Digital Evolution and Buddhism Influence the Thai Local Political Behavior

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Abstract

The significant impacts on contemporary society of the fusion of Buddhist precepts with digital progress. It highlights how this confluence has improved general well-being, promoted moral engagement in social and political spheres, and aided in the dissemination of Buddhist teachings. The purpose of this essay is to investigate how Buddhism and the digital revolution have influenced local political behavior in Thailand. Documentary research is what this paper is. The findings highlight the significance of digital technology and Buddhist concepts for political engagement in Thailand. It demonstrates how Buddhist organizations and people have been able to disseminate their teachings, become more active in local politics, and advocate for political change thanks to the development of internet platforms. Digital innovations and Buddhist influence have come together to create a more informed and engaged public, which has also affected political conduct by bringing Buddhist ethical practices and ideals into political discourse. As a result, the interplay between religious beliefs and technological advancement is influencing local political behavior in Thailand and promoting a unique blend of traditional values and modern democratic participation. The study concludes by emphasizing how important digital technology and Buddhist concepts are to raising political engagement in Thailand. By fusing traditional ideals with contemporary democratic involvement, it shows how the public has become more aware and involved as a result of the convergence of technological innovations and Buddhist influence, changing local political behavior.

Keywords: Digital Democracy; Technology; Social Media; Local Political Behavior

Introduction

Digital evolution signifies a profound transformation that society, industries, and individuals undergo with the advent of digital technologies. The shift from analog to digital formats has revolutionized the creation, access, and dissemination of information. Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) describe digital evolution as characterized by rapid advances in computing power, connectivity, and data storage, fundamentally altering business operations and interpersonal interactions. This transformation encompasses the proliferation of digital devices, the ubiquity of the internet, and the rise of data-driven decision-making, laying the foundation for the digital age.

A key driver of digital evolution is the exponential growth of data and the emergence of big data analytics. McAfee and Brynjolfsson (2012) highlight the transformative potential of big data in extracting meaningful insights from large datasets. The ability to process and analyze vast amounts of data in real time has enabled organizations to make informed decisions and forecasts, impacting fields such as business intelligence, healthcare diagnostics, and scientific research. This centrality of data drives industry changes and influences individual engagement with information and technology.

Moreover, the rise of technology and social media has fundamentally changed communication dynamics. Boyd and Ellison (2007) examine the impact of social media on contemporary social interactions, noting that platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram facilitate new forms of online networking and information dissemination. These platforms enable global connectivity, allowing people to share and disseminate information widely, which affects communication styles, identity creation, and the dissemination of news and information. This digital transformation not only reshapes personal relationships but also transforms how businesses, governments, and organizations interact and engage with audiences in an increasingly connected world.

Innovations such as smartphones and high-speed internet have further stimulated the digital revolution. Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) illustrate the transformative effects of these technologies across industries, highlighting how the ubiquity of mobile devices and seamless connectivity provide instant access to information, entertainment, and services. This shift has given rise to new business models like e-commerce and app-based services, altering consumer behavior and market dynamics. The convergence of technology and social media represents

a paradigm shift in how individuals navigate the digital landscape, impacting personal interactions as well as the social structure and economic systems.

Understanding the impact on local political behavior is crucial for effective governance, community development, and political participation. Verba and Nie (1972) emphasize that local political behavior shapes the broader political landscape by reflecting the attitudes, preferences, and participation patterns of community residents. Research by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) underscores that local political behavior forms the foundational building blocks of democracy, influencing civic participation, trust in institutions, and social cohesion. A thorough understanding of local political dynamics helps policymakers tailor strategies that respond to unique community challenges and aspirations, promoting responsive and representative governance.

