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DIGITAL MEDIA AND PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT: PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL SCIENCES STUDENTS AT TURKISH UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

In the last decade, global society has undergone a considerable technological transformation that has dramatically changed the ways people communicate with each other at personal, social, government, and commercial levels. A large part of this transformation has been the emergence of digital media platforms, which are the preferred method of distributing information, connecting with others in a social context, and engaging with governments through interaction with citizens. With the increasing emphasis on digital media by governments as a way to disseminate official messages, influence public opinion, and communicate directly with citizens, digital media have become a central source of news for individuals regarding their own the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) in Turkey's case. According to data from this study, 55.5% of all Social Studies students at Turkish universities indicated a preference for following the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) news through digital media; in this case, X was by far the preferred outlet among digital media because of its high volume of political information. Overall, they were most interested in the overall social climate affecting their fellow students within Turkish society related to any developments on legislative processes through3 X. The research illustrates that student participation in different types of digital media platform users have experienced a positive relationship in three areas: cognitive, affective, and behavioral, especially with their knowledge acquisition due to a strong correlation between these variables (knowledge acquisition). In addition to the above-mentioned correlations, digital media platforms are particularly helpful to students wanting to learn about political processes/legal issues and are supportive of active engagement in the public debate. The overall results show that by using digital media, students can become more politically aware and will have higher levels of civic engagement throughout the country of Turkey.

Keywords: *Digital Media, Parliamentary Engagement, Political Communication, University Students, Political Participation, Turkey.*

1. Introduction

With the great and accelerating development in science and technology witnessed all over the world in the past few years, all public and private bodies, both individual and collective, local and international, now have access to a great variety of methods by which to interact, with many characteristics that distinguish them from other old traditional ones. This large set of technical methods to interact, specifically in media and communication, has imposed a new reality that is very different from the past. All parties- individuals, companies, and countries- have developed a need to interact and communicate with other audiences, countries, and peoples through modern communication means used by the same audience. (Bossetta,2018). This ensures access to these audiences and helps to address and influence them in a way that achieves mutual interest between all parties in several fields and sectors. Digital media of all kinds and forms have been one of the most important products of this great technological revolution, as these methods have become one of the most important channels of communication with people, providing news and facts, specifically in the political aspects related to both local and international affairs (Malkawi,2026). All intergovernmental institutions of all countries seek to use modern digital media when practicing their various political activities. Among these countries is Turkey, which has a large number of students and academics interested in following political news and political participation through many digital means, as indicated by many previous studies (Malkawi, 2025).

Among the important political institutions and bodies in the Turkish state is the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), which, like other government institutions, has digital media accounts to communicate and interact with the public on an ongoing basis to provide the public with all the information, laws and news issued by the legislative body, given the importance of these laws and news in general.

As students are the most prominent group following digital media, this study seeks to assess the effects of digital media on Turkish university students in following the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). It also aims to find out the patterns of their follow-up and how deeply they depend on digital media in following the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT).

2. Literature Review

Recent scholarly work has also highlighted the significance of digital media in reconstituting political communication, political consciousness, and citizens' perceptions of parliamentary institutions. The development of digital journalism and new social media tools has changed traditional patterns of political information consumption, making it more interactive, personalized

