

SOCIAL MEDIA-BASED PARTY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN BANGLADESH: AN ANALYSIS OF THE BANGLADESH AWAMI LEAGUE'S FACEBOOK PAGE

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Abstract

User behaviour of political parties' social media varies from country to country. Though there is much research on political parties' social media-based election campaigns, there is a scarcity of research on how political parties use social media for their party-building activities. Particularly about Bangladeshi political parties, there is no research in this area. The user behaviour and effectiveness of the Bangladesh Awami League's (AL) Facebook page are explored in this study to realise Bangladesh's social media-based political communication patterns. Following the mixed-methods approach, it has collected both qualitative and quantitative data. This study has analysed the posts shared on AL's Facebook page to collect its data. The interview is also taken with five key persons closely related to the AL's Facebook page. This study has explored that AL does not use its Facebook page in a participatory way. Instead, it uses the platform as a one-way communication channel mainly for disseminating information, advertising this party, mobilising its supporters and confronting its opposition parties and rumours. Though it does not use its Facebook page in a participatory way, AL's Facebook page is helping this party to do its party-building activities easily. Besides, it is also helping to enhance and achieve its other goals. The study fills the existing knowledge gap in this field and helps other political parties understand how a Bangladeshi political party uses social media to substantiate its party-building activities.

Keywords: Bangladeshi political party, Bangladesh Awami League, Party-building activities, Political communication, Social media, Effectiveness.

Introduction

Before the arrival of television and the internet, people became acquainted with political information and campaign through newspapers and traditional

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campaigning methods. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first person who used radio to connect with the American public in the 1930s (“FDR broadcasts”, 2009). After that, Nixon and Kennedy’s debate first introduced the mass-produced version of face-to-face politics through television in the 1960s (“The Kennedy”, 2010).

At the beginning of twenty century, the internet became a channel for political communication (Kanungo, 2015). During the 2004 election cycle, politicians and political parties first started online-based campaigns (Kiyohara, 2016), and social media were used more strategically in the 2008 and 2012 US elections (Vesnic-Alujevic, 2012). Over time, social media have earned popularity worldwide for its various opportunities. Political parties in the US, UK, Australia, Africa, Europe and some Asian countries are extensively using social media in their elections now (Arackal, 2015; Kanungo, 2015). Bangladeshi political parties also started giving special attention to social media-based campaigns with the country’s incredible progress in using the internet and information communication technology in the last decade (Hasnat, 2018).

Since Bangladesh is a newly digitised country, a study like this is necessary, as Bangladeshi political parties also focus on social media-based campaigns and communications alongside traditional campaigning methods. Further, there are many studies on political parties’ social media-based election campaigns but no studies on Bangladeshi political parties’ social media-based party-building activities. Therefore, it is essential to know why Bangladeshi political parties use social media for their party-building activities, how they use their social media platform and how much it is helping them to fulfil their desired goals.

However, Galvin (2010) defined party-building activities as attractive strategies that help a party to develop its organisational capacity and reach new groups of voters throughout the year. This process strengthens a party’s combating ability, unity and solidarity and broadens and consolidates this party’s links with the masses in every possible way.

To fulfil the aims of this study, it has collected qualitative and quantitative data both and followed a mixed-method approach. It has analysed the Facebook posts shared on the AL’s Facebook page at a specific time. An in-depth interview is also taken place with five key persons closely related to the Facebook page.

The result of this study contributes to filling up the existing knowledge gap in this field and helps to understand how the Bangladeshi ruling and the major political party use their social media to substantiate their party-building activities.

Literature Review

This literature review chapter first discussed the effectiveness of social media-based communication and campaign issues and then discussed the reasons for using social media by politicians and political parties of different countries. The last part discusses the social media user behaviours of various politicians and political parties. Through an analysis of this scholarship's relevant literature, this part identified research gaps in this area in the Bangladesh context, which this study attempts to fill.

Effectiveness of social media-based political communication and campaign

While working on the 2016 US Presidential Polls, Liberini et al. (2018) said that Facebook played an influential role in this election and persuaded non-aligned voters to vote for Donald Trump as he invested more in the Facebook campaign than in Hilary Clinton. Furthermore, working on the 2014 Indian General Election, Ahmed, Cho, and Jaidka (2017) claimed that the social media-based campaign helped candidates to get voters' attention. Besides, different research findings also described that social media-based campaign encourages people to participate in political activities (Jackson & Lilleker, 2009; Larsson, 2015a; Nielsen, 2013). Therefore, it can be argued that social media-based campaign affects audiences, persuade voters and helps politicians achieve public support.