However, the intersection of digital technology, religious beliefs (particularly Buddhism), and political behavior in Thailand presents a complex research problem. This study aims to understand how digital platforms influence political behavior among Buddhist groups and individuals in Thailand and how Buddhist principles shape their political actions. It investigates how the convergence of technology and religion affects the local political environment, including the incorporation of Buddhist ethical principles into political discourse and changes in established political systems. By analyzing the relationship between digital evolution and Buddhist influence on political behavior, this research seeks to provide insights into the complexities of modern political behavior in Thailand, with implications for social change and policy-making.

Objectives

This paper aims to investigate Digital Evolution and Buddhism's Influence the Thai Local Political Behavior.

Literature Review

The digital revolution has profoundly influenced political behavior worldwide, including in Thailand, where digital platforms and tools have transformed political communication and engagement. At the same time, Buddhism, a core aspect of Thai culture, continues to shape the values and behaviors of individuals, including their political actions.

This literature review examines the evolution of digital technology in politics, its adoption in local political contexts, and its interplay with Buddhist principles, offering insights into the unique patterns of political behavior in Thailand.

The integration of technology in politics has fundamentally transformed political communication, campaigning, and public participation. The advent of the internet and social media platforms has revolutionized the dissemination and consumption of political information. Chadwick (2013) posits that digital technology has democratized political communication by providing individuals with unprecedented access to information and enabling active participation in political discourse. Social media's influence on political campaigns is particularly significant, as candidates utilize these platforms to connect directly with voters, mobilize support, and shape public opinion. Kreiss (2016) highlights the role of data-driven campaigning, where big data analytics allow political actors to tailor messages, target specific demographics, and optimize resource allocation. This technological evolution has profound implications for political participation, fostering interactive and dynamic interactions between politicians and voters while raising concerns about privacy, ethics, and the potential distortion of political narratives.

The shift from traditional to digital campaigns marks a paradigm change in political communication and engagement strategies. Traditional campaigns relied on mass media channels such as television, radio, and print to reach broad audiences (Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2008). In contrast, digital technologies offer new avenues for political actors to engage with voters through social media, interactive websites, and online platforms. Gibson and McAllister (2015) argue that digital campaigns enable more targeted and personalized communication, allowing candidates to engage specific demographic groups, mobilize supporters, and swiftly respond to political developments. This transition enhances political inclusivity and civic engagement by providing direct channels for interaction between citizens and candidates, thereby altering the dynamics of political communication in the contemporary era (Chadwick, 2007).

The internet plays a pivotal role in shaping modern political communication by facilitating the dissemination, access, and discussion of political information. Sunstein (2007) asserts that the internet fosters a more pluralistic and decentralized public sphere by providing platforms for diverse voices and opinions. Political actors utilize social media, blogs, and online

news websites to communicate directly with the public, enabling real-time interactions and global reach. Bennett and Segerberg (2012) emphasize the transformative impact of digital technologies on social movements and political activism, as online platforms allow for the organization of campaigns, protests, and advocacy efforts. However, the rise of online activism also introduces challenges such as misinformation and echo chambers, which can distort public perception and exacerbate societal divisions (Sunstein, 2017).

Local political entities increasingly adopt digital tools to enhance campaign strategies and online presence. Vaccari and Valeriani (2015) note that social media platforms, email campaigns, and interactive websites enable local politicians to disseminate messages, engage with constituents, and mobilize support effectively. Enli and Skogerbø (2013) highlight that cultivating a strong digital persona through websites and social media profiles allows local politicians to share policy positions, engage in dialogue, and present their personalities beyond traditional media coverage. This adoption not only transforms political communication dynamics but also enhances the accessibility and transparency of local governance, fostering greater civic engagement and participation.

Social media platforms significantly influence political discourse by providing dynamic and interactive spaces for diverse voices and discussions. Towner and Dulio (2017) observe that platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram facilitate real-time interactions and engagement, reshaping political conversations and public opinion. Barberá et al. (2015) demonstrate how social media serves as influential channels for political information, allowing users to consume, share, and discuss political content actively. The ability to amplify certain narratives and engage in agenda-setting through social media has profound implications for the democratic process, influencing how citizens perceive political issues and candidates (Barberá et al., 2015).