and visually appealing, especially among students and within academic circles. Empirically, digital journalism is seen as influencing the formation of political perceptions and images of parliamentary institutions. Scholars in Turkey find evidence that digital journalism meaningfully shapes evaluations of legislative performance and political representation, ultimately concluding that digital news environments influence not only political knowledge but also more general attitudes and interpretations about politics (Malkawi 2025). Research on social media platforms shows similar patterns, as visually oriented networks, like Instagram, impact users' attitudes toward political parties, i.e., Turkish university students, due to the ubiquity and persuasive potential of these platforms (Malkawi, 2024). Collectively, these point to the role of digital media as an intermediary, active in shaping political perceptions of the audience, rather than merely transmitting and receiving the audience's political perceptions toward the media. Within the scope of students' political engagement, previous research consistently identifies social media as a significant level of political activity. Research employing surveys and mixed-methods has shown that social media channels are the most dominant means of communication for Turkish university students, which allows them access to political content and the ability to exercise their freedom of expression in a new way, as compared to traditional forms of media (Zenginkuzucu, 2024). This is consistent with the international evidence, where systematic literature reviews establish a positive correlation between students' political media consumption and their political activity, particularly political discourse, information accessibility, and online political communication (Zai Nurin et al., 2024). Such research indicates that new media provide more opportunities for political involvement, even if the quality and depth of participation may differ. But the effect of digital media on political activity is still relative to context study conducted on Generation Z in Turkey indicates that students are not politically neutral; however, they are somewhat wary about engaging in online political activities due to the presence of monitoring, self-censorship, and the continuation of the "spiral of silence" effect in relation to digital media (Gürel et al., 2023). The studies that have examined political participation within Turkey also find that individuals who utilize online means for expressing political views are more likely than others to engage in offline means of political engagement due to their exposure to different perspectives and through sharing political viewpoints (Toros & Toros, 2022). The results of these previous studies suggest that although media play a positive role in providing individuals with avenues for political participation, the extent to which individuals utilize digital means for political participation is dependent upon their social, cultural, and institutional contexts. Previous works around parliamentary communication has informed us about the institutional context of legislative structures. The academic reviews conducted on parliamentary websites highlight that the ability for citizens to interact directly with parliament is still limited in nature. This limitation is seemingly representative of the wider administrative and political cultures that shape the type and level of digital participation that can be undertaken. Multiple studies can be cited to support

this view. For instance, researchers in Jordan say that university students follow parliamentary-related news and develop their impressions about and opinions of legislators primarily on the media that they consume. The majority of the time, traditional media and satellite television channels had been the two main ways that citizens had been offered an opportunity to receive parliamentary mediated information (Al-Farihat, 2015).

Studies of image framing in the US Congress indicate that they work to shape public perceptions of policymakers and to reinforce gender stereotypes regarding legislators. This emphasizes the role of media framing in politicians' presentation and interpretation (Anderson, 2003). The online digital media – that is, the news sites, 'social media' forums, and official parliamentary sites - have come to define politics and shape behavior to parliamentary institutions. Existing literature may have extensively covered youth political and media engagement, but has not explicitly narrowed in to empirically assess how Turkish university students follow parliamentary updates on the Internet. And, perhaps most crucially, what this type of interaction does to their attitudes toward the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). This study attempts to fill that void by closely examining news consumption patterns on parliament among Turkish university students. It also looks at how digital media is influencing the ways they interact with parliamentary issues.

3. Media Dependency Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory as a Theoretical Basis for the Study

3.1. Media Dependency Theory

One of the most well-known models or ideas regarding media and communications is Media Dependency Theory, which was developed by DE Fleur and Ball-Rokeach in the 1970s. Media Dependency Theory highlights how audiences are dependent on media to gather information about current events, among other things. There are differences in how much media affects or influences people based on individual conditions and needs, as well as on the social conditions involved in particular relationships between media and audiences (Ball-Rokeach & DE Fleur, 1976). There are other significant implications of this theory that are also found from a cognitive viewpoint. The fact that the content distributed via mediated channels is often ambiguous leads to the influence and shaping of people's perceptions about a range of different topics based on their level of exposure to media. Yaylagül (2019) reported that media can cause people to give more attention to certain topics even when those topics are not necessarily meaningful by virtue of media exposure, and ultimately demonstrates that media affects our value systems through this process. On an emotional level, the signal media actively solicits feelings of admiration and attachment — or jealousy and revulsion — toward media stars and events. They can even work on a subconscious level, which might create rather complex affective responses among your viewers. On the level of behavior, the effects of mass communication appear as activation or inhibition of specific behaviors. Media, as a withholding institution, can lead to spur-of-the-moment decisions and actions and mobilize people from passive watchers

into players in media engagement (Makawi & Elsayed, 1988; Hijab, 2010).

