10-16-2025

Civic Engagement Among African American Women and the 2024 Presidential Election

ArQuena Dailey
Walden University

Walden University

College of Health Sciences and Public Policy

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

ArQuena Shervon-Yel Dailey

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Gregory Campbell, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. William Benet, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2025

Abstract

Civic Engagement Among African American Women and the 2024 Presidential Election

by

ArQuena Shervon-Yel Dailey

MPhil, Walden University, 2020

MPA, Troy University, 2003

BS, Longwood University, 1998

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy & Administration

Walden University

November 2025

Abstract

Although election data exists on the importance of African American women for the Democratic Party, a gap remains in the literature regarding the influences of African American women who participated in the Democratic Party civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election. Key findings from existing literature included the tension between hope and burnout and the reliance on faith-based and peer networks to sustain motivation. The purpose of this study was to explore the influences responsible for African American women's civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election. This authentic narrative qualitative study's conceptual framework was grounded in the digital peer influence theory and the effort-reward imbalance theory. The study was conducted using an authentic narrative research design. Participant interviews were conducted with 10 respondents. Data were coded using emotion, verbal exchange, and domain/taxonomic mechanisms. Digital platforms amplified existing motivations and trusted peer networks served as the most powerful drivers of digital political action. Emotional fatigue, cultural loyalty, and offline organizational affiliations significantly shaped engagement patterns, which extended the understanding of African American women's civic engagement in the context of digital platforms and cultural identity during the 2024 presidential election. Recommendations include the expansion of support for offline culture and community-based efforts and the recognition of emotional labor in political activism. The implications for positive social change include the contribution of elevating voices by Black women in civic discourse and encouraging equitable engagement strategies across multiple platforms and institutions.

Civic Engagement Among African American Women and the 2024 Presidential Election

by

ArQuena Shervon-Yel Dailey

MPhil, Walden University, 2020

MPA, Troy University, 2003

BS, Longwood University, 1998

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy & Administration

Walden University

November 2025

Dedication

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to the legacy of my grandmother, Mary Davis Simmons, whose life began in Mississippi, where opportunity was scarce and the doors to higher education were often closed to women like her. Though she may not have walked the halls of a university, her spirit, strength, and quiet resilience laid the foundation for everything I have become. I often imagine the pride she would feel witnessing her descendants break barriers, shatter ceilings, and pursue the dreams that once felt impossible.

To my parents, my mother, Mrs. Luebertia Dailey, thank you for setting the first example by attending Mississippi Valley State University and earning dual master's degrees while serving in the United States Air Force at a young age. Your pursuit of excellence is the standard that shapes my ambition. You modeled discipline, grace, and the relentless pursuit of purpose. To my father, Ret. CMSG -AF Angelo Dailey, who ensured I had the proper resources and housing throughout my doctoral journey, thank you for the continued support, encouragement, and motivation.

To my twin sister, Dr. Arkena Dailey, who obtained a Doctorate of Physical Therapy degree from Hampton University and the University of St Augustine for Health Sciences in her twenties. She taught me that timelines are meant to be rewritten. To my middle sister, Angie Dailey Clark, who is now boldly tackling the joys of motherhood with my two nephews after completing her undergraduate degree at George Mason University. And to my younger sister, Antwanette Dailey, who continued the tradition of academic excellence by earning a master's degree in behavioral psychology from the Chicago School of Psychology and an undergraduate degree from Hampton University.

This journey is not mine alone. It belongs to all the family members and ancestors whose sacrifices paved the way: this achievement is yours as much as it is mine. Also, to the women who came before me and the generations who will follow.

Acknowledgments

This journey would not have been possible without the love, encouragement, and unwavering support of the incredible people in my life. First and foremost, I extend my deepest gratitude to my parents and sisters, the original DGs, whose belief in me never wavered. To my sisters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, and my CARATS, Incorporated sisters, thank you for surrounding me with a community of excellence, sisterhood, and encouragement when needed.

