global affairs is a topic of controversy, as it plays a pivotal role in defining focal points of public attention and subsequent actions (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020). Boström *et al.* (2018) ^[3] assert that the media is significantly influencing citizens to engage in lifestyle politics globally.

Citizen participation and awareness of governmental decisions are imperative for the effectiveness of any political system. Newspapers serve as a medium through which citizens actively engage in their government (Rubado & Jennings, 2019) ^[22]. Zetra *et al.* (2022) ^[25] emphasize the essential role of public participation in political processes for the development and consolidation of democratic systems. They argue that the extent of political engagement directly impacts the perceived legitimacy of a society's administration. Additionally, Peterson (2019) ^[21] emphasizes the role of news outlets in facilitating the acquisition of knowledge by the general population. In his study titled "Not Dead Yet: Political Learning from Newspapers in a Changing Media Landscape," he contends that newspapers continue to play a substantial role in fostering political awareness within a dynamic media environment, even among individuals with minimal political engagement. This study supports the idea that newspapers contribute to the public's political knowledge and foster political engagement.

The notable transformations in the media landscape, such as the emergence of cable news and broadband internet, have garnered scholarly interest in the social sciences over the past two to three decades (Moskowitz, 2020) ^[16]. Radio, through its various programs with active participants, employs a systematic approach to selecting topics and news information (Sujoko *et al.*, 2023) ^[24]. Sujoko *et al.* (2023) ^[24] investigate radio's operational processes and political influence in facilitating citizens' education programs in East Java, Indonesia. They also explore the techniques employed by radio stations to adapt and thrive

amidst the challenges posed by digital competition. Their findings indicate that radio fulfills its function by coordinating programs that actively involve participants.

People utilize diverse means and platforms, such as video clips, messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp), and online platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, to express their political views. Additionally, individuals engage in direct conversations with governmental representatives in their local communities, facilitating the exchange of valuable ideas and ensuring their voices are heard (Oji & Bebenimibo, 2021; Oji & Erubami, 2020) [17, 18]. Minhas *et al.* (2022) [15] investigate how social media influences political consciousness in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and comprehend how electorates perceive its impact on political engagement. Their study reveals that social media platforms play a significant role in enabling political organizations and the public to access information and participate in political discussions.

Lee's (2020) [12] research provides robust evidence supporting the assertion that users' desire for social inclusion, their perception of the ease of using social network sites, and their perception of the usefulness of these platforms significantly contribute to their engagement in political activities. This engagement, in turn, reinforces the significant role that social networking sites play in contemporary political elections, positively influencing voting attitudes and confidence in decision-making. Lee investigates the relationships among factors influencing the usage of social networking sites, citizens' engagement in political activities, citizens' perspectives on voting, and citizens' level of trust in their decision-making process.

Despite prior research indicating a relationship between mass media and voters' political engagement, some argue that there is no significant relationship. Alfarugy and Padmonurcahyo (2023) [1] contend that engagement encompasses interest, effectiveness, political knowledge, individual attachment, and specific issues. Voting, a fundamental aspect of political engagement, forms the basis of democratic countries today, with political participation considered crucial for effective democratic institutions (Pande, 2020; Kaskazi & Kitzie, 2021) [20, 11]. However, Alfarugy and Padmonurcahyo (2023) [1] assert that media use may not necessarily heighten political engagement.

Recognizing these results, researchers must explore whether interaction with mass media affects the political engagement of electorates. This study investigates the connection between mass media exposure and the level of political engagement among electorates in Noveleta, Cavite. Conducting this research will provide crucial insights into how mass media exposure correlates with the political engagement of Noveleta Cavite electorates.

Objectives of the Study

This study's objective is to comprehensively understand if there is a connection between mass media exposure and political engagement among the electorate in Noveleta. The primary objectives include examining the extent and nature of mass media exposure, exploring various factors of political engagement, and establishing correlations between these two variables. By adopting a descriptive-correlational research approach, this study aims to offer a comprehensive overview of the current state of media consumption and political involvement within Noveleta Cavite. This study involves analyzing patterns of exposure to different types of

media, assessing levels of political interest and efficacy, and identifying potential correlations that may elucidate the role of mass media in shaping political engagement.