3.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Use and Gratification Theory is a widely accepted model that helps to understand the way in which people interact with mass media. It is based on the premise that rather than being passive receivers of a particular media product, audiences make conscious decisions about the media that they consume, based on personal motivations and/or interests (Katz, Blumer and Gurevitch, 1974). Originally, Use and Gratification Theory concentrated on non-digital forms of media such as radio and television (a linear media experience, providing little chance of interactivity or choice). There has been a resurgence of Use and Gratification Theory in light of the developing media landscape due to the emergence of the digital and interactive media environment, which affords the audience the opportunity to become more active participants in their media consumption experience through intentional media choice based upon the cognitive, social, and entertainment needs of the audience (Ruggiero, 2000; Sundar and Limpers, 2013). A significant change is occurring from traditional, sedentary forms of media to active, interactive, and flexible forms of interaction with digital platforms. Social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter) provide users with the ability to curate their content feeds according to their interests through algorithmically-based user profiles. More control over what content they wish to interact with has created segments of different audiences and supports the primary principle of intentional choice expressed within the active choice theory (McQuaid, 2010). Recent studies in Turkey have found that the method by which university students access digital platforms is different from users in other parts of the world, as university students access these platforms purposely and intentionally as opposed to randomness in Browsing. Different platforms are used to achieve different goals and objectives. For example, Facebook allows users to connect and maintain connections to family and friends, while Instagram enables users to express themselves and define who they are. Users regularly access live news and/or breaking political or legislative news on X due to its speed and immediate nature (Öz Döm & Bingöl, 2021). Students use a variety of methods to navigate digital media intentionally by selecting various platforms based on what those platforms provide. Overall, the larger picture from these patterns indicates that there is more of a shift occurring within the research related to those who use media than previously thought, as audience agency is being acknowledged and the ways in which people use media are being more understood as active and participatory (McQuaid 2010).

4. The Problem of the Study and Its Main Topic

The primary research problem of this study is the notion that digital media used by Turkish university students affects their approach to news related to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT).

The general question of the study is how Turkish university students follow the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) through digital media. From this perspective, a set of other sub-points can be expressed through

these research questions: to what extent do Turkish university students depend on digital media to follow the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)? What are the patterns of Turkish university students' use of digital media when following the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)? What is the most common digital media used by Turkish university students to follow the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)? Why do Turkish university students prefer to use digital media to follow the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)?

What is the nature of the news about the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) that Turkish university students follow? What are the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects of digital media on Turkish university students while following the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)?

5. Study Population and Sample

Undergraduate social sciences students in Turkish universities made up the study's sample. A quantitative approach, using an electronic questionnaire distributed to a non-random sample of 229 students was utilized to elicit data from the participants. Convenience sampling technique, which is popular among other studies, was employed to recruit participants based on convenience. The participants included two public universities: Kocaeli University in Kocaeli and Süleyman Demirel University in Isparta. Based on previous studies, estimating a sufficient sample size of ~200 - 300 participants are generally considered enough to provide reliable and stable data (Hair, 2009) for quantitative descriptive and correlational research. This method was appropriate as the target population of the research uses numerous different digital platforms to communicate and connect (Etikan et al., 2016).

6. Sample Limitations

The study included only first-year undergraduate students enrolled in social science programs at two public universities within Turkey: Kocaeli University and Süleyman Demirel University. Prior research indicates that there is a great deal of political exposure and engagement for participants studying within a social science discipline by means of the environment where they receive their education, and as such may contribute to their greater connection with current events (Nimi & John, 1998; Glaston, 2001). Thus, the relatively high degree of political interest exhibited in these findings could be partially due to the academic nature of the sample population.

7. Study Tool

A digital questionnaire collected data on three primary areas. The first area collected demographic information from participants. The second area collected information about patterns of digital media adoption and use by first-year social

studies students in Turkey, with specific focus on following news related to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). Items in the second section of the survey were based on both classical and modern literature for the fields of digital media and political communication. Major contributions to theory were used from research examining how digital media expands the public sphere and creates opportunities for political discourse (Dahlgren, 2005), how media choice can create differences in levels of political engagement and both engage and disenfranchise people (Prior, 2007), and how digital media enables connections among individuals and provides opportunities for people to participate politically through the use of personalized, digital channels (Bennett & Segeberg, 2012).

