The Relationship between Social Media and Political Awareness: Applied Study

[1]Abed Alhakim Isleem Salman Alqaraleh, [2]kamel Fathy kamel khedr

[1]*Applied Science Private University, Amman, Jordan, a_alqaraleh@asu.edu.jo*
[2]*Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt, drkamelfathy@gmail.com*

Abstract

The study tackles the relationship between social media and political awareness. It reveals that there is a correlation between social media and political awareness among Cairo University students. It further shows a positive correlation between these means and political awareness indicators, such as the realization of rights and duties, political knowledge, reacting to events, and political participation. Regardless of such positive correlation, but the study revealed that there is a problem related to traditional institutions, such as Parliament, government, or political parties that are unable to take advantage of the opportunities in social media platforms in influencing and communicating with citizens and using it as a means for political education and channels for communication. The study finds a weakness in the role and the impact of political parties, the Parliament lack of interest of popular participation in debating draft legislations, and the government lack of addressing to public opinion. The study has a number of important implications; the most important one is that the traditional institutions in Egypt should change their perspectives, ideology, and approach in dealing with political socialization, along with investing social media in creating channels of communication with citizens, designing governmental programs for awareness,crowding out virtual entities to draw youth, establishing observatories to analyze and monitor public opinion, and conducting additional scientific studies that are specialized in the role of traditional political institutions in Egypt in shaping political awareness.

Keywords: political awareness, political participation, social media, political parties, political education, political socialization.

1. Introduction

Recently, political awareness is considered as one of the topics that has unfailingly garnered attention a variety of scholars and researchers, particularly in Arab region due to their realization of its role in individuals' rehabilitation to understand systems, public policies, governmental plans and participations in developing their societies.

After the emergence of the Internet, social media platforms created a virtual room, which enabled the individuals to give their opinions, discuss their ideas directly, interact with each other at both the national and global levels in the light of providing a degree of confidentiality, freely democratic participation, and easy access to information.

The technological boom has led the social media to attract a large number of youth by considering them as the most vital category that look forward to participate. Besides, it raised youth's awareness, liberated them from traditional frameworks of expression and participation. It further opens doors for them to engage in political interaction of non-traditional forms and to participate in creative means in policy decision making.

Undoubtedly, it provides value added in political life, which led to reinforce the relationship between the political system and other cultural, social, and economic systems in the society. It has also increased the individuals' desire to obtain further knowledge on political action and prompted them towards greater participation and involvement.

The researchers in this study seek to investigate the impact of social communication of political awareness on Cairo University students in Egypt by conducting an applied survey study on the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences since youths are the most group of students engaged with the general field in general and the political field in particular. Their study is correlated with the political sciences, economy, and the international law. On the other hand, such students are educationally and scientifically successful.

1.1 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study springs from the considerable importance of social media platforms in the light of their significant impact on influencing the lives of individuals and communities, along with their growing role in affecting and generating political ideas, their role in political culture, mobilization, and participation. This study highlights the youths in particular because they are more inclined towards using social media platforms and more willing towards participation and political change; thus, their awareness should be raised. Besides, the political awareness issue is correlated with the public policies in any state.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study attempts to envisage the manner of taking the utmost advantage of social media platforms in increasing political awareness on Arab youths by developing it in an examined ideological framework that enables obtaining effective leadership in the future for political action, having the best guidance by encouraging constructive popular participation, protecting them from isolated opposition and intellectual extremism, harnessing youths' energies on social media platforms, such as freedom of expression, political knowledge, non-conventional means, and engagement, which increase their creativity in providing

solutions for political problems and increasing active participation.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Political movement that the Arab world has witnesses since the late of 2010 has attracted researchers and political analysts' attention in which popular revolutions occurred in various Arab countries that toppled ancient governments kept under control the political scene for centuries. Social media platforms were considered as a backbone for such revolutions.

Hence, the problem of the study is manifested in answering the following study question: Are the youths able to make change in the virtual reality by transforming it into reality? Have social media platforms raised their political awareness, which has been reflected on their active participation? How does the role of social media platform influence youths' political interaction and participation? What are the reflections of these platforms on the youths' political participations and other movements?