A special acknowledgment goes to my late-night writing partner and fellow doctoral cohort, Dr. Christie Ross. We started this program around the same time and faced our fair share of detours, career transitions, family losses, and the unpredictable rhythms of life. Through it all, we leaned on each other for strength, laughter, and accountability. This moment would not have arrived without her companionship and motivation.

To all who contributed in large and small ways, whether through financial support, emotional encouragement, persistent nudges, or shared moments of vulnerability, I thank you. You kept me going when the road was long and the nights were endless.

To Dr. Gregory Campbell, Jr. and Dr. William Benet, my dissertation committee, and Dr. Monique Allen, my dissertation coach, thank you for your steadfast guidance and wisdom throughout this process. Your direction helped turn uncertainty into clarity and setbacks into milestones. Throughout the terms, Dr. Gregory Campbell's cohort motto was, "Where there is a way, the will follows." I must agree, there was a way when the will was resurrected, and for that, I am grateful!

Lastly, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all the staff at Walden University and the many brilliant cohorts I encountered along the way. Earning a Ph.D. can be a profoundly isolating experience, but your voices, advice, and shared commitment to scholarly excellence reminded me I was never alone. Thank you, thank you, and thank you for walking this road beside me and helping me reach the finish line.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

According to Slaughter et al. (2024), in the United States, Black women are the saving grace of the Democratic Party. As a result, the Democratic Party relies on the votes of female African Americans to secure elections. Ballotpedia (2020) mentioned in the 2020 U.S. presidential election, voter turnout in the East Coast region exceeded the national average, with Virginia at 72.8%. Also, Upward News (2020) stated that by 2020, social media became a primary news source for younger voters, with 61% of Gen Z users relying on YouTube for political information. However, while these statistics highlight overall participation and preferred media sources, the statistics fail to capture the nuanced influence of female African Americans' contributions to civic engagement.

In recent elections, political participation and civic engagement have been essential to the democratic process, yet African Americans continue to experience low engagement. Racial centrality, Black consciousness, and Black Studies courses are significantly associated with civic engagement (Chapman-Hillard et al., 2022; Dolan et al., 2021). Accordingly, African Americans' plight is a nonfactor in comparison to racial centrality.

Chapman-Hillard et al. (2022) further noted evidence of Black consciousness or the importance of Black people's historical narratives that partially mediates the relationship between racial centrality and civic engagement. Although African American narratives of systemic societal problems are present, African American narratives do not wield influence over African American civic engagement. Chapman-Hillard et al. also mentioned how the study's findings contribute to an overall understanding of how

culture-specific factors are related to civic engagement among Black emerging adults. Therefore, my study sought to understand the influences that impacted female African Americans' civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election.

Miller et al. (2021) strongly suggested that promoting civic engagement must be conducted with careful attention to an individual's unique circumstances, with discussions of risks and benefits. Civic engagement is based on shared intentions that work together to achieve greater good. Bejarano and Smooth (2022) argued that much of the growth in women of color voting and running as candidates for public office stems from strategic networks of women of color-centered mobilizations that work to extend democratic inclusion. In Chapter 1, I discuss the following topics: background, problem statement, purpose of the study, nature of the study, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance, and the summary that leads into Chapter 2.

Background

Slaughter et al. (2024) found that Black women were motivated by civic duty to participate in elections, whereas civic duty did not motivate Black men and White women. African American women felt a responsibility as citizens to have a say in America's democratic process. Slaughter et al. examined how Black women's individual attachments to the Democratic Party as strong or weak partisans (long term) and the warmth toward Democratic Party candidates (short term) factored into Black women's political decision-making and perceptions of its effectiveness.

Zhang and Pinto (2021) noted that empathetic feelings served as the mediator of the relationship between exposure to digital memes and consequent civic engagement in online climate change campaigns. While texting which usually comes across cold without

emotional connections, social media platform memes generated empathy among its subscribers. Jacob et al. (2023) stated that experiences of racial discrimination were associated with greater community and civic engagement. Civil unrest in society created a positive space of inclusion based on a shared goal of justice.