The study by Malkawi (2024) served as both an empirical basis for the development and modification of the questionnaire items and as a relevant source of empirical evidence supporting the current study's exploration of Turkish youth's use of digital media and their identification with political information related to their consuming news about GNAT. The final section of the questionnaire focused on how the consumption of news about GNAT affects the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses of young people in Turkey to the news they read about GNAT. This section drew on the Media System Dependency Model (DE Fleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1976), which suggests that the impact of digital media on cognition, emotion, and behavior can be conceptualized in three ways - cognitive effects, emotional effects, and behavioral effects. The various items included in the questionnaire were developed according to this theoretical framework as well as based on the results from previous empirical studies relating to the three-dimensional nature of media use. All items measuring attitudes used a 5-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

8. Statistical Methods Employed in the Study

This research used multiple approaches to analyses the survey responses of Turkish students. Using the SPSS software system, descriptive statistics (also called frequency, percentage, and mean), Pearson's correlation coefficients, and standard deviations were calculated for the statistical analysis associated with each of the student survey responses in order to establish reliability.

9. Analysis of Results

Part 1 of the questionnaire (Demographic Characteristics):

Table 1. Findings related to the demographic characteristics of Turkish students participating in the research

	Frequency	Percent
Age		
18 – 20	89	38.9

21-23	54	23.6
24-26	47	20.5
Mor Than 26	39	17.0
Total	229	100.0
Gender		
Male	128	55.9
Female	101	44.1
Total	229	100.0
The University		
Kocaeli University	115	50.2
Süleyman Demirel University	114	49.8
Total	229	100.0

The demographic results of the study sample (N = 229) indicate that participants aged 18–20 constituted the largest proportion, accounting for 38.9% of the sample. This was followed by the 21–23 age group at 23.6%, and those aged 24–26 at 20.5%, while participants older than 26 represented 17.0%. In terms of gender distribution, males comprised 55.9% of the sample compared to 44.1% females, reflecting a relatively balanced composition with a slight predominance of male participants. Regarding university affiliation, the sample was almost evenly divided between Kocaeli University (50.2%) and Süleyman Demirel University (49.8%), ensuring a balanced representation of both institutions in the study.

Part 2 of the questionnaire (Types of Addiction):

Table 2. The extent of reliance on digital media platforms to follow news from the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)

	Frequency	Percent
I don't follow at all	11	4.8
A little	62	27.1
A moderate amount	127	55.5
A great deal	29	12.7
Total	229	100.0

The results of the study are in Table No. (2) indicate that the majority of Turkish students participating in the research rely on digital media platforms at an average level, with a percentage of (55.5%) and a frequency of 127, while the lowest percentage was recorded for the category "never follows the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)" with a frequency of 11, and a percentage of (4.8%).

As for the group that answered that they never follow the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), they were asked an open question, which helped uncover the reasons for not following the news. Their answers were as follows:

I don't care.

I don't have time to follow it.
 I don't trust news related to the Turkish Parliament.
 It negatively affects me emotionally.
 I use paper magazines to follow it.

Table 3. The most reliable digital media platform for following news from the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)

	Mean	Std. D
Instagram	.337	.473
X platform	.535	.499
YouTube	.157	.365
Telegram	.043	.205
WhatsApp	.026	.160
Digital Journalism	.486	.618

The results of Table No. (3) indicate that X is the most accredited platform to follow the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) among Turkish students participating in the research, with an average of (.535), followed by the digital press with an average of (.486), and then Instagram with an average of (.337).

Table 4: Reasons for preferring digital media platforms to follow the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) news

Note: Means are based on a five-point Likert scale (1–5).

	Mean	Std. D
To follow news about laws passed by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)	3.940	.911
To follow the news published by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) regarding its performance audits	3.357	1.199
To follow the press releases published by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)	3.623	1.130
To follow the news published by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) on issues of public interest in Turkey	4.045	.9589
To follow the news published by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) regarding its relations with other state institutions.	3.766	1.071

The results of Table No. (4) indicate the reasons for the dependence of Turkish students participating in the research on digital media platforms to follow the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). The highest reason was (to follow the news published by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) on issues of public interest in Turkey), with an average of 4.045.

Table 5. The nature of news related to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey

(GNAT) is followed across digital media platforms.

Note: Means are based on a five-point Likert scale (1–5).