Disagreeing with the above finding, Bergsson (2014) said that the social media-based campaign did not affect Iceland's election result as people obtained their required information about politics through the internet. Moreover, working on the 2007 Danish Parliament Election, Andersen and Medaglia (2009) added that online users expect nothing new from social media regarding election issues; they know about a candidate through their traditional channels. Therefore, it can argue that the effectiveness of a social media-based campaign depends on the country's internet user behaviour. Because if social media user seeks such information on their social media, then the information has demand and effect on them. Nevertheless, if social media users do not expect anything from social media like the users of Iceland and Denmark, then it has no effect on them. This study has examined the debate in the Bangladesh context.

The reasons for using social media by politicians and political parties

From the above literature, it found that there is a debate about whether social media-based campaign influences voters or not. Similarly, there are debates about

the purposes of using social media by political parties. For example, Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan (2013) said political parties use social media to collect, monitor, analyse, summarise and visualise politically relevant information. In addition, it helps political parties and citizens communicate directly with each other and involves them in the political decision-making process, indicating transparency in political activities.

Another group of researchers argued that politicians run their online campaigns or activities to mobilise their supporters, raise donations and highlight their particular purposes (Chadwick, 2013; Lilleker et al., 2011; Nielsen & Vaccari, 2013). Furthermore, some other researchers said that politicians use social media for their unidirectional delivery of information, interactive communication with the public and political mobilisation (Golbeck, Grimes, & Rogers, 2010; Hong & Nadler, 2012; Larsson, 2015b; Small, 2012). Supporting this, Gibson (2015) and Lilleker and Jackson (2011) also argued that social media effectively connect voters and candidates and create participatory interactions between campaigners and supporters. Therefore, it can argue that besides marketing, monitoring information, mobilising supporters and fundraising, politicians and political parties use social media for dialogue and interactive communication with citizens.

Disagreeing with the above finding, Bergsson (2014), Rodrigues and Niemann (2017), Ross, Fountaine, and Comrie (2015) and Steenkamp and Hyde-Clarke (2012) claimed that most politicians do not invite political dialogue on their social media platforms. Instead, they use it to circulate their information and advertise themselves. Consequently, there is a debate about whether politicians and political parties use their social media platforms in a participatory way or not. Hence, this study also contributes to checking this debate in the Bangladesh context.

However, studies have also shown that politicians or political parties use social media more than others who lack name, recognition and resources (Hong & Nadler, 2016; Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014). In addition, other scholars found more exciting findings that better-financed candidates (Jeff & Williams, 2010), young and women politicians (Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014; Ross et al., 2015) and incumbent parties use social media more than others (Jacobson, 1992; Schiffer, 2006). Moreover, researchers found that social media influences voters, traditional media, and journalists (Johnson, 2011; Kalsnes, 2016). It is cheap and easy to use (Spierings & Jacobs, 2019), which are also reasons for paying attention to social media-based campaigns.

Besides, researchers also found that political parties and politicians of different countries use their social media platforms differently. The way of user behaviour and reason for using social media by politicians and political parties depend on the country's culture, user behaviour and technological and economic development. For example, South African political parties use social media to disseminate information rather than join the public for political debate or discussion (Steenkamp & Hyde-Clarke, 2012). On the other hand, political parties in India, Ghana, Germany, and the Netherlands are emphasising their social media-based campaign to reach young citizens (Rampal, 2019; Statista, 2020).

Furthermore, working on the 2014 Lok Sabha election campaign in India, Kanungo (2015) and Das (2016) also claimed that besides fundraising, connecting the electorate and mobilising volunteers, Indian political parties also use their social media to confront their opponents and advertise their leadership. Consequently, it argues that researchers are claiming different reasons for using social media by political parties that need to be checked in the Bangladesh context.