Methods and Materials

Quantitative research serves as the foundational methodology for this study. Hodge (2020) [10] defines quantitative research as a systematic approach to collecting and analyzing numerical data to provide descriptions, predictions, or control over variables of interest. This research paradigm enables the researchers' to explore the cause of relationships between variables, the creation of predictions, and generalizing the findings of a broader population. The researchers have opted for this method to analyze information using numerical data and discern if a correlation exists between mass media exposure and political engagement among electorates.

Specifically, the study employs a descriptive-correlational research design. As elucidated by Stangor and Walinga (2019) [23], this research method is dedicated to offering an easy-to-understand description of the characteristics or behaviors of a specific population, phenomenon, or situation. The approach aims to depict the existing state of affairs without manipulating variables. Adding to this understanding, Cherry (2023) [5] defines correlation as the association between two variables, presenting potential outcomes of positive, negative, or no correlation in a study. Therefore, a descriptive-correlational research design seamlessly combines the principles of descriptive research in portraying subject particulars with the analytical tools of correlational research to examine relationships between variables without intervention.

The chosen design aligns with the research's primary goal, focusing on describing and investigating the correlation between mass media exposure and political engagement among participants. To gather data, the researchers will employ a Google Forms survey instrument, distributing a questionnaire to 100 electorates in Noveleta, Cavite. Aulianto and Raharja (2023) [2] have identified Google Forms as suitable for data storage and processing. The questionnaire integrates standardized survey instruments developed by Efetobor and Anigbo (2019) [7] and Levy and Akiba (2019) [13], modified to suit the study's context. Convenience sampling is employed to select the 100 electorates participating in the survey.

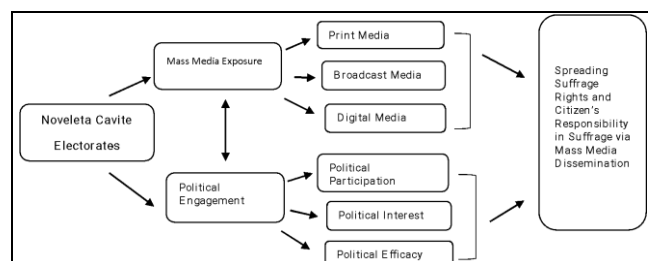


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

The diagram illustrates the researchers' focus on scrutinizing the correlation between mass media exposure and political engagement in suffrage among Noveleta Cavite electorates. The study's respondents are the electorates of Noveleta Cavite. The independent variable is mass media exposure, encompassing sub-factors such as print media, broadcast media, and digital media. The dependent variable is political

engagement, which includes sub-factors like political knowledge, political interest, and political discussion. Additionally, the framework indicates the study's broader objective of advocating, enhancing, and promoting suffrage rights and civic responsibility through mass media dissemination.

For the analysis of quantitative data, the researchers employed descriptive statistics, specifically mean and percentage. Following the coding of the data in Google Sheets, the information was transferred to Jamovi Statistics software to calculate the mean for each data point collected from individual respondents. This mean value served as a summary and analysis tool through data tabulations. The use of Jamovi Statistics software facilitated the assessment and description of the electorates' mass media exposure and political engagement levels, providing a basis for mean score interpretation.

Furthermore, the researchers employed the correlational statistical method, specifically Spearman's rho (rs), to explore whether a significant connection exists between the two variables: mass media exposure and political engagement. The use of the correlational statistic approach gave the researchers the power to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between mass media exposure and political engagement among the Noveleta Cavite Electorates.