And yet Jacob et al. (2023) noted that reappraisal, such as self-assessment, was often associated with greater civic engagement for women and less for men. Reappraisal represented one of the influences of civic engagement for women. Chang et al. (2020) warned that cases of Taiwan and China pointed toward a growing trend where regular citizens, enabled by new media, exacerbated and hindered misinformation. Globally speaking, civic engagement had to be honest to give the population a fair chance to decide based on facts and not meandered in fiction. Change et al.'s study highlighted an overlooked aspect of misinformation studies, beyond the veracity of information itself, that was the clash of ideologies, practices, and cultural history that mattered to democratic ideals.

My study was rooted in public policy and administration. Public policy of the U.S. president terms and election frequency into the position were applied to my study. The U.S. Constitution's 22nd Amendment explains the policy regarding the terms and frequency of the nation's president:

> No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once. (Constitution Annotated, n.d.)

My population of civically engaged African American women in the Virginia Democratic Party during the 2024 presidential election were considered my study's public administration aspect. For that reason, Slaughter et al. (2024) sought to explain why Black women turned out for Clinton in such high numbers despite ambivalence towards Hilary Clinton as a candidate. Slaughter et al. concluded by questioning why Black women continued to serve as the thankless keepers of democracy and the Democratic Party. My study was conducted to respond to the gap in research regarding the influences of African American civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election. Scott et al.'s (2021) data indicate that political participation significantly predicted candidates being asked to run and the thought of running for office. Political participation encourages candidates to run for office. My findings build upon political participation by highlighting how Virginia African American civic engaged in party structures. My study reveals how African American civic engagement fostered political ambition and reinforced critically underrecognized roles of African Americans who sustained democratic institutions.

Phan and Kloos (2023) stated that it was also important to consider the impact of contemporary activism using technology and online resources in an increasingly polarizing society. Gause et al. (2024), following the 2020 presidential election, in a longitudinal study, discovered that each week assessed feelings of authenticity, motivation for civic engagement, and self-reported civic engagement. Moreover, Gause et al.'s results showed that the felt authenticity of civic engagement predicted greater engagement motivation, which, in turn, predicted higher engagement frequency in the following weeks of research.

Political participation and civic engagement were fundamental to the democratic process, yet it is unknown what influences African American women to commit to civic engagement with the Virginia Democratic Party. Over the past decade, the role of social media in shaping political behavior has gained increasing attention. Moreover, existing studies often overlooked the intersection of race and gender in online political and civic participation. With the emphasized need for inclusive civic participation in marginalized communities, my study has aligned with the digital peer influence (DPI) theory and the effort-reward imbalance (ERI) theory.

Problem Statement

Although there was election data on the importance of female African Americans for the democratic party, the problem was that there was a gap in the literature regarding the influences of African American women who participated in the democratic party civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election. Scott et al. (2021) examined the extent to which Black women's level of civic engagement influenced the likelihood of considering political office compared to other groups of women. African American women's ambitions were both self-serving and for the preferred candidate on the ticket.

Additionally, a gap in the literature did not explore the influences responsible for the Virginia Democratic Party's African American civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election. My study added to the body of knowledge regarding the digital political influences responsible for African American civic engagement. The ERI theory explained the perceived relationship of reciprocity between civic contributions and acknowledgement of political labor among African American Virginian women.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of my study explored the influences responsible for African American women's civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election. Kwon et al. (2021) learned that localized social media use driven by social motivation had a greater effect on trust and civic participation than informational motivation. Knowing this, the use of digital platforms when focused on positive intentions influenced civic engagement participation.

Healthy democracy entailed not only citizens' participation in large-scale political events, such as elections and social movements, but also the engagement with everyday community life (Kwon et al., 2021). Knowing what influenced African American civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election was essential content that added to the body of knowledge. My study's research question answers provided authentic context from the narratives of African American civically engaged women in the Virginia Democratic Party.

Research Questions

This study had two research questions. Both research questions adequately added to the body of knowledge. Therefore, the following overarching research questions guided my study:

RQ1: In what ways, if any, did digital platforms influence civic engagement among Virginia Democratic African American women in the 2024 presidential election?