Technology significantly impacts voter mobilization and participation. Falck, Feess, and Heimel (2016) indicate that digital tools like online registration systems and election information websites streamline the voting process, making it more accessible and convenient. Conversely, concerns about the security and integrity of electronic voting systems may hinder voter participation by fostering skepticism. Bond et al. (2012) illustrate that social media platforms effectively mobilize voters through targeted digital campaigns and social network engagement, enhancing awareness and participation. However, disparities in technology access

can exacerbate existing inequalities in political engagement, necessitating strategies that promote inclusive and equitable participation.

Political communication has evolved from traditional, one-way models to more interactive and participatory strategies, driven by digital advancements. Chadwick and Stromer-Galley (2016) emphasize that political actors now use social media, online forums, and interactive websites to engage with the public in real-time, allowing for personalized and responsive communication. Stromer-Galley (2018) highlights the use of big data analytics and targeted messaging to predict voter preferences and address specific concerns, shifting from mass communication to micro-targeted approaches. Additionally, technology enhances accessibility and transparency in local politics by providing clear information about decision-making processes and public policies through digital platforms (Grimmelikhuijsen & Knies, 2017; Meijer, Curtin, & Hillebrandt, 2012). These changes foster an informed electorate and promote accountability in governance.

In conclusion, the integration of digital technology and Buddhist values creates a distinctive framework for understanding political behavior in Thailand. Digital platforms have enhanced inclusivity and engagement in local politics but present challenges like misinformation and digital divides. Buddhism's ethical and community-oriented principles influence political attitudes, shaping a culturally grounded approach to digital democracy. Future research should explore how digital tools can be used responsibly within cultural contexts to promote inclusive and informed political participation.
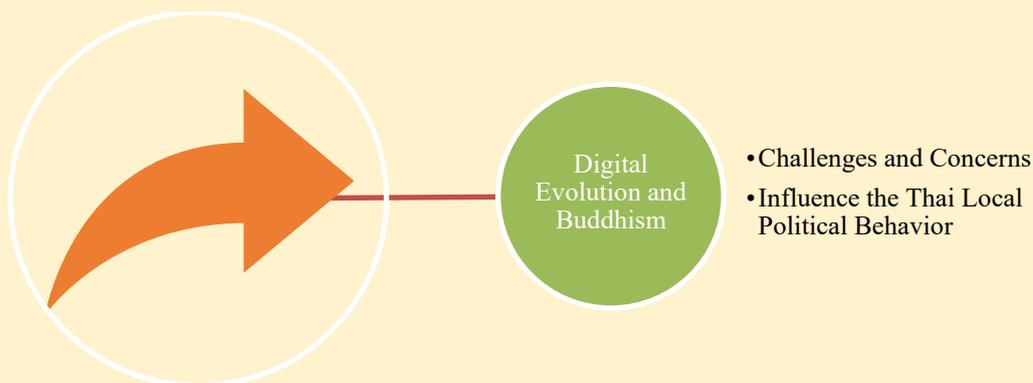
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Research Design

The research design used in the review article, "Digital Evolution and Buddhism Influence the Thai Local Political Behavior," is mixed-methods. This method combines qualitative and quantitative techniques to offer a thorough examination of the connection between Buddhism, digital technology, and political behavior in Thailand. To create a theoretical framework and give background information on the subject, the study starts with a comprehensive literature review. The design guarantees a comprehensive investigation of how Buddhist principles interact with digital technology to influence political conduct by combining the findings of previous studies.