The user behaviour of politicians and political parties' social media

To respond to the question of how politicians and political parties use their social media platforms, Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin (2010) claimed that politicians apply traditional strategies for online campaigns, while Stier et al. (2018) disagreed that social media create different ways of communication channels. Moreover, Falasca (no date) added, "individual politicians may be active, but my belief is that social media will be used like an ordinary advertising channel (...) social media are used more as a place for marketing" (no pagination). Hence, Falasca (n. d.) is calming; political parties do not use social media in a participatory way, instead use it for their advertisement.

Furthermore, working on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Twitter account (Rodrigues & Niemann, 2017), Iceland's political parties (Bergsson, 2014), the 2012 US Presidential Election (Hong & Nadler, 2012), New Zealand General Election (Ross et al., 2015) and Danish political parties (Farkas & Schwartz, 2018) scholars found that politicians and political parties of the countries also use their social media as a one-way communication channel and advertising tool.

Disagreeing with this finding and mentioning the 2008 US Presidential Election and the 2010 UK General Election, Gibson (2015) said, "recent developments in social media are promoting a new form of citizen-based campaigning" (p.183). Working with the members of the United States Congress (Golbeck et al., 2010)

and the Swedish 2014 Election (Larsson, 2015b), scholars claimed that Facebook and Twitter-based campaigns created a participatory environment between citizens and candidates. Consequently, it said that there is also a debate about whether politicians and political parties use their social media in a participatory way or not.

From the above literature review, it can be said that there are robust debates about why politicians or political parties use social media and how they use it. There are also debates on the effectiveness of social media-based political communication and campaign. In addition, researchers are claiming these arguments and findings based on their studies on American, African, European and some Asian countries' electoral campaigns. Besides, most research was on politicians, not political parties. Additionally, Bangladesh is not included in this list. Therefore, from the above literature review, it is clear that there are solid debates and research gaps similar to this study's research questions.

Research Methodology

The primary aims of this study are to locate the effectiveness of a Bangladeshi political party's Facebook page and, therefore, to contribute to filling up the existing gaps in the field of the study. This research aims to answer four questions to fill- up this research's objectives.

1. What contents is the party mainly sharing, and why is the party sharing these contents mostly?
2. How are the audiences engaging with the shared content, and in which content is the audiences engaged more?
3. How much is the party engaged with the audience, and why?
4. How much is it working for party-building activities?

Research Method

This study has followed the mixed-methods approach. It has collected both qualitative and quantitative data. We all know that in every research method, there are some biases and weaknesses, "and the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data neutralised the weakness of each form of data" (Creswell, 2014, pp.14-15). Hence, it has collected both qualitative and quantitative data and followed the mixed methods approach to get a perfect result and omit the disadvantage of a single method.

It has applied content analysis and telephone interview methods to collect qualitative data. This study analysed the Facebook posts that AL shared on its Facebook page from 01 March 2020 to 31 March 2020. 96% of Bangladeshi social media users use Facebook as their primary social media platform (Statcounter, 2019), so it worked on AL's Facebook page instead of other social media platforms. In addition, since this research area is not large (size of data), it focused on only one political party for one month.

Accordingly, this study has chosen the largest, oldest, and longest-serving political party in Bangladesh, AL, from among the various political parties in Bangladesh. This party has been in power since 2009. Here it is mentionable that this paper is a part of a master's thesis, and the month of March 2020 was the most suitable time for data collection considering the timetable of the master's degree; hence it has selected the month.

It has categorised the shared Facebook posts into twelve categories. To categorise the post, it analysed the post's text, image, graphics, video, and other content, considering its context, culture and background, applying the content analysis method. This investigation also categorised the format of the posts into six different categories.

Furthermore, it also used the in-depth interview method to collect qualitative data. It explored the answers to the queries about how much AL's Facebook page is helping this party to achieve its goals as a political communication tool, why this party runs this platform in a specific way and why it shares a specific type and format of posts more than others etc. through interview. A team of six members runs the Facebook page according to the party's instructions. It has interviewed the team leader (requested anonymity). The other interviewees were Barrister Biplab Barua, Shah Ali Farhad, Aminul Islam and Sayem Khan. Mr Barua and Farhad are the two Special Assistants to the party chief Sheikh Hasina. Mr Islam is the Deputy Secretary of Publicity and Publishing of AL, and Sayem Khan is Deputy Office Secretary. Both of the persons are also closely related to the Facebook page.