RQ2: What type of influences, if any, impacted Virginia Democratic African American women's civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual theoretical framework that grounded my study was the DPI theory and the ERI theory. Rachmad's (2023) DPI theory emerged from an understanding that, in the digital age, peer influence extends far beyond physical interactions. Worldwide digital social media platforms became the primary source of global peer influences. My focus was based on the DPIs responsible for African American civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election, which was why the DPI theory best suited my study. Rachmad's DPI conveyed that social media platforms, online forums, and digital communities expanded the scope and scale of peer influence. DPI was selected because online forums were used in many aspects of the 2024 presidential election. Working in tandem with the DPI, I used the ERI theory as my public policy theory.

Gong et al. (2021) expanded the ERI theory to include a new mechanism that related individual overqualification to creativity and examined the mediating effects of emotional exhaustion. Gong et al. hypothesized that, in accordance with ERI theory, person overqualification, as a high-cost/low-gain condition in the employment relationship, caused employee emotional exhaustion, thereby damaging individual creativity. Conditions or environments conditioned for high-cost and low-gain bred emotional exhaustion. Gong et al. insisted that overqualified and overutilized people received a reasonable return. The sentiment of receiving a reasonable return for consistent African American civic engagement in the United States resonated with my study's ERI theory.

According to Gong et al. (2021) research, employees not only regarded personal abilities, time, and effort as inputs to a job but also considered individual qualifications,

including education, skills, and experience, as contributions to the employer. Siegert (1996; 2016) noted that the ERI model offered an established stress-theoretical explanation of the links between poor work conditions and reduced health. Siegert's (2016) ERI model assumed that the recurrent and prolonged experience of failed reciprocity between high effort (the cost) expended in work and the low reward (the gain) received. The ERI model demonstrated how the dynamics of cost and reward required a balance of reciprocity. Siegert's ERI model underscored how the cost and the gain factors activated persistent negative emotions of reward frustration and related reward system circuitry in the brain. African American women who gave individual efforts that exceeded expectations felt put upon when the reward did not exceed expectations. African American female civic engagement was reflected as elements of financial, political, psychological, and social imbalance.

The DPI theory posited that DPI operated through several key channels, including social media interactions, user-generated content, online reviews, and shared online experiences (Rachmad, 2023). Both theories explained how motivation, effort, and perceived fairness shaped African American civic engagement influences and experiences. The DPIs amplified ERIs by increased social comparisons that fostered unrealistic expectations. Such imbalanced outcomes include stress, disengagement, or digital burnout. Through the lens of both theories, my study sought to understand the influences responsible for civic engagement among African American in the state of Virginia Democratic Party.

Through a qualitative, authentic narrative research design, my study explored the influential factors that factored into African American civic engagement in the 2024

presidential election. The study was grounded in the DPI theoretical framework, which emphasized the impact of digital influences responsible for recent African American civic engagement. The DPI theoretical lens allowed for an analysis of how female African Americans navigated individual influences of civic engagement. By exploring the possibility of digital influence, the DPI framework provided a comprehensive understanding of the influences of civic engagement within this demographic. ERI was added as the secondary theory to capture the public policy and administrative data from my study's population of African American civically engaged women.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this qualitative authentic narrative study included a thick description of data collection. A thick description of qualitative findings was critical to improving the transferability of qualitative research findings as it allowed researchers to assess the applicability to other contexts and settings (Younas et al., 2023). Younas et al. (2023) described an authentic narrative as one that supported the description of study findings in a manner that appeared genuine and representative of the participants' experiences and viewpoints. Therefore, my qualitative study used an authentic narrative research design to explore the influences responsible for African American political civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election.

According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research enabled the researchers to uncover general themes from participants' narratives and to understand the underlying values, rituals, symbols, beliefs, and emotions that shaped behaviors. My study employed a qualitative authentic narrative research design to understand the experiences and perspectives of civically engaged Virginia Democratic Party African American women

who participated in the 2024 presidential election. Boddy (2016) suggested that phenomenology-based research required between 5 and 15 participants to achieve saturation of experiences and perspectives from the respondents. To this end, 10 participants were interviewed and with that I reached data saturation. Because of the gap in the literature, there was a lack of validated qualitative and quantitative instruments that spoke to the influences responsible for African American involvement in the civic engagement of political parties.