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses of the study are divided into main hypothesis and four sub-hypotheses as follows:

1.4.1 Main Hypothesis:

There is no statistically significant relationship between dealing with social media platforms and the level of realizing political awareness among Cairo University students.

1.4.2 Sub-Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses emanate from the main hypothesis as follows:

- There is no statistically significant relationship between dealing with social media platforms and the level of realizing the duties and rights among Cairo University students.

- There is no statistically significant relationship between dealing with social media platforms and political knowledge among Cairo University students.

- There is no statistically significant relationship between dealing with social media

platforms and political events among Cairo University students.

- There is no statistically significant relationship between dealing with social media platforms and political participation among Cairo University students.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework:

First, the concept of social media platforms:

Social media platforms played a pivotal role in Spring Arab revolutions that occurred by the end of 2010 that was the main channel for exchanging political dialogues among political activists. They were regarded as a safety means for exchanging information, organizing protests, and social movements. The spark of the events launched in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, and so forth. By the beginning of movement, social media platforms played a key role in organizing the activists, transferring the events, exchanging information about gathering locations and they can be used at home and abroad (Ghanem and Bwdaah, 2021, p. 398-399).

There are a variety of definitions that were provided for social media platforms; the concept is varied in literature due to the intervention of opinions and attitudes due to the rapid developments in communication techniques world and media; such concept reflects this technical development that has occurred on using technology, which is attributed to any individual who uses technology for communication on platforms; such concept is so-called 'media means' the word 'social' was added to refer to the indispensable instinct needs in building their lives. The nature of humans entails their communication with each other (Safko,2010, p.4). As such, social media platforms are defined as 'correlated systems with type and/or types of correlation; including, values, visions, mutual ideas, social communication, kinship, conflict, financial and commercial exchanges, and mutual membership in the organizations and participating groups in particular events and other aspects of human relations" (Al-Matere, p. 24).

Other researchers define it as 'social systems that gather millions of people and users by creating electronic personal accounts that enable them to exchange the information, news, images, videos, conversations, and so forth. They also enable them to build new relationships with the newly acquainted people and bring people with mutual interests closer to each other". (Al-Issa, 2021, p. 24).

Other scholars define social media platforms as 'electronic networks that permit the participants to create new private accounts and then correlating them with electronic social system with other members who have similar interests and hobbies or familiarizing them with friends or classmates with mutual interest in the school or work…etc." (Monsaer, 2018, p. 75). They further mean as 'interactive networks that enable their users to communicate with each other at any time. Social media platforms are the most prominent media phenomenon in the world because they attract a large number of Al-Mamurah residents (Bo-Afya Wayder, 2021, p. 502).

They are further defined as 'a group of networks on the Internet, such as Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, Whatsapp, Instagram, Snapchat, and so forth) that enable the individuals to communicate and constitute new social relations or maintain the relationships by a group of means that permit building virtual community that permits youths to express their ideas, opinions, feelings, sharing knowledge, experiences, various information, knowledge, engaging in various social, cultural, religious, economic, political, and health activities with the individuals who have the same tendencies and interests at various age levels and at any place in the world with different social and cultural backgrounds, which affected on their values, culture, and the behavior of youths and played a pivotal role in constituting and improving their social awareness" (Al-Qaws, 2018, p. 6).

Social media platforms are attributed with a number of characteristics that enable social media platforms to make new friendships, to constitute relations in various fields, exchange information and ideas, follow the developments of natural, political, and economic events. Such events are attributed with certain characteristics that are summarized as follows (Al-Issa, 2021, p. 25-28):

- The interaction and the user of such platforms are considered as a sender and a receiver at once. He/she has enough room for active participation.

- The ease of use and the diversity of expression and participation by using symbols, images, videos, or writing in which more than 75 languages are used for communication.

- Their low cost because the participation of these programs is free.

- The diversity of options and usages according to the whole tendencies and attitudes.

- The ability to build a content by the users and the ability to control the presented content and then participation.

- The increase of friends' base and the freedom of choosing those who are willing to participate.

- The lack of restrictions on participation and the ability to maintain privacy.