Data Collection Methods

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the data collecting for this review. Focus groups, interviews, and ethnographic observations are examples of qualitative techniques that provide a thorough grasp of how Buddhist people and organizations use Internet channels for political objectives. These approaches also investigate how political attitudes and actions are influenced by Buddhist ideas. Analyzing trends and patterns in political behavior and digital platform usage across Thailand's various demographic groupings is part of quantitative data collecting. This two-pronged strategy guarantees the gathering of rich, varied data to capture the topic's complex dynamics.

Data Analysis

In order to include insights from both qualitative and quantitative data, the data analysis process uses a methodical methodology. Finding themes and patterns in how Buddhist people and groups use digital technology and how their religious beliefs affect their political behavior is the main goal of qualitative analysis. Demographic differences and statistical patterns in political conduct and the use of internet platforms are examined through quantitative analysis. The review offers a comprehensive knowledge of the complex dynamics influencing local political conduct in Thailand in the context of digital evolution and Buddhist influence by integrating various methodologies.

Research Results

1. Challenges and Concerns

1.1 Spread of misinformation: The spread of misinformation in local political contexts poses significant challenges to the integrity of political narratives. Academic research, such as the work by Guess, Nyhan, and Reifler (2020), highlights the adverse impact of misinformation on local political discourse. False or misleading information circulating in local communities can distort public perceptions, shape inaccurate narratives, and contribute to the polarization of political opinions. Misinformation may compromise the ability of citizens to make informed decisions about local issues and candidates, eroding the foundation of trust essential for a healthy democratic process. Understanding the dynamics of misinformation in local politics is crucial for devising effective strategies to mitigate its impact and safeguard the integrity of local political narratives. Moreover, addressing misinformation requires multifaceted strategies that account for the local context. Research by Walter, Tukachinsky, and Aharony (2020) suggests that interventions should not only focus on correcting false information but also on preventing the initial spread of misinformation. Collaborative efforts between local governments, media organizations, and community leaders can play a pivotal role in disseminating accurate information and fostering media literacy within local communities. Educating citizens about the risks of misinformation and promoting critical thinking skills are essential components of a comprehensive strategy to address the challenges posed by the spread of misinformation in local political contexts.

1.2 Privacy and ethical considerations: Balancing transparency with privacy is a pivotal challenge in the ethical governance of local politics, particularly when leveraging technology. The need for transparency is essential for accountable governance, but it must be carefully weighed against individuals' right to privacy. Research by Friedewald et al. (2019) underscores the complexity of this balance, advocating for clear policies that delineate the scope of data collection, usage, and storage in local government practices. Striking this balance requires local governments to transparently communicate their data practices to citizens, ensuring informed consent and building trust. Ethical considerations dictate that the collection of personal information should be limited to what is strictly necessary, with robust safeguards to protect the privacy rights of individuals in the community. Ensuring the ethical use of technology in local politics is imperative to maintain public trust and uphold democratic

values. Macnish (2019) discusses the ethical challenges associated with emerging technologies, emphasizing the importance of responsible governance. Local governments must adopt ethical guidelines that govern the deployment of technologies such as data analytics and surveillance tools. These guidelines should address issues such as fairness, accountability, and the prevention of discriminatory practices. By adhering to ethical standards, local governments can navigate the complexities of technological advancements, fostering a sense of transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct in their political processes.

2. Digital Evolution and Buddhism Influence the Thai Local Political Behavior

This explores the complex interrelationship between Thailand's local political behavior, Buddhist influence, and the evolution of digital technology. This talk clarifies how, in the Thai context, the convergence of digital technology and Buddhist principles influences civic engagement, political engagement, and governance.

First, the study looks at how the evolution of digital platforms has affected political behavior, emphasizing how these platforms have transformed communication, mobilization, and advocacy. Social media and online communication tools have made it easier for people and organizations—including Buddhist organizations—to engage in collective action, sway public opinion, and spread political messages (Howard, 2011).