However, I used and modified the open source publicly accessible Lark Suite (2025) community engagement interview questions for the study. The interview questions were modified to capture data as it related to the Virginia Democratic African American civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election. Hossan et al. (2023) explained that snowball sampling meant that people were asked to refer to known people as participants instead of randomly choosing participants for a study.

The population of my study was a cohort of African American women who worked in a professional or volunteer capacity of civic engagement with the Virginia Democratic Party during the 2024 presidential election. To reach my participants, I used the snowball sampling method and asked the first participant who met the criteria to refer me to additional candidates, who would voluntarily participate in my study. In total, I interviewed 10 Democratic Party members in the state of Virginia. The participants were African American civically engaged women of the Virginia Democratic Party in the 2024 presidential election.

I used a coding mechanism table for my data analysis that generated patterns, categories, and emerging themes. Data triangulation points involved my literature review

and my reflexive journal which were used in comparison against my study's finding for thorough data analysis. Key terms and definitions were used to explain concepts, context, and terms that were conceptualized in my study.

Definitions

Belief perseverance: Encourages people to cling to pre-existing beliefs, even in the face of contradictory evidence, as cognitive biases that significantly affect political decisions (Jingwen, 2023).

Cognitive dissonance: Stems from the possibility of voting for a candidate and living under that candidate's disliked policy (Howell et al., 2022).

Political leveling-up: British Conservatives who represented a new party of redistribution, as a method to create opportunities for high-profile initiatives and symbols of change through which the government crafted a narrative of success (Jennings et al., 2021).

Political micro-influencers: Strategic communicative actors who perform authentic political identities with the goal of influencing public attitudes and behaviors (Boichak, 2023).

Political misinformation: Campaign rhetoric that directly challenges a dominant understanding of the truth—such as politics, elections, etc.—and tends to garner public attention (Banet-Weiser, 2021).

Social structures: Structures that are socially created and maintained to influence how individuals live experiences based on social position and exercise free will (Heller et al., 2024).

Assumptions

My study had at least three assumptions. The first assumption was that the Lark Suite modified instrument was adequate in data collection and provided a thick description to answer my study's research questions. The second assumption was that my participants would honestly respond to my in-depth interviews and add to the body of knowledge. The third assumption was that using an authentic narrative research design would provide a thick description represented in the collected data. My study did not go beyond its scope and had certain delimitations.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of my study did not exceed the state of Virginia. My study had at least three delimitations. The first delimitation was the exclusion of any political parties outside of the Virginia Democratic Party as participants in my study. The second delimitation excluded African American Virginia Democratic Party men from participating in my study. The third delimitation did not involve presidential elections prior to the year 2024. My study had significant limitations.

Limitations

The first limitation was the modified use of the Lark Suite engagement instrument. The second limitation was the use of an authentic narrative research design, which was best suited for my study. The third limitation was the use of the DPI theoretical framework to align with the purposes of my study. Even with limitations, my study's findings added to the current body of knowledge regarding influences responsible for African American civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election.

Significance

My study holds significant implications for both academic scholarship and practical applications. First, my study expands existing literature regarding the role of digital platforms in political participation by exploring the intersection of race and gender influences. The findings contribute a nuanced understanding of how female African Americans engage with digital platforms for civic engagement purposes. As a Virginian citizen who is both African American and civically engaged, I took steps to eliminate my personal bias.

I created a reflexive journal to remove known biases as well as some unconscious biases. An implication for social change offered insights into the complexities of Virginia Democratic Party affiliation in the digital age. Insights from my study's findings contained recommendations for policymakers, community organizers, and educational institutions on strategies to enhance political and civic engagement among marginalized communities.

Summary

My study added to the body of knowledge regarding the gap in literature about influences responsible for African American civic engagement. There was little to no knowledge regarding the influences of African American women who participated in the democratic party civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election. Meanwhile, the use of digital platforms, when focused on positive intentions, influenced African American civic engagement participation. Therefore, the purpose of my study explored the influences responsible for African American civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election.