This research also applied the quantitative approach. To collect quantitative data, it counted which types of posts the party mainly shared and which format and posts received the highest number of reactions, shares and comments. By counting different types of shared posts, it has been able to know what types of content the party shares most that expresses why the AL uses this platform. Moreover, by counting the post type, the post format, reaction, shares and comments on each post, it has been able to know in which format the party is sharing posts mostly. It also reveals the relationship between the party and audiences with a particular type of post and

a particular format of posts. This process also has been able to express in which content audiences engaged more and how the audiences are engaging themselves. Moreover, this investigation has analysed the party's engagement with audiences by counting and analysing the party's participation in the comment section.

Result and Discussion

This part first describes what type of post this party share for the highest time and its reasons. Secondly, it discusses the nature of audience involvement with the various posts. Then, it discusses the user behaviour of the Facebook page. Afterwards, it showed the result of various arguments from the Bangladesh perspective found in the literature review. Finally, it discusses the effectiveness of the Facebook page.

What kind of posts are shared the most and why?

In March 2020 (01 March-31 March), AL shared 218 posts in 8 categories (definition in appendix-A). This month, this party shared 94 Information Posts (for public), 50 Opinion/Article Posts, 24 Activities of the Party Chief Posts, 14 Awaking Citizen Posts, 11 Quotation Posts, 10 Documentary Posts, 8 Development Posts and 7 Information Posts (for party members). This result shows that this party gave importance to information posts (for citizens), opinion/article posts, activities of the party chief post, awakening citizen posts, quotation posts, documentary posts, development posts and information posts (for party members), respectively.

This result also indicates that this party mainly uses this platform to disseminate public information, as it shared 43% of its posts to provide information to the citizens

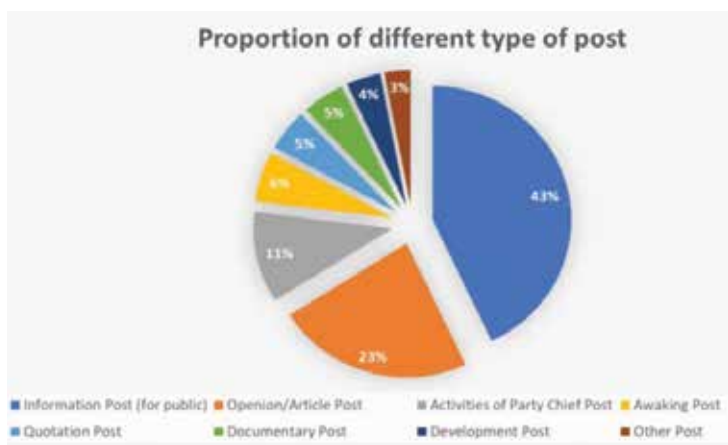


Figure 1: Showing the percentage of different types of posts

After this post, in March 2020, it shared 23% of its total posts as opinion/article posts. Based on this one-month data (March 2020), it can be argued that this party is using this platform to advertise itself as these articles (opinion/article posts) highlighted its sublime role and significant achievements accomplished at different times for the betterment of people and the country. In Bangladesh, 01, 02, 07, 25, and 26 March are historically very important to the nation related to the liberation war of Bangladesh. A significant proportion of posts these days AL posted on its Facebook page mentions their contribution and sacrifices during the time. In addition, this party produced these types of articles in a way that could attract people to the party.

Consequently, the party is trying to present itself positively to people through these articles (opinion/article posts) that work as their advertisements to raise its support. In the in-depth interview, all five interviewees also acknowledged that they try to impress the young citizens to their party through opinion/article-type posts, which receive many reactions, comments and shares from their followers.

However, the above finding also indicates that AL is also using this platform to advertise its party chief, as it shared the third-highest number of posts (11% of total posts) on the activities of its party chief. This post presented different positive activities, achievements and contributions of its party chief. Besides, the content categorised as quotation posts, documentary posts and development posts in this study also worked as AL's advertisement. Hence, based on the above findings, it can be claimed that this party mainly uses this platform to disseminate public information and advertise it.