Results and Discussion

This segment provides the analyzed results of the gathered data. Mean levels of mass media exposure and political engagement factors for the electorates were calculated

across print, broadcast, and digital media. Quantitative data, processed using Jamovi, is divided into descriptives and correlations for addressing the research problem. In essence, descriptive and inferential statistical analyses strengthened the findings.

Table 1: Electorates' Exposure to Different Mass Media

Types of Mass Media	General Average	Rank	Interpretation
Print Media	2.11		Low Exposure
Broadcast Media	3.32		Moderate Exposure
Digital Media	4.39	1	Very High Exposure
Total Average	3.27		Moderate Exposure

Table 1 provides a comprehensive summary of the different types of mass media exposure among electorates, specifically Print Media, Broadcast Media, and Digital Media, resulting in a total average of 3.27. This average indicates a moderate level of exposure among respondents. The data illustrates that, among these types of mass media, Digital Media stands out as the most prevalent, with a mean value of 4.39. Following closely is Broadcast Media, with a mean of 3.32, while Print Media lags behind with a mean of 2.11 in terms of frequency of usage regarding electorates' exposure to mass media.

These findings align with the outcomes of Ortiz-Ospina's (2019) [19] research, which emphasizes the widespread influence of social media on a global scale. The study notably highlights an increasing trend in social media usage, suggesting a preference for frequent engagement with social media platforms over traditional sources such as newspapers and television among the sampled population.

Table 2: Electorate's Political Engagement

Types of Engagement	General Average	Rank	Interpretation
Political Participation	3.95	3	Neutrally Engaged
I vote regularly.	5.59		
I wear a campaign button to support a candidate.	3.87		
I volunteer for a political party or candidate.	3.57		
I participate in political activities, such as protest, march, or demonstration.	3.06		
I talk to others about why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates in an election.	3.64		
Political Interest	4.91	1	Moderately Engaged
I am interested in political issues.	4.22		Neutrally Engaged
I am interested in learning about political campaigns.	4.50		Moderately Engaged
For me, understanding political issues is important	5.66		Engaged
It is useful for me to learn about political issues.	5.30		Moderately Engaged
I like learning about political issues.	4.85		Moderately Engaged
Political Efficacy	4.49	2	Moderately Engaged
I feel that I have a good understanding of the important political issues facing our country.	4.97		Moderately Engaged
I feel that I have a good understanding of the important political issues facing our world.	4.76		Moderately Engaged
I am confident that I can construct good arguments about political issues.	4.37		Neutrally Engaged
I can write clearly about political issue.	4.07		Neutrally Engaged
I often don't feel sure of myself when talking with other people about politics and government.	4.30		Neutrally Engaged
Total Average	3.27		Somewhat Engaged

The Total Average of all General Average scores (M = 3.27) indicates that electorates are moderately engaged in Political Participation, Interest, and Efficacy. Table 2 provides a detailed depiction of sub-factors contributing to political engagement among voters, categorizing individuals as either neutrally engaged or moderately engaged. Among these

factors, Political Interest emerges as the most prominent (M = 4.77), followed closely by Political Efficacy at 4.49 and Political Participation at 3.95.

Expanding on these findings, it is noteworthy to mention a study by Gil de Zúñiga (2019) [8], which found a positive correlation between individuals' political interest and their

voting habits, a connection significantly influencing electorate engagement levels. This amalgamation of empirical data with existing literature solidifies the understanding that the degree of an individual's political interest significantly influences heightened voter engagement.

With the computed Mean of each description, the General Average of Political Participation (M = 3.95) suggests that electorates are neutrally engaged. Voting emerges as the most actively participated form of political engagement, boasting a noteworthy mean score of 5.59, followed by wearing a campaign button at 3.87. Discussing reasons for or against candidates had a mean of 3.64, and volunteering for political candidates had a mean of 3.57. Moreover, engaging in protests or marches had the lowest mean score of 3.06. However, insights from Brannen *et al.*'s (2020) [4] work, highlighting a global trend of increasing protests, prompt reflection on the relatively low mean scores observed in our specific sample for political engagement through protesting, marching, or demonstrating.