The exploration of my qualitative study used an authentic narrative research design that explored the influences responsible for African American political civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election. I used and modified the open-source, publicly accessible Lark Suite (2025) community engagement interview questions for my study. The interview questions were modified to capture data as it relates to the Virginia Democratic African American civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election.

Using the snowball sampling method, I interviewed 10 Democratic Party members in the state of Virginia, and data saturation was reached. My methodology included a coding process to help with data analysis. Chapter 2 detailed my topic's literature review.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The problem was the lack of knowledge regarding the influences of African American women who participated in the democratic party civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election. The purpose of my study explored the influences responsible for African American civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election. Chapter 2 entailed the historical reasons, motivations, and influences responsible for civic engagement among people in general. The current literature established relevance to my research problem as well as the gap in the literature that was missing knowledge about female African Americans' influences regarding democratic governance.

In the United States, Black women were touted as the saving grace of the Democratic Party, according to Slaughter et al. (2024). As a result, the Democratic Party relied on the vote of female African Americans to secure elections. In recent elections, African Americans continued to experience low engagement. Chapman-Hillard et al. (2022) further noted that there was also evidence that Black consciousness or the importance of Black people's historical narratives partially mediated the relationship between racial centrality and civic engagement. Political participation and civic engagement were essential to the American democratic process.

Although African American narratives of systemic societal problems were present, African American narratives did not wield influence over African American civic engagement. Therefore, my study sought to understand the influences that impacted female African Americans' civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election. Chapter 2 focused on the following topics: civic engagement, digital peer theory, ERI theory,

history of the Democratic Party, Virginia Democratic Party, the gap in research, and Chapter 2 summary.

Literature Search Strategy

My literature search strategy included relevant literature in the following academic databases: Sage Journals, ProQuest Central, Thoreau Multi-Database Research, Political Science Complete, and under Public Administration Abstracts. My search limited resources to full text and peer reviewed scholarly journals: Communication Research, Social Science Computer Review, and Information, Communication & Society, Journal of Youth and Adolescence, Youth & Society, Journal of Civic Studies, and Journal of Adolescence, American Sociological Review, Sociology Compass, and Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, African Journal of Political Science and Journal of Black Psychology, Annual Review of Psychology and Oxford University Press. My keyword search terms used in the databases mentioned above were motivation, engagement, engage, ethnic, influential, influences, peer influences, efforts and rewards imbalance, woman and African American, Black people, political participation, civic engagement, digital platforms, social networking sites, and social media. To ensure I searched thoroughly, I used variations of the named terms such as peer influence, participation efforts, employee efforts, political outcomes, reward imbalance, cost and gain, exhaustion, initiative, and movements. The literature review contained material from 300 peer-reviewed journal articles, 45 books, and 132 web pages.

Conceptual Framework

This study employed a dual-theoretical conceptual framework that integrated DPI theory and ERI theory. Therefore, my conceptual framework explored online civic

engagement in tandem with the ERI experience among African American women during the 2024 presidential election. DPI theory explains how digital environments and peer interactions influence civic and political behaviors through platforms like social media.

Next, the ERI theory provided insight into how perceived imbalances between the efforts invested and rewards received impact political motivation and participation. Both theoretical frameworks offered a holistic lens that explored the digital influence and effort reward dimensions of female African Americans' engagement during the 2024 presidential election. First, DPI theory is elaborated.

Figure 1 demonstrates the alignment of my study's conceptual theoretical framework. For my study, the first tier of the cycle represents DPI theory as the first point of digital influence by peers or artificial intelligence regarding the 2024 presidential election. The second tier of the cycle displays how ERI was based on the first cycle of influence regarding the 2024 presidential election. The third tier of the cycle represents the population of civically engaged African American women influenced by both cycles of DPI and ERI regarding the 2024 presidential election.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework

Digital Peer Influence Theory

My first theory was the DPI theory. Rachmad (2023) posited that the DPI theory emerged from an understanding that, in the digital age, peer influence extended far beyond physical interactions. The digital age enhanced the reach of peer influence with globally scaled platforms of social communication interactions. Nelson et al. (2017) debated that the Internet also created a real challenge for educators, uncertain how to encourage a wide scope of new kinds of civic engagement. Even though the importance of the physical community waned, the Internet provided an opportunity to cultivate new, digital communities, and with new forms of political engagement (Allen & Light, 2015; Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Hargittai & Shaw, 2013; Zuckerman, 2014; Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, & Delli Carpini, 2006). Digital platforms represented a profound space for global political engagement in communication.