Audience engagement with the shared post

This study found that audiences engaged themselves with a shared post in three ways, showing a reaction, writing a comment and sharing a post. For example, in March 2020, the shared 218 posts received 693420 Reactions, 27011 Comments and 126243 Shares. These findings show that audiences mainly engage with a shared post by showing a reaction and sharing the post rather than writing comments. On average, each *activities of party chief post* received the highest number of reactions among the eight types of shared posts. Each *activities of party chief post* received 6154 reactions, while each *quotation post* received 3763 reactions and each *documentary post* received 3680 reactions.

AL shared 24 posts regarding the party chief's activities in March 2020 that received 147700 reactions. After dividing the total number of reactions (147700)

by the number of total activities of party chief posts (24), this study found an average number for each post, which is 6154. Following this method, this paper has found that *quotation posts* received the second-highest and the *documentary* post received the third-highest number of reactions.

Category of Data	Type of Post							
	Development	Information (for party members)	Information (for public)	Awaking Citizen	Quotation	Opinion/ Article	Documentary	Activities of Party Chief
Number of Total Post	8	7	94	14	11	50	10	24
Total Reaction	29200	20243	306346	38989	41400	72742	36800	147700
Total Comment	812	1310	11690	736	1273	2124	1385	7681
Total Share	4055	3361	52945	10302	5362	11445	13423	25350
Reaction on each post	3650	2891.86	3259	2785.92	3763.63	1454.84	3680	6154.17
Comment on each post	101.5	187.14	124.37	52.58	115.73	42.48	138.5	320.04
Share on each post	506.88	480.14	563.24	735.85	487.45	228.9	1342.3	1056.25

Table 1: Showing the number of reactions, comments and shares received by various types of posts

Moreover, by dividing the total comments by the total posts of each type, this study found that each *activities of the party chief post* also received the highest number of comments among the eight types of shared posts, like reactions. For example, each *activity of the party chief post* received 320 comments, each *information post* (for party person) received 187 comments, and each *documentary post* received 138 comments.

In addition, by dividing the number of total shares by the total posts of each type, this paper found that each *documentary post* received the highest number of shares among the eight types of shared posts. For example, each *documentary post* received 1342 shares, each *activities of the party chief post* received 1056 shares, and each *awaking citizen* post received 735 shares.

Therefore, these findings indicate that the audience engages with a post by showing a reaction, writing a comment and sharing a post. This study found they engage more with a post showing a reaction and sharing a post than by writing a comment; each post received the highest number of 6154 reactions, 1342 shares and 320 comments.

In a nutshell, the above findings indicate that audiences are mainly involved with the activities of the party chief post, as this post received the highest number of reactions and comments and the second-highest number of shares. After the activities of party chief posts, audiences are more likely to involve themselves with

the documentary post as it received the highest number of shares and the third-highest number of comments and shares. In addition, quotation posts received the second-highest number of reactions, information posts (for party person) received the second-highest number of comments, and awaking citizen posts received the third-highest number of shares.

Therefore, it can be said that audiences engage themselves more with activities of party chief posts, documentary posts, quotation posts, information posts (for party members) and awaking citizen posts, respectively.

Post formats and audience involvement

AL shared its 218 posts in four formats: *Graphics*, *Video*, *Video-TV News* and *Newspaper Article* (definition in appendix-B). Among the four formats, the *graphics* format was used in the highest number of posts, 159. *Video*, *video-TV news* and *newspaper article* formats were used in 38, 19 and 2 posts, respectively. 73% of the posts made by this party were in *graphics* format, and 17%, 9% and 1% were in the *video*, *video-TV news* and *newspaper article* formats, respectively.

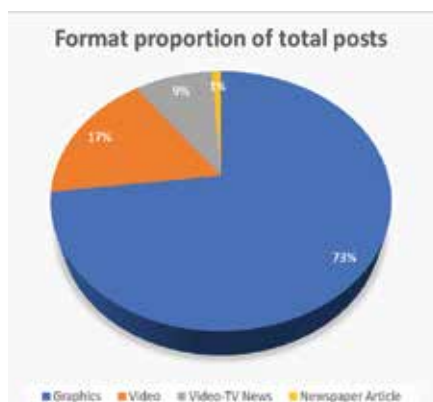


Figure 2: Showing format proportion of total posts

Dividing the total number of reactions, comments and shares of each post format by its respective number of total posts, this paper found that each graphics format post received 2316 reactions, 82 comments and 315 shares. At the same time, each video format received 5148 reactions, 303 comments and 1409 shares. In addition, each video TV news format post received 4815 reactions, 107 comments and 1125 shares, and each newspaper article format post received 1600 reactions, 36 comments and 229 shares.