	Mean	Std. D
News about legislative activities and laws passed.	3.880	.9621
News about government performance audits.	3.536	1.128
News about political issues of public interest.	4.018	.9835
News about issues that concern students.	4.045	.9732
News about job opportunities for young people.	3.981	1.042

As for the nature of the news that Turkish students participating in the research follow about the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), Table No. (5) indicated that the answer “news about issues of interest to students” is the highest value, with an average of (4.045). This answer is very logical because the study sample is originally from Turkish students, and therefore, it is very natural that the most important news of interest to this group is the news of university life in general and the news of the student group in particular, as mentioned in the results of this question.

Part 3 of the questionnaire (The effects of digital media) :

Table 6. The cognitive effects of digital media platforms.

Note: Means are based on a five-point Likert scale (1–5).

	Mean	Std. D
Cognitive effects in general	3.5624	.81747
It increased my knowledge of the latest laws approved by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)	3.715	.8542
It provided me with the opportunity to constantly follow the news published by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), especially on legislative matters.	3.550	.9694
It raised my awareness that following the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) news enhances my political knowledge.	3.509	1.052
It made it easier for me to understand the role of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) in overseeing the government.	3.275	1.080
It improved my ability to follow daily political developments in Turkey.	3.761	.9921

As shown in Table No. (6), the results of the study indicated that the answer “this improved my ability to follow daily political developments in Turkey” was the highest on the side of the cognitive effects of digital media platforms with an arithmetic average of (3.761) followed by the answer “increased my knowledge of the latest laws approved by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)” with an arithmetic average of (3.715)

Table 7. The emotional effects of digital media platforms.

Note: Means are based on a five-point Likert scale (1–5).

	Mean	Std. D
Emotional effects in General	2.8018	1.15379
It gave me a sense of optimism that the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) is enacting laws that meet the public's expectations.	2.807	1.229
It gave me a sense of optimism that the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) will be successful in monitoring the government's performance.	2.756	1.199
It increased my optimism about the future of the Turkish legislative system.	2.793	1.202
It increased my optimism about the importance of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) in Turkey's political life.	2.830	1.234
It gave me a sense of optimism that the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)'s contribution to finding solutions to conflicts in Turkey will increase.	2.821	1.270

As for the emotional effects of digital media platforms, Table No. (7) indicates that the answer “This has increased my optimism about the importance of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) in political life in Turkey” with an arithmetic average of (2.830) followed by the answer “This gave me a sense of optimism that the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)'s contribution to finding solutions to conflicts in Turkey will increase” with an arithmetic average of (2.821).

Table 8. Behavioral effects of digital media platforms.

Note: Means are based on a five-point Likert scale (1–5).

	Mean	Std. D
Behavioral effects in General	3.0450	.92562
After following the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) news, I began to participate more in political discussions.	3.087	1.162
I follow the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) news more regularly than before.	3.238	1.143
I share information and news about the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) with my friends and family.	3.513	1.091
After following the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) news, I was motivated to participate in civic and political activities.	2.793	1.171
I share news published by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) on my digital media accounts.	2.591	1.192

As for the effects of behavioral digital media platforms, the results of Table No. (8) indicate that the answer “I share information and news about Grand National

Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) with my friends and family” is the highest, with an average of (3.513), followed by the answer “I follow the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) more regularly than before”, with an arithmetic average of (3.238)

The results of the study hypotheses

H1- There is no statistically significant correlation between the effects, cognitive, emotional, or behavioral, of digital platforms and the nature of the news.

The Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the effects of digital media platforms and the nature of the news that Turkish students follow through those digital platforms about the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). Table 9 indicates the results of the analysis process:

Table 9. The relationship between the influence of digital media platforms and the nature of news about the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) that is being followed.