Regarding Political Interest, it resulted in moderate engagement among electorates (M = 4.91). The data indicates that understanding political issues is highly valued, with a mean score of 5.66. Additionally, learning about political issues is perceived as valuable, scoring a mean of

5.30, followed by electorates' interest in learning political issues with a mean of 4.85. Moreover, there is notable interest in political campaigns, averaging at 4.50, and a slightly lower interest in general political matters, with a mean of 4.22. Dennison's study (2019) [6] emphasizes varying interest levels in political issues and the importance of understanding these issues in electoral behavior.

Furthermore, in terms of Political Efficacy, electorates are somewhat engaged, with a total mean score of 4.49. The data suggests they feel informed about important political issues in their country, scoring a mean of 4.97, indicating moderate engagement. The data also shows that electorates' understanding of global political issues scored a mean of 4.76. Moreover, 4.37 percent of electorates feel confident they can construct good political arguments. However, other respondents express less certainty when discussing politics, scoring a mean of 4.30. Writing clearly about political issues scored 4.07, with this mean score being the lowest. According to Groth (2019) [9], political stories are shared in daily conversations, leading people to consider political understanding essential, and using these stories to grasp political events and ideas. Consequently, most respondents in this study feel well-informed about their country's important political issues.

Table 3: Correlation between Mass Media Exposure and Political Engagement

Correlation Matrix

Variables	Print Media	Broadcast Media	Digital Media	Political Participation	Political Interest	Political Efficacy
Print Media	—					
Broadcast Media	0.393***	—				
Digital Media	-0.256**	0.115	—			
Political Participation	0.025	0.133	-0.064	—		
Political Interest	-0.113	0.155	0.267**	0.514***	—	
Political Efficacy	0.014	0.165	0.236*	0.544***	0.762***	—

Table 3 presents correlations among variables, revealing key associations. Political Efficacy demonstrates links to Political Interest, Participation, and Digital Media. Political Interest is correlated with both Political Participation and Digital Media. Notably, Political Participation lacks correlation with any variable. Furthermore, Digital Media and Broadcast Media exhibit a correlation solely with Print Media. The correlation matrix indicates that certain political engagement factors are associated with Mass Media exposure. Specifically, the observed correlations suggest a relationship between Political Interest and Efficacy with Print Media, highlighting Print Media as a primary channel for political engagement among the electorate.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study set out to explore the relationship between mass media exposure and the political engagement of electorates in Noveleta Cavite. The objectives were twofold: firstly, to examine the various forms of mass media and their impact on political engagement; and secondly, to assess the levels of political participation, interest, and efficacy among the electorates.

The findings indicate a moderate level of political engagement among Noveleta Cavite electorates, with notable variations in the degree of engagement across different dimensions. Print Media emerged as a prominent channel, with digital media following closely, showcasing the evolving landscape of media consumption. These results

align with global trends, emphasizing the increasing influence of digital media on political awareness and engagement.

The correlation analysis revealed significant associations between Political Efficacy, Political Interest, and Digital Media, reinforcing the interconnectedness of these variables in shaping political engagement. Notably, Political Participation lacked significant correlation with other variables, suggesting a nuanced relationship between active political involvement and media exposure.

Furthermore, the study highlighted the unique role of Print Media, demonstrating correlations with key political engagement factors, particularly Political Interest and Efficacy. This underscores the enduring influence of traditional media formats, even in the face of the digital revolution.

The implications of these findings extend beyond academic discourse. Policymakers, media professionals, and educators can leverage these insights to tailor strategies that foster informed political participation. Recognizing the enduring significance of Print Media, despite the rise of digital platforms, emphasizes the need for a balanced and inclusive approach in media outreach.

In essence, this research contributes valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between mass media exposure and political engagement among Noveleta Cavite electorates. As media landscapes continue to evolve, understanding these dynamics becomes pivotal for ensuring a well-informed and

actively engaged citizenry in the democratic process.

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