Second, the study explores how Buddhism influences political behavior, looking at how Buddhist principles and teachings shape people's views on social justice, government, and civic duty. Being the most popular religion in Thailand, Buddhism has a big influence on the moral and cultural standards that guide political debate and decision-making. Buddhism's emphasis on compassion, nonviolence, and social harmony may have an impact on people's political convictions and behaviors, helping to create a unique perspective on public policy and governance (Tambiah, 1976).

Third, the study looks at how Buddhist influence on political behavior and digital evolution intersect, showing how these two factors work together to influence Thailand's political environment. Buddhist organizations and individuals now have new channels for political expression and involvement thanks to digital platforms. They can use these channels to spread their message, rally supporters, and push for social change. Simultaneously, the ethical aspects of digital activism could be influenced by Buddhist principles, which could direct people's actions and choices in online political discourse (Cheong, 2017).

Fourth, the research looks at how this convergence might affect local political behavior, including how Buddhist ethical principles might be incorporated into political discourse and how old political structures might change. Through an examination of the local intersections between digital evolution and Buddhist influence, the study provides insights into the dynamics of political participation, governance, and social change in modern-day Thailand. It emphasizes the necessity of approaching the opportunities and challenges of the digital age with a nuanced understanding of the intricate interactions between politics, religion, and technology (Campbell, 2013).

Ultimately, "Digital Evolution and Buddhism Influence the Thai Local Political Behavior" advances our knowledge of the intricate relationships influencing political behavior in Thailand. The research offers important insights into the transformative potential of digital technology and religious traditions on civic engagement, governance, and social change by examining the interactions between digital evolution, Buddhist influence, and local politics. It emphasizes the significance of taking cultural and technological aspects into account when examining political behavior and the need for more investigation into the changing dynamics of digital democracy in various sociocultural contexts.

Discussion

Explores the complex relationship between digital evolution, Buddhist influence, and local political behavior in Thailand, "Digital Evolution and Buddhism Influence the Thai Local Political Behavior" First, the research explores how Thailand's political participation has been impacted by the digital revolution. Social media and online forums have become widely used, giving people and groups easy access to information, a platform to express their opinions, and a way to engage in political discourse. Digital tools enable citizens to advocate for policy changes, plan protests, and interact with political leaders by facilitating communication and mobilization. The dynamics of political participation have changed as a result of the greater accessibility and connectedness, strengthening grassroots movements and upending established power structures (Howard, 2011).

The study also looks at how Buddhism affects political behavior in Thailand. Thailand's predominant religion, Buddhism, has a strong influence on many facets of society, including politics. Buddhist teachings place a strong emphasis on values like compassion, nonviolence, and societal harmony, which can influence people's political opinions and behavior. Buddhist

leaders and organizations frequently take an active part in community development and social welfare programs, influencing public opinion and governmental regulations. The goal of the study is to comprehend how political attitudes and behaviors interact with Buddhist values to create Thailand's distinct sociopolitical environment (Tambiah, 1976).

The study also looks at how Buddhist influence on local political behavior interacts with the evolution of digital technology. Buddhist organizations and individuals now have new channels for political expression and involvement thanks to digital platforms, which also help them reach a wider audience. Buddhist organizations spread religious teachings, advance social causes, and rally supporters for political campaigns through social media and online networks. In addition, people's ethical judgments and decisions in online political discourse may be influenced by Buddhist principles, which could influence the content and tone of digital activism. Comprehending the intricate dynamics of political participation in modern-day Thailand requires an understanding of this interplay (Cheong, 2017).

Additionally, the study looks into how Buddhism influences public policy and governance in Thailand, as well as the implications of digital evolution. The study clarifies the opportunities and difficulties faced by political leaders and policymakers by examining how digital technology and religious traditions interact with political processes. Digital platforms provide new channels for public participation and transparency, allowing governments to interact with citizens and gather input more successfully. However, the impact of religious principles on political decision-making may bring special priorities and considerations into the formulation of public policy. The goal of the study is to investigate how these variables affect governance results and the political environment in Thailand as a whole (Campbell, 2013).