In other countries, civic engagement entails digital influences constructed for political purposes. In Africa, Ibeanu (2022) noted that the role of social media in the

application of digital technologies in election management in Africa attracted extensive attention in the Institute. Ibeanu also found that social media platforms were powerful in mobilizing popular participation in the electoral process. The popularity of social media platforms mobilized African citizens to become more engaged in the electoral process.

Ibeanu (2022) declared that social media platforms were vital tools for candidates, political parties, and other stakeholders. Social media platforms helped political candidates reach many constituents. Ibeanu issued a warning that social media carried fake news and hate speech, which were very damaging to the electoral process. Respectively, the dangers of misinformation and hate speech deflated or fueled the momentum of presidential candidates. Ibeanu recalled how the role of social media promoted electoral violence that was widely reported in many African countries. Negative political rhetoric derailed the intentions of positive public democracy.

Essentially, civic engagement activities were designed to promote the public good (Warren & Wicks, 2011; Zukin et al., 2006). Nelson et al. (2017) noted that there was also the question of what constitutes “engagement” and what constitutes “participation.” Previous research debated how the terms engagement and participation applied to political civic activities. Dilliplane (2011) considered participation primarily referred to offline activities, such as attending campaign events or rallies. Previous research defined civic participation as physical attendance to political functions. Whereas Nelson et al. determined that engagement referred specifically to measures of exposure to community or political news. Additional research that interpreted civic engagement involved political topic awareness for the masses. Ultimately, many researchers used “engagement” and “participation” interchangeably (Baek, Wojcieszak, & Delli Carpini, 2012; Bakker & de

Vreese, 2011; Paek, Yoon, & Shah, 2005; Shah, 1998; Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001). For the purposes of my study, engagement constituted digital responses to civically charged matters while participation constituted being involved in political campaign activities.

Subsequently, Ronceray et al. (2023) were convinced that digital technologies helped civic initiatives in West Africa to mobilize constituencies and leveraged knowledge that fostered accountability. Digital platforms that fostered accountability during the electoral process were preferred in West Africa. Ronceray et al. maintained that, regarding democracy, digital technologies also allowed civil society to resist and sometimes counter the pressures on civic spaces. Societies used DPI that applied pressure on political candidates or adversaries in the name of democracy.

Ronceray et al.'s (2023) findings supported that a partnership on digital technologies and governance between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and civil society was useful. Digital platforms and civic influences sought to promote healthy West African societies. Ronceray et al. determined that the community was well-placed to guide its members on how to regulate technologies in ways that worked for an inclusive governance in West Africa. The rules of civic engagement were meant to not generate a collective in governance where cohesive communal societies thrive together.

Rachmad (2023) noted that social media platforms, online forums, and digital communities expanded the scope and scale of peer influence. Societal digital influence incorporated boundaries unlimited by space. Rachmad explained that social media platforms enabled individuals to be impacted by not only close friends and family but

also by broader networks that spanned the globe. The global implication of DPI resonated with many worldwide political elections. Rachamd's DPI theory posited that the elements of DPI operated through social media interactions, user-generated content, online reviews, and shared online experiences. Regarding the 2024 presidential election, digitally shared content related to presidential candidates was posted on social media sites in hopes to gain traction for popularity and voting purposes.

Nelson et al. (2017) noted that online civic engagement was no longer recognized as a worrisome symptom of an apathetic generation and considered as a sign of the future political agency. Over time, civic engagement became a positive mechanism of politics. Nelson et al. mentioned that online activism appealed to the digital savvy generation because, whether in the form of a social media trend or a digital petition with hundreds of thousands of signatures, results were immediately noticed. Online civic engagement, when compared to traditional civic engagement, generated faster results than paper polls. The convenience of immediate results was beneficial for candidates in a presidential election.