Based on the above-mentioned section, the concept social media platforms can be defined procedurally according to the following determinants:

- The platforms that have a significant importance for all categories in the societies; thus, they become as a contemporary life necessity that occupy a large portion of daily practices by individuals; they are significant in understanding the events that occurred around them and expanding their cognition and knowledge to various experiences because they convey the reality without fabrication.

- There is a high degree of correlation since they attract the individuals towards using them who have great passion and confidence towards using them because social media platforms give them the ability to contact with others and they contribute to accomplish their tasks and they give them the opportunity to contribute to various activities. Therefore, they are considered as indispensable life necessity.

- They are a variety of drivers towards using them; including, their easy access to knowledge and information, entertainment, ability to make new friends, express opinions freely, communicate with others, skills improvement, and talent development.

Second: Political Awareness Concept

There are several definitions for such concept that are summarized as follows:

Political awareness is defined as "the citizens' knowledge of their political rights and duties, the surrounding events and facts, their holistic vision of the reality as a total reality with interconnected elements, rather than separated elements and scattered events. Besides, their ability to override the experiences of groups or small groups to address the experiences and the problems of the overall political community" (Mawad, 1983, p. 114).

Social media platforms further mean the process that enables the individuals to know the world, its changes, and its role in the political process, their participations, political tendencies, party affiliation, and their ability to evaluate the political reality of the society, along with the matters that should be either supported or changed. They further express the extent of people's knowledge, realization, and interest in issues, institutions, and political leadership at various local, regional, and international levels (Al-Farde, 2010, p. 63).

Political awareness is defined as 'the public understanding of the political climate, is plans and roles. It is defined as the types of knowledge, values, and orientations that constitute the political culture of the people in terms of its relation to political power. Political awareness plays a pivotal role in the preparation and rehabilitation of understanding the plans, objectives, systems, public policies of the political party, and the participation in improving them" (Al-Jasser, 2020, p. 147).

Other scholars suggest that awareness expresses in general mental state that is represented in human's perception of the world either cognitively or sentimentally. The political awareness has different manifestations that vary according to the perceived field or the awareness topic since individuals are aware of religious, scientific, social, and ethical types of awareness. Accordingly, political awareness is defined as 'the state in which the individual represents political life issues with its various dimensions and they take from such issues cognitive and sentimental stance". (Warklah, 2012, p. 206-207).

It can be deduced that such definitions express the individuals' perceptions towards themselves and the group they live in, along with their ability to override their experiences and problems to the overall community.

Several researchers underscore the importance of correlating political awareness with education, which plays a key role at various levels, starting with constituting national identity, which contributes significantly to enhancing political socialization and political participation, which constitute a fundamental aspect in increasing the level of political awareness since political socialization plays a fundamental role in enhancing it by improving the concepts of political participation, which entails a responsibility towards various national issues and increasing their role in serving the community and vice versa. (Al-Sarayrah et al., 2013, p. 164-165).

Political awareness is an accumulative and complicated process that contributes to intellectual and cognitive interaction, along with what people acquire of factual information about governance and politics that is obtained by various sources and platforms. (Khamoka, 2022, p. 91).

Several studies suggest the political awareness elements that guarantee various processes that are summarized as follows (Al-Magale and Al-Khlaylah, 2021, p. 87).

•   Political culture is a set of values, beliefs, and emotional attitudes of individuals toward state affairs and community policy.

•   Political socialization influences the ability of the individuals in a society to respond to various political variables; political participation; political development; dialogue; criticism; affiliation; citizenship; political understanding of diverse phenomena and issues.

•   Political participation that is manifested in the individual's positive role in society and his/her keen on being an active factor in political life and the accession to political parties, being a part of the decision-making process, having a sense of political responsibility, and so forth.

The significance of political awareness is attributed to the fact that it represents a mental state that is grounded in a cognitive and cultural basis that enables the individual to interact with his or her social environment. It also allows the individual to explain the situation and make changes for the better. Furthermore, this awareness elevates the individual's personal concerns to the national concerns of his or her community. (Al-Manofe, 1979, p. 76).