New Knowledge from Research

This study enhances our comprehension of the intricate relationship between digital technology and religious customs in influencing local political conduct in Thailand. It emphasizes the transformative capacity of digital platforms in promoting political participation, leading to a more inclusive involvement in political procedures, while also drawing attention to the dangers linked with misinformation and privacy issues. The significant cultural impact of Buddhism on Thai political behavior is crucial for examining political trends and formulating efficient governance tactics. Additionally, balancing transparency with privacy emerges as a pivotal challenge in leveraging technology for governance.
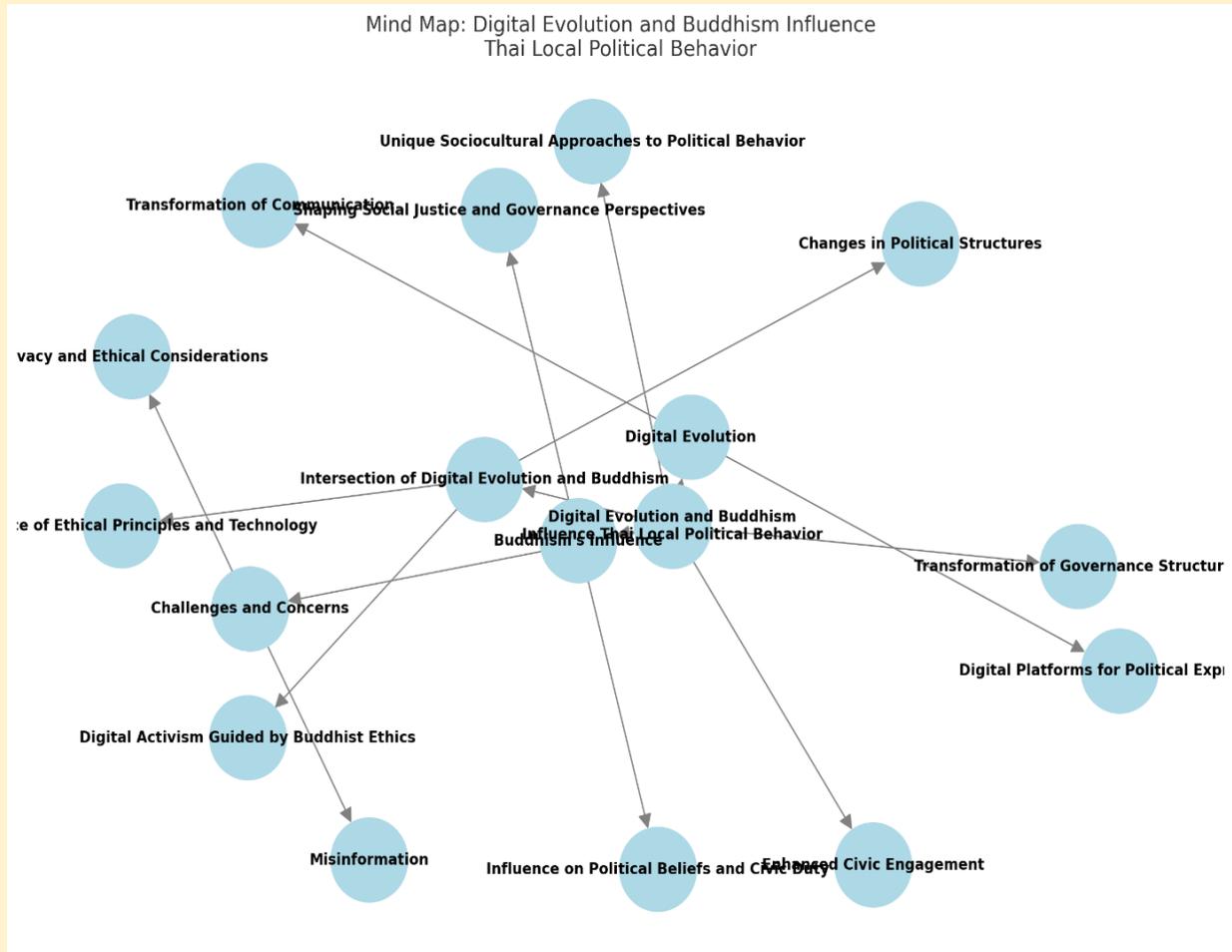
Figure 2 Digital Evolution and Buddhism Influence the Thai Local Political Behavior