Format of Post	Total Reaction	Total Comment	Total Share	Total post in each format
Graphics	368395	13100	50203	159
Video	195625	11549	53547	38
Video-TV News	91500	2044	21393	19
Newspaper Articles	1900	54	292	2
				Total: 218

Table 2: Showing the number of reactions, comments and shares received by each format of post

Therefore, this finding indicates that each video format post received the highest number of reactions, comments and shares. Consequently, it can argue that audiences engage themselves more with the video format of posts than with other formats of posts. Furthermore, this result also expresses that though this party shared the graphics format of posts for the highest time, audiences engaged themselves with the video format of posts for the highest time. Based on these findings, it suggests that audiences involve more in a post if this party shares a post that expresses the activities of its party chief in a video format because users are involved more with the activities of party chief posts regarding the type of posts and the post shared in video format regarding the post format.

User behaviour on the Facebook page

The purpose of this part is to describe how AL uses its Facebook page. In the interviewees' opinion, the party primarily uses the Facebook page to reach out to youths. Even though this party's Facebook page did not post targeting only young people, it posted all kinds of content intended on this page for young people because youth are the majority on Facebook. In addition, according to the interviewees, this party is disseminating information to many audiences via its Facebook page, which helps it fight against rumours, propaganda, and misinformation aimed at discrediting it.

There is considerable debate about whether political parties use their social media in a participatory way or not (Falasca, n. d.; Rodrigues & Niemann, 2017; Bergsson, 2014; Hong & Nadler, 2012; Golbeck et al., 2010). This study has analysed this party's involvement in the comment section to check this debate in the Bangladesh context because communication with citizens on the platform can be participatory only by replying to a comment and showing a reaction to a comment in the comment section.

Checking how much this party is responding (providing reply and reaction) in the comment section, this study has identified how much AL is engaged with audiences and the shared contents. Checking all 218 posts and their comment section, it found that this party did not provide any reply or reaction to a comment written by the followers of this page. It only posted various posts on its Facebook page. In the interview, the interviewees also acknowledged that their party does not participate in public discussion and does not provide a reply or reaction to the public's queries.

Therefore, it can be said that this party is not participating in public discussion, replying to queries and other activities. Hence, AL is not using its Facebook page in a participatory way and is not inviting public debate, discussion and interactive communication with citizens. Instead, this party is using this platform as a one-way communication channel for information dissemination, advertisement and gaining support from young citizens.

This study classified a type of *counter-to-opposition post* to determine whether the AL uses its Facebook page to confront its opposition parties on social media platforms. This study addresses the contents in which opposition parties and their opinions are criticised as counter-opposition posts. It analysed all 218 posts but did not find any such type of post. During the interview, the leader of the Facebook page explained that the page was established in 2013 to counter opposition parties' rumours and informational conspiracy. He added that they did not post any counter content to the opposition party in the sampled month because the opposition parties did not raise any issues during the month that would necessitate protest. This party, however, posts such content when necessary.

The interviewees added that though they do not participate in public discussion and do not communicate with voters directly, they monitor every single comment and try to understand people's perceptions. They added that it helps this party to take a people-friendly decision which is also helping this party to achieve popularity for taking a people-friendly decision. Furthermore, they mentioned that besides mobilising their supporters, volunteers, activists and local leaders, this party is also using this Facebook page to expand their party's advertisement round of the year, connecting the electorate and keeping their supporters active.

Usually, it thinks that if a party wants to mobilise its supporters, activists and local leaders, it sends or disseminates information addressing its party members. However, this study found that AL shared only 3% of its posts that addressed their party members, the lowest number of shared posts. Despite this, all interviewees

stated that there were not many vibrant political issues in March 2020, which explains why this party did not provide much information for the party person.

Hence, based on the above discussion, it can be said that this party is using its Facebook page to collect, monitor, summarise, and understand public perception. It did not find any counter to the opposition post in the sampled month, but the team leader of the Facebook page explained its reason. Based on the explanation, it can be said that it is used to confront opposition parties. In addition, this party is using it to advertise leadership, disseminate information, connect the electorate, mobilise volunteers, supporters, activists and local leaders and spread their campaign widely. However, this study did not find any content that said donation for this party.