Also, political awareness represents the driving force for the individual to effectively contribute to society's movement and to change society for the better. It is essential to know that political awareness varies according to the levels of society and the ability of society to provide the freedom climate that enables such levels to realize the relationship between social and political awareness. The social awareness among the levels does not necessarily entail a conflict among them since the awareness of each level of their interests, disparities, and differences supports the necessity to have a formula. (Saad, 1989, p. 368).

Based on the above-mentioned definitions, the researchers define political awareness procedurally as follows:

•   Individual recognition of political rights and duties resembles recognition of constitutional articles and granted rights; freedom; existing law; newly promulgated laws; or discussed law projects.

•   Political awareness is described as the level of political culture and the extent of following local and global events and the awareness of national issues, plans, and future policies.

•   Interaction with events, as well as participation in community dialogues on a variety of issues from the perspective of national affiliation and participation in shaping public opinion

•   Adherence to political parties or various political movements; political action such as nomination, election, or realization of one's role in political decision-making; and one's role in the process of change and political reform.

2.2 Previous Studies

The researchers reviewed the literature that addressed the topic under investigation. The

following section presents the previous studies in chronological order:

Khamoka (2022) investigated the role of social media platforms in shaping and raising the political awareness among governmental university students in Duhok city in Iraq. The study concluded that the participants used social media platforms with high percentage for acquiring knowledge, political news because they are rapid, unmonitored, activate political participation, and consolidate political awareness.

Abdul Ghani et al. (2020) conducted a study on the role of social media as an instrument for political awareness and mobilization in Pakistan. The study found that social media platforms are the most commonly used means in Pakistani politics and in Punjab province. Such means have changed the political scene completely. They have been used excessively in political campaigns, protests, talk shows, and they have a significant impact on voters' behaviors.

Al-Jasser (2020) examined the role of new social media platforms in raising the awareness of University Saudi students towards political issues. The findings of the study revealed that the participants relied heavily on Twitter to obtain political knowledge due to its accessibility and easy access to information, which in turn, shapes their political awareness and improves their political knowledge and motivation towards expressing their opinions about political subjects, along with giving them the freedom to express their opinions.

Sayer (2017) carried out a study on the role of new media in creating political awareness among youths towards national and global issues. The study concluded that such means played a key role in raising individual awareness, particularly in the light of the diversity and the ambiguity, and the inaccessibility of the source. The study deduced that the benchmarks and the references of cultural and scientific forum were the reference and the fundamental provision regarding the investigated topic. The political awareness that includes such means is considered as a passive awareness that interacts with the internal conditions and shaped by political advertising.

Al-Sarhan et al. (2016) investigated the role of social media platforms in shaping political awareness from the perspectives of Al Albayt University students. The study indicated that social media platforms played a cardinal aspect in shaping political awareness among the respondents because they familiarized them with the internal situations, the public affairs, events, and regional and international developments. They further enhanced political participation and highlighted new political figures.

Salem (2015) addessed the role of social media platforms in raising political awareness among Asyut university students by measuring their interest in reading political subjects and acknowledging the extent of using such platforms in obtaining political information and their participation in the most important political events. The findings revealed that social media platforms enabled the participants to easy access the information, change the political information, and to expand their knowledge about the political system, which in turn, prompted them to participate in the demonstrations that occurred on 25 January 2011

Ali (2013) tackled the role of social media platforms in shaping political awareness. The sample consisted of a number of youths in some of Egypt provinces. The study found that Facebook was the most influential social media platforms among youths since it is considered as the main source to obtain information. The study indicated that such means were transformed into an effective pressure element on the governments. The study recommended the necessity to conduct further studies on the advantages of such means.

After reviewing the number of studies that addressed the relationship between social media platforms and political awareness, the researchers elicited that such studies disagreed with their resources and subjects, but they agreed with the importance of such means on political awareness. They keened on investigating the types of such means and their effective role without determining the tracks of such impacts and how they are different from the conventional channels of participations and the attitudes of political parties, Parliament, or government.