		Cognitive effects	Emotional effects	Behavioral effects
The nature of news	PC	.559**	.331**	.354**
	Sig	.000	.000	.000

According to what is found in Table No. (9), the following results were obtained regarding the first hypothesis:

After conducting the Pearson correlation coefficient test, it was found that there is a statistically significant direct relationship between the effects of cognitive digital media platforms and the nature of the news followed by Turkish students participating in the questionnaire about the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), with a value of (R = 0.559, Sig = 0.000). The results also showed a weak to moderate and statistically significant direct relationship between the emotional effects of digital media platforms and the nature of the news followed by Turkish students participating in the research on the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), with a value of (R = 0.331, Sig = 0.000). As for the effects of behavioral digital media platforms, the results showed that there is a weak to moderate and statistically significant direct relationship, as the value of Pearson's correlation coefficient was (R = 0.354, Sig = 0.000). Based on these results, we can say that the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects of the three digital media platforms are all positive and statistically proven. However, these effects are different in intensity; the cognitive effects were the closest and most related to the nature of the news that Turkish students follow through digital platforms about the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). This indicates that the cognitive aspect is the most influential in the way Turkish students follow parliamentary news in general.

This result supports the findings of many previous studies on the effects of

digital media platforms in general, such as the study of Marciano et al. (2024), which indicated that the use of digital media is linked to cognitive processes and plays a role in regulating the emotional effects of adolescents. The Bozkurt et al. (2024) study also indicated that social media in general has become the main source of information for Turkish students, which in turn enhances the relationship between digital platforms and their followers of news.

H2- There is a statistically significant correlation between the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects of digital platforms and the reasons for use. The Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the effects of digital media platforms and the reasons why Turkish students follow news related to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) through those digital platforms. Table 10 indicates the results of the analysis process:

Table 10. The relationship between the effects of digital media platforms and the reasons for using them to follow news about the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT).

		Cognitive effects	Emotional effects	Behavioral effects
Reasons for use	PC	.661**	.353**	.409**
	Sig	.000	.000	.000

According to what is found in Table No. (10), the following results were obtained regarding the second hypothesis:

By conducting the Pearson correlation coefficient, it was found that there is a statistically significant medium-to-strong direct relationship between the effects of cognitive digital media platforms and the reasons why Turkish students follow news related to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) through digital platforms, with a correlation value of ($r = 0.661$, $\text{Sig} = 0.000$). The results also showed that there is a weak to moderate and statistically significant direct relationship between the emotional effects of digital media platforms and the reasons why Turkish students follow the news related to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) through digital platforms, with a correlation coefficient of ($r = 0.353$, $\text{Sig} = 0.000$). Finally, the study found a direct-to-moderate and statistically significant relationship between the effects of behavioral digital media platforms and the reasons for following up on the news related to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) through those digital platforms, with a correlation value of ($r = 0.409$, $\text{Sig} = 0.000$). This result indicates that the actions of digital media participants, such as searching for and sharing information and news, are related to the motives of following political news related to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). This provides a great indication for countries and stresses the important impact of the behavioral dimension in enhancing public interaction with political content. This result is consistent with some previous studies, such as Vaccari et al.

(2015), which indicated that actions and behavior through social media platforms such as searching for and sharing news, are associated with high intentions for political participation and a great tendency to follow political news.

10. Discussion and Conclusions

In recent years, the world has witnessed a great and rapid boom in the fields of science and technology. This development was not limited to a certain party; all parties were involved; from government and private institutions, individuals and groups, locally and globally. Everyone now has access to modern tools to interact with one another and with new ideas that are completely different from the old traditional tools. People, companies, and countries need to communicate and interact with other audiences and countries through the means favored by the audience itself. The goal is to reach these audiences, address them, and influence them in a way that suits everyone in every field. Digital media have become one of the most prominent ways to communicate with people and convey news and facts, especially in political affairs, whether locally or internationally. Today, all government institutions are trying to take advantage of modern digital media in fulfilling their political missions. Turkey, for example, has a large audience of students and academics who follow and participate in political news via various digital platforms. In this context, this study also sought to highlight the nature of the cognitive, emotional and behavioral effects of digital media platforms on Social Sciences Students at Turkish Universities perceptions of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). The study has reached many important results, which can be summarized as follows:

The majority of Turkish students participating in the research rely on digital media platforms at an average level, with a percentage of (55.5%), while the lowest percentage was recorded for the group that responded that it never follows the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), with (4.8%).