Working on the 2014 Lok Sabha election campaign in India, Kanungo (2015) and Das (2016) claimed that besides fundraising, connecting the electorate and mobilising volunteers, Indian political parties also use their social media to confront their opponents and advertise their leadership. Moreover, working with Indian politicians, Bozarth et al. (n. d.) found that the political parties who are in power or running the government avoid controversial or combative topics on their Facebook pages and highlight positive issues. This study has checked it on AL's Facebook page and found a similar result. Hence, it can be argued that AL is following the Indian political parties' trend.

This study and other debates in this field

The purpose of this part is to discuss other significant debates in this arena that have not been addressed in the discussion above. For example, Adhana and Saxena (2019) claim that Indian political parties are using social media to avoid mainstream media. For instance, they are providing political news and information on their social media platforms so that people are not dependent on newspapers and television to collect that information previously collected from newspapers, radio, and television. Concerning this claim, this study found a different result in the context of Bangladesh.

It has been revealed that this party uses content on its Facebook page published by mainstream media at different times of the year. In addition, all interviewees stated that the Facebook page uses mainstream media content to gain more public attention since people still trust traditional media content more. As a result, it can be argued that traditional media provides different content for this Facebook page, and this party uses that content to attract the public's attention.

However, Havick (1997), Jeff and Williams (2010), Jacobson (1992) and Schiffer (2006) claimed that the oldest, most decadent and incumbent party uses social media more than others. This study found AL is more robust in the cyber area than other Bangladeshi political parties based on reviewing literature and randomly analysing Facebook pages, websites and other cyber activities of different Bangladeshi political parties. Such as, the total follower of AL's Facebook page is now 3.2 million, while Bangladesh Nationalist Party's Facebook page is 1.3 million, and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami's Facebook page is 1.8 million. AL also involve more virtual and cyber activities in the platforms than other political parties. Therefore, this study supports that the oldest, most decadent, incumbent party uses social media more than others.

Effectiveness of the Facebook page

All interviewees have acknowledged that this Facebook page is helping this party greatly to fulfil its goals, and they think this is an effective platform for their party-building activities. The team leader of the Facebook page said, "We launched this Facebook page in 2013 to confront the rumours, propaganda and fake news, and now, we are getting results". Another interviewee added that this platform is helping them to run their party's campaign around the year efficiently, cheaply and effectively, keeping their supporters, activists and local leaders vibrant and active. He also said, "This platform helps this party to strengthen the party's unity, develop party's organisational leadership and broaden and consolidate this party's links with the masses".

Another added that this party is disseminating information, advertising leadership, expanding advertisement, mobilising supporters, introducing electoral symbols and confronting its opposition parties, rumours, propaganda and fake news through this platform. Therefore, it can be said that by performing these jobs, the Facebook page is helping AL to achieve its goals and substantiate its party-building activities.

Conclusion

The research aimed to explore AL's Facebook page's effectiveness regarding social media-based party-building activities in Bangladesh. It also wanted to explore the reasons for using the Facebook page by AL and the pattern of users, and this party's engagement with this platform. To sum up, it can be claimed that this Facebook page is helping this party to substantiate its party-building activities and fulfilling its other purposes. Like most countries and political parties (India, Iceland, New

Zealand, US, Denmark), this party is not engaged with the public on social media platforms but follows public behaviour to understand them. AL uses this platform as a one-way communication channel for its advertisement and does not invite public debate, discussion, or interactive communication. Though this party is not engaged with the audiences, followers of this Facebook page engage with a shared post in three ways, showing a reaction, writing comments and sharing a post. They engage more in a post by showing reactions and sharing it rather than writing a comment. Followers of this page engage more with video format posts and activities of the party chief post. Regarding the purposes, AL is mainly using its Facebook page to attract and reach young citizens. Using this platform, this party disseminates information, advertises leadership, connects the electorate, mobilises supporters, introduces electoral symbols, policies and profiles, and confronts its opposition parties, rumours, propaganda and fake news. This party also uses this platform for monitoring, collecting, understanding and summarising political information and peoples' perception on different issues. Hence, it can be concluded that AL uses this Facebook page like most of the political parties of the world and gets benefits.

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