3. Methods and Procedures of the Study

3.1 Instruments of the Study

The researchers designed a questionnaire that consists of two variables, namely, social media platforms as an independent variable that contains three indicators (the significance, the degrees of correlation, and the drivers of use); and the second is political awareness as a dependent variable, which includes four indicators (the recognition of the rights and duties; political knowledge; the interaction with the events; and political participation). Then, it was presented to a jury of experts. After verifying its validity, the researchers distributed the questionnaire to a sample of students at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at Cairo University. Upon the distribution of the questionnaire, the researchers did not guide nor divide the participants according to their gender, academic year, occupation, or profession.

3.2 Population of the Study

It includes all students at Cairo University's Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences for the academic year 2021-2021, totaling 3040 male and female bachelor students (the official website of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, 2022).

3.3 Sample of the Study

The study distributed (300) questionnaires to the sample of the study randomly, which constituted (10%) of the total population of the study.

3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To verify the validity of the questionnaire, the internal consistency test for the scale paragraphs was conducted using Cronbach's alpha.

Table (1) Validity and Reliability Coefficient

M	Variable	Validity Coefficient	Reliability Coefficient
1	Social Media Platforms	0.949	0.908
2	Political Awareness	0.945	0.894
	The Total of Axes	0.949	0.901

The findings of Table (1) show that Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to verify the validity and reliability of the list. It is clear from the Table that the list has a very high validity and reliability degree since the validity coefficient amounted to (94.9%), while reliability coefficient accounted for (90.1%).

Second: descriptive analysis for the variables of the study:

1. Dependent variable: social media platforms (X) including three indicators that are illustrated as follows:

Table (2) The Significance of Social Media Platforms:

No.	Statements	Means	Frequency	Arrangement
1	It becomes a contemporary daily life necessity.	4.47	89.3	1
2	It occupies a high portion of my daily practices.	4.18	83.7	4
3	It is important for understanding what happened around me.	4.34	86.7	2
4	It enables me to expand my horizons and recognition.	4.2	84	3
5	It equips me with various experiences.	4.13	82.7	5
6	It renders the abstract reality without fabrication.	4.03	80.7	6
	Total	4.23	84.5	

The findings of Table (2) regarding the significance of social media platforms indicator revealed general trend towards means value around (4.23) with frequency (84.5%). According to the findings of the study, the whole participants agreed on the statement that social media is a contemporary life necessity for the students at the Faculty of Economics and Political Sciences with means (4.47), while the least agreed responses were for the statement that the means render the reality without fabrication with the means (4.03), the other responses ranged from agreed and strongly agreed.

Table (3) The Degrees of Correlation with Social Media Platforms

No.	Statements	Means	Frequency	Arrangements
1	I have a constant passion towards using it.	3.97	79.3	5
2	I become unable to live without it.	4.13	82.7	2
3	I feel very confident by using it.	3.98	79.7	4
4	It gives me the opportunity to communicate with others.	4.12	82.3	3
5	It enables me to accomplish my academic tasks.	3.67	73.3	6
	It gives me the opportunity to participate in various activities.	4.25	85	1
Total		4.02	80.4	

The findings of Table (3) regarding the study degree of correlation with social media platforms were inclined towards strongly agreeing in which the means amounted to (4.02) with (80.4%). A closer inspection of the table shows that the students' responses ranged between high and medium approval; the highest approval degrees were for social media platforms that give the opportunity to participate in various activities with the means (4.25), followed by the statement stating that the student becomes unable to live without it with the means (4.13), and subsequent by the statement that it gives them the opportunity to communicate with others with the means (4.12). However, the lowest approval degrees were for the statement indicating that it enabled the student to accomplish his/her academic task with the means (3.67), and for the statement that the student has a constant passion towards using it with the means (3.97).

Table (4) The drivers towards Using Social Media platforms

No.	Statements	Means	Frequency	Arrangements
1	An easy means for obtaining knowledge and information.	4.37	87.3	1
2	It is used for entertainment.	4.23	84.7	3
3	Making new friendships.	3.8	76.7	5
4	Expressing the opinions freely.	4.3	86	2
5	Communicating with the society.	3.92	78.3	4
6	It is used for skills and talents development.	3.68	73.7	6
	Total	4.06	81.12	

The findings of Table (4) concerning the drivers of the students towards using the networks exhibited positive attitudes with the mean (4.06) with frequency (81.22%). As shown in the table, the majority of the respondents agreed; however, the degree of agreement varied from high to low. The highest level of agreement was for social media to be used as an easy means of obtaining information (4.37) and freely expressing opinions (4.3). However, the least level of agreement was for students' use of such means for developing their skills and talents with means (3.68).