The study results show that the vast majority of Turkish students participating in the survey (95.2%) watch news related to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey to varying degrees. This may indicate a high level of awareness and engagement with political information and events, rather than regular or intensive political participation. The research indicates that many kinds of digital media provide a way for students to access information about the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. While these platforms allow students to communicate with one another and to gather information, accessing this information does not necessarily represent an expression of political interest or participation in politics. In this regard, a small percentage of students (4.8%) indicated that they do not follow news related to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. This small group does not reflect a general lack of political interest among students, as the vast majority follow news about the Grand National Assembly of Turkey to varying degrees, as mentioned in the previous

paragraph. Regarding the reasons why this small group of students does not follow the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the answers were as follows: lack of interest, lack of time, lack of trust in parliamentary news, emotional distress, and selective exposure to that news. This does not necessarily indicate political apathy, as some studies have indicated that some students prefer to use digital media primarily for entertainment or social networking purposes only (Kiran, 2021).

The X platform represents the platform most widely used by the participating Turkish students to follow the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), with an average of (.535). This is a very logical result, which is consistent with the nature of the X platform, which is more interested in and specialized in politics and news, which makes it distinct from other platforms. This is its general nature, and this is what many previous studies have indicated, including Hermida (2010), who concluded that the X platform has become an essential means for the immediate dissemination of news and following various political events in general. The digital press followed the X platform with an average of (.486), followed by the Instagram platform with an average of (.337). This is also an expected result because Instagram is one of the most common platforms among young people, as indicated by many studies (Malkawi, 2024). The highest reason among the reasons why Turkish students participating in the research rely on certain digital media platforms to follow the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) was “to follow the news published by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) on issues of public interest in Turkey,” with an average of 4.045. This finding is consistent with the results of Toros (2022), which indicated that Turkish students use social media platforms to follow political news and participate in discussions of public issues. As for the nature of the news that Turkish students participating in the research follow about the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), the answer “news about issues of interest to students” had an average of 4.045. This answer is very logical because the study sample is originally from Turkish students, and therefore it is very natural that the most relevant and interesting kind of news for this group is the news of university life in general and student life in particular, as mentioned in the results of this question. This is an important result since it made this assumption scientifically proven, and that is what distinguishes the current study from previous studies.

The results of this study indicated that the answer “this improved my ability to follow daily political developments in Turkey” was the highest in terms of the cognitive effects of digital media platforms, with an average of (3.761), followed by the answer “it increased my knowledge of the latest laws approved by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)” with an average of (3.715). As for the emotional effects of digital media platforms, the answer “this increased my optimism about the importance of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) in political life in Turkey” had an arithmetic average of (2.830) followed by the answer “this gave me a sense of optimism that the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)'s contribution to finding solutions

to conflicts in Turkey will increase” with an arithmetic average of (2.821). As for the effects of behavioral digital media platforms, the answer “I share information and news about Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) with my friends and family” was the highest, with an average of 3.513, followed by the answer “I follow the news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) more regularly than before” with an average of 3.238. The effects of the three digital media platforms, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral, are all positive and statistically proven, but their intensity is different; the cognitive effects were the closest and most related to the nature of the news that Turkish students follow through digital platforms about the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). This indicates that the cognitive aspect is the most influential in how Turkish students follow the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) news in general. The study also found a direct-to-moderate and statistically significant relationship between the effects of behavioral digital media platforms and the reasons for following the news related to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) through those digital platforms. The findings of this study have provided us with a clear overview of how Turkish students use digital media platforms when following news of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). Understanding how digital media has had a direct as well as indirect effect on students’ Cognitive, Affective or Emotional, and Behavioral experience is critical and beneficial for further development of such understanding through studies performed on digital media on how these types of media impact upon political involvement through academically and socially engaged contexts.

The results of this study support the conclusion that the impact of students’ use of digital media through public and private participation in various political topics includes participation through the means described above but also include multiple levels of engagement when considering the different dimensions measured, with cognitive influence being the primary aspect of media involvement with respect to the amount of data produced in relation to versions of engagement. Other dimensions provide a lower level of engagement in terms of time spent participating within those categories.

Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the use of digital media for formal educational purposes provides an additional means of enhancing the ability of young individuals to develop political knowledge through participation in both political participation types described above; however, it should also be noted that these findings are correlational in nature. Future studies implementing longitudinal and/or experimental methodologies regarding political participation will provide further clarity to the relationship and directionality of this participation process.

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