The mind map shows how Buddhism has influenced local political conduct in Thailand and how the dynamics of digital evolution are intertwined. The interaction of these components, which branch into important issues, including the influence of Buddhism, digital evolution, challenges, and concerns, and their intersection, is at the heart of the matter. Under difficulties, it draws attention to the effects of false information and moral conundrums such as striking a balance between privacy and openness. Buddhism's effect reflects its role in forming political ideals, civic duty, and governance, whereas digital evolution focuses on how technology changes advocacy, communication, and political engagement. The intersection demonstrates the confluence of cultural values and technological advancements, highlighting how Buddhist ethics direct digital action and alter political systems. Improved civic involvement, a change in governance, and sociocultural perspectives on political conduct are

some of the results, which highlight the intricate relationships influencing contemporary Thai politics.

Conclusion

The article "Digital Evolution and Buddhism Influence the Thai Local Political Behavior" offers insightful information about the intricate relationships that exist in Thailand between digital technology, religious customs, and political behavior. Through an analysis of how digital evolution and Buddhist influence affect political participation, governance, and public policy, the study advances our knowledge of the socio-cultural processes influencing modern Thai society. It emphasizes the significance of taking cultural and technological aspects into account when examining political behavior and the need for more investigation into the changing dynamics of digital democracy in various sociocultural contexts. The findings emphasize critical areas such as the spread of misinformation, which significantly impacts local political discourse by distorting public perceptions, contributing to political polarization, and undermining the democratic process. Effective strategies to combat misinformation necessitate collaborative efforts among local governments, media organizations, and community leaders to promote media literacy and critical thinking among citizens. Additionally, balancing transparency with privacy emerges as a pivotal challenge in leveraging technology for governance. The research highlights the necessity of clear policies and ethical guidelines to ensure responsible data collection and usage, safeguarding individuals' privacy while maintaining public trust.

Recommendations

1. **Future Trend Recommendations**

The integration of emerging technologies is revolutionizing local politics, and enhancing governance, communication, and civic engagement. Artificial intelligence (AI) and predictive analytics are enabling local governments to analyze vast datasets, anticipate community needs, and optimize resource allocation, thereby improving decision-making and policy formulation. However, the adoption of AI raises ethical concerns regarding data privacy, algorithmic bias, and transparency, necessitating robust regulatory frameworks to ensure responsible use. Additionally, augmented reality (AR) is transforming political campaigns by creating immersive and interactive voter engagements, such as virtual town halls and location-based information dissemination. While AR enhances communication effectiveness, it also

presents challenges related to accessibility and data privacy, requiring clear guidelines to maintain ethical standards.

2. **Recommendations for Policymakers**

Policymakers must balance free speech with responsible content sharing by establishing clear regulations that define permissible content and hold platforms accountable for misinformation and harmful material. Promoting transparency in algorithms and content moderation processes is essential to fostering an informed and discerning online community. Furthermore, ensuring fair and transparent digital campaigning practices involves setting guidelines for online advertisements, disclosing funding sources, and regulating data-driven targeting to protect voter privacy and prevent manipulation. Collaboration with technology companies to develop industry standards can enhance transparency and accountability in digital campaigns, safeguarding the integrity of democratic processes. By addressing these areas, policymakers can create a balanced digital environment that supports democratic participation while mitigating the risks associated with technological advancements.

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