The dependent variable is political awareness (y), which includes four indicators; the recognition of duties and rights, political knowledge, interaction with the events, and political participation.

Table (5) The recognition of duties and rights:

No.	Statements	Means	Frequency	Arrangements
1	It enables me to know the constitution articles.	3.83	76.7	4
2	It enables me to know the fundamental political rights.	3.87	77.3	3
3	It enables me to know the granted freedoms and their borders.	3.8	76	5

4	It enables me to acknowledge the new laws.	3.9	78	2
5	It enables me to follow-up the draft legislations debated by the parliament.	3.35	67	6
6	It warns me from prohibited laws and the illegal procedures.	4.08	81.7	1
Total		3.81	76.1	

The findings of Table (5) regarding the dependent variable related to the recognition of duties and rights indicate an agreement attitude in which the means amounted to (3.81) with (76.1%) frequency. It is clear from the table that there is a strong correlation among the responses in which the whole responses agree, except for one neutral response. The highest level of agreement was for the statement stating that social media platforms warn me from prohibited acts and illegal procedures with the means (4.08). There were various attitudes regarding the students' follow-up of the draft legislation debated by the parliament with the means (3.35).

Table (6) Political Knowledge

No.	Statements	Means	Frequency	Arrangements
1	Developing political culture.	4.4	88	2
2	Following-up local and global events.	4.45	89	1
3	Conveying the details of the events directly.	4.3	86	3
4	Raising the awareness of the national issues.	4.08	81.7	4
5	Acknowledging the details of the national plans.	3.85	77	6
6	Defining the future policies.	4.03	80.7	5
Total		4.19	83.7	

The findings of Table (6) concerning the indicator of political knowledge showed a general attitude towards agreement with a high level in which the means amounted to (4.19) with a frequency of (83.7%). As demonstrated in the table above, there are diverse responses among the responses between high and medium agreement. The highest response was for the statement stating that social media platforms enabled the students to follow-up the local and global events with the means accounted for (4.45), whereas the least level of agreement was for the role of the means in acknowledging the national plans with the means (3.85).

Table (7) The Interaction with the events

No.	Statements	Means	Frequency	Arrangements
1	Expressing the opinions freely.	4.2	84	3
2	Enhancing national affiliation.	4.02	80.3	6
3	Activating community dialogue about the country's issues.	4.03	80.7	5
4	Opening the participation channels among youths' communities.	4.32	86.3	2
5	Increasing communication channels among the government and the citizens.	3.31	66.2	4
6	Constituting public opinion.	4.13	62.6	1
Total		4	76.7	

As shown in Table (7) above regarding the indicator of the interaction with the events, general attitude towards agreement, the means amounted to (4) with (76.7%). Except for one neutral response, all of the responses agreed, as shown in the table. The level of agreement was between high and medium. The statement that social media platforms open channels for participation among youth communities with the means received the most responses (4.32). The opinions varied regarding whether such means increase communication channels between the government and the citizens with the means (4.31).

Table (8) Political Participation

No.	Statements	Means	Frequency	Arrangement
1	Activating the role of political parties and increasing their membership.	3.37	67.3	6
2	Increasing the opportunities of joining political parties.	4.17	83.3	3
3	Increasing the opportunity of practicing political act properly.	4.4	88	1
4	Affecting on political-decision making.	3.38	67.6	5
5	Its ability to bring about political change.	4.15	83	4
6	It plays a role in accelerating reform processes.	4.18	83.7	2
	Total	3.94	78.8	

The findings of Table (8) concerning political participation indicate a general attitude towards approval in which the mean value is accounted for (3.94) with a (78.8%) frequency. Based on the findings of the table, there are two responses that were answered neutrally that revolved around the role of social media platforms in activating political parties and increasing their membership with the means (3.37), while the second statement is related to the impact of decision-making with the means (3.38). The degrees of agreement were high concerning the ability of such means to allow the political process with the means (4.4) and its role in accelerating the reform processes with the means (4.18), and increasing the opportunities of joining political parties with the means (4.15).

Third, Hypotheses Testing:

To test the hypothesis of the study, the Spearman correlation coefficient was used because of the ordinal data. The researchers used the 5-Point Likert Scale to investigate the relationship between social media platforms and political awareness and the data was as follows:

1. Main Hypothesis:

This hypothesis entails that there are no statistically significant differences among the social media platforms and the level of political awareness among Cairo University students. This is clear from the analysis that there is a significant relationship between social media platforms and political awareness; such a correlation was positive; this correlation is strong (77.6%). As such, the main hypothesis was rejected. The study proved a strong positive correlation. The more the students use the social media platforms, the more the

political awareness among the students is reflected positively.

Sub-hypotheses:

Using Spearman's coefficient correlation coefficient, these hypotheses show that there is no statistically significant correlation between dealing with social media platforms and political awareness indicators such as recognition of duties and rights, political knowledge, interaction with events, and political awareness among Cairo University students.

Table (9)

	r	Significance Level	Result
Correlation coefficient between x, y	0.715 **	0.01	Statistical

Table (10)

No.	Political Awareness	Social Media Platforms
1	The recognition of rights and duties	0.701
2	Political knowledge	0.832**
3	The interaction with the events	0.811 **
4	Political participation	0.515

** Significance Level (0.01).

It is clear from the findings of the table that there is a strong positive correlation between social media platforms and the indicators of political awareness. The degrees of correlation are converging; the highest one was between social media platforms and political knowledge with the means (83.2%), followed by the

interaction with political events with the percentage (81.1%), and subsequent by the recognition of duties and rights with the means (70.1%). However, the lowest percentage was for political participation with the means (51.5%).

As such, the sub-hypotheses are rejected and the study showed a positive correlation between social media platforms and political awareness indicators, such as the recognition of duties and rights, political knowledge, interaction with events and political participation. The highest degrees of correlation were for political knowledge, while the lowest degrees of correlation were for political participation.

It can be deduced that such findings indicate that the benefits of social media platforms on students in terms of increasing their political awareness are in the domain of political knowledge resulting from their interaction with the events and the degrees of correlation were high, while the statement of the recognition of their duties and rights was low. However, it is significantly decreased when addressing political participation, which means that there is a need to activate the participation channels from the traditional institutions in Egypt to commensurate with the amount of development regarding increasing political knowledge and the students' interaction with the events.

4. Results

First: Findings of the Study

4.1 The findings related to the Hypotheses of the study

The study hypothesized that there is a correlation between social media platforms and political awareness among the students at Cairo University. The main hypothesis generates four sub-hypotheses indicating a link between social media platforms and political awareness indicators such as recognition of rights and duties, political knowledge, interaction with events, and political participation. The study rejected the main hypothesis, in which the study indicated a strong positive correlation, because the more the students use social media platforms, the more their political awareness increases.

In respect of sub-hypotheses, they were rejected in which the study indicated a strong positive relationship between social media platforms and political awareness indicators, such as the recognition of the rights and duties, political knowledge, interaction with events and political participation. The highest degrees of correlation were for political knowledge, while the lowest degrees of correlation were for the recognition of rights and duties.

4.2 Results related to the Variables of the Study:

In respect of the dependent variable (social media platforms), the study revealed that they are highly used by the students. Regarding their importance, the study showed that they are considered as a life necessity. They are essential for students to understand the events that are occurring around them. They further expanded their knowledge and horizons. They preoccupy an important part of their daily practices, they gave them many experiences, and they characterized by a reasonable level of credibility in terms of their provided facts.

With regard to the extent of their attachment with such platforms, there is a high degree of correlation between the students and social media platforms. They give them the opportunity to participate in various activities in which they become unable to live without them. They further give them the opportunity to communicate with others. They also have strong confidence on using them with high percentages. However, they have the passion towards using them and they help them in accomplishing their academic tasks but with lower levels.

In respect of the motives towards using social media platforms, the study found strong motives for the students because they enable them to obtain the information, express their opinions freely, entertain them, enable them to communicate with the community, and to make friends. However, they develop their skills and talents to a lesser degree.

Regarding the dependent variable (political awareness), the study revealed that there is a high degree of awareness among the students at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Science in Cairo University in the light of their use of social media platforms. In respect of the recognition of the rights and duties, the study

found that social media platforms played a pivotal role in their recognition of their political rights and duties because they warn them from prohibited acts and illegal procedures. They enable them to know the new laws, the basic political rights, the articles of the constitution, and the levels of the granted freedoms. However, following-up new draft legislations debated by the Parliament have not received much attention.

Regarding the political knowledge, social media platforms play a cardinal aspect in obtaining political knowledge because they enable following-up local and global events, develop their political culture, transfer the details of the events directly, and raise their awareness with national issues, define their future policies, and acknowledge their national plans.

The study further showed that social media platforms played a role in students' interaction with the political events, opening channels of participation among youth communities, opening doors for youths to express their opinions freely, influencing the constitution of public opinion, activating community dialogue about national issues, and enhancing national belonging. However, they are unable to increase the channels of communication between the government and the citizens.

The study further indicated that social media platforms played a role in increasing political participation among the students since they give the opportunity for the students to engage in political activity adequately. They also accelerate reform processes; they have the ability to make a political change. Nevertheless, there is a divergence of views regarding the opportunity to join political parties and their ability to affect policy decision making.

5.Discussion

Based on the foregoing, the study found that the differences of opinions among students revolved around the statements about Parliament, government, political parties, and the effect in policy decision making. However, the statements that revolved around popular public practices; including political movements, change and reform, youth

gatherings, community dialogue with have level of agreement, which indicates that there is an institutional problem in the process of building political awareness in Egypt. Such problem is attributed to the institutions themselves rather than the individuals. To verify that, this study addressed a sample of students at the Faculty of Economics and Political Sciences, whose main subject is political sciences on the one hand and the analysis and the follow-up of political situations on the other hand. As such, these students are more keen on achieving political awareness, along with the high agreement among the participants on the other statements related to popular and public (unofficial) determinants in building political awareness. The aspects of such problem are defined as follows:

-The weak role and impact of Parliament in the political life in Egypt in general, the lack of interest in popular participation in debating law legislations and issues within its agenda, and the weakness of addressing the public opinion.

- The lack of governmental interest in the role and the impact of social media platforms in communicating with citizens and using them as a tool for raising political awareness or as a channel for participation.

- The weakness of political parties and their limited role that are manifested in their ability to take advantage from social media platforms that created a revolution in community engagement and influence, particularly among youths.

6. Recommendations

In the light of the findings, the study recommends the following:

-The traditional institutions in Egypt, such as the government, Parliament, and political parties have to change their perspectives, ideology, and approach in dealing with political socialization underpinning the building of political awareness in the light of new technological means that brought about new innovative means for attraction and political mobilization.

-The traditional political institutions in Egypt have to invest social media platforms in

creating means of communication with the citizens, particularly youths and enhancing the process of building political awareness by using scientific and civilized manner in which these institutions target their messages to the citizens and they keen on involving them in political, social, and economic reform process.

-Designing governmental programs for awareness and providing accurate political knowledge by social media platforms, along with competing virtual entities that are able to attract youths by establishing bodies that are able to manage community dialogues in a scientific manner and by the inclusion of the youths in their ideologies, aspirations, and by taking advantages of their potentials.

-Analyzing and monitoring the trends of public opinion by using social media platforms by the establishment of observatories whether in the ministries or various governmental departments to be taken into by the decision-maker upon developing public policies and future plans.

-Increasing the level of electronic communication between the citizens and the government by increasing the free expressions of ideas and opinions in public subjects and national issues, allowing the opposing views and accepting them by governmental electronic committees, and addressing the public opinion regarding that with new speech that is distant from stereotypical and traditional aspects.

- Conducting specialized scientific studies concerning the role of traditional political institutions in Egypt in political awareness, particularly the political parties, Parliament, professional associations, religious institutions, civil society institutions, and investigating their mechanism in activating their role.

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