Through the lens of civic engagement, influences, peers, and like-minded individuals used digital platforms to grow support for movements and social initiatives. Rachmad concluded that DPI theory was powerful because it combined the wide reach of traditional media with the personal relevance of close social interactions. Regarding the Virginia Democratic Party African American women who worked and volunteered during the 2024 presidential campaign, DPI theory was best suited for my study. According to Rachmad, DPI theory explains influences as a potent platform in shaping consumer behaviors, political opinions, and even personal identities.

Rachmad (2023) recommended that entities seeking to leverage DPI develop strategies that genuinely engaged communities, fostered authentic interactions, and provided value that encouraged sharing and discussion. For this reason, DPI theory aligned with the influences that attract African American women to civic engagement during presidential elections. Boulianne (2015) investigated the effect of social media use on civic engagement based on national data and found a positive association between informational use (e.g., seeking information about public affairs and the local community) and political participation. Additionally, Rachmad emphasized the importance of monitoring and analyzing social media trends and interactions to gain insight into consumer preferences and behaviors, which allowed for more targeted and effective engagement strategies.

Effort-Reward Imbalance Theory

My study employed the ERI which aligned with the civic duty plight of African American nationwide and addressed the public policy aspect of my research. In China, Ge et al. (2021) examined the influence of ERI, job satisfaction, and work engagement on the self-rated health of healthcare workers. ERI was recognized as having an impact on the wellness of employees in the workforce. Ge et al. discovered that healthcare workers faced various psychosocial pressures that included working night shifts and long hours, demands of patient care, medical disputes, workplace violence, emotional distress due to poor interactions with patients and colleagues, and poor promotion prospects. The more effort put into work did not equate to a balance of rewards. Ge et al. asserted that to improve the health of healthcare workers, administrators had to balance effort and reward as well as provide opportunities for career development and training.

Previous studies indicated that the ERI theory was primarily rooted in education, healthcare, job satisfaction, and policing. In all instances, efforts were continuously maximized to produce the preferred outcome, while the rewards did not match or exceed the efforts that achieved the desired outcomes. Acceptable forms of rewards included monetary incentives, tokens of appreciation, and promotions.

Employee exhaustion was one outcome of the ERI implementation in the workplace. Ge et al. decided that health managers who assisted healthcare workers realized the significance and value of individual work, and kept workers actively devoted to the work through incentivized mechanisms. In the healthcare industry, the reward, when earned, should exceed the effort to incentivize future efforts. In America, Chance (2022) stated that Black women were resilient and strong. When a specific group of people was deemed as resilient and strong, the ERI theory was aptly applied to determine whether the effort was worth the reward.

In a German study, Santa Maria et al. (2021) results indicated that high work effort among police officers was associated with higher levels of burnout, while job rewards and health-oriented leadership were associated with lower levels of burnout. When the ERI theory was applied to law enforcement agents, the result was exhaustion. Santa Maria et al.'s results emphasized the importance of leadership for health promotion in policing. Financial reward was a practical intervention to balance and counter worker exhaustion.

During presidential elections, social media platforms created echo chambers where like-minded individuals influenced others and had heightened expectations about electoral outcomes. However, when amplified expectations were unmet, the perceived

ERI resulted in disillusionment. Digital affirmations may not translate into tangible political change and would generate instances of ERI.

In the United States, Chance's (2022) results revealed that Black women's strength through adversity was driven by the resilience that manifested as motivation factors such as family and relationships, mentorship, and sponsorship, as well as the support of cultural identity and diversity. African American women in society tend to navigate in spaces of empowerment. Chance emphasized that Black women in leadership had to specifically take on the stereotypical role of the Black superwoman (SBW).

Historically, African American excelled in leadership roles as pioneers and innovators. Chance (2022) explained that a Black superwoman upheld a ridiculous work ethic and lived by the mantra of having to work twice as hard to get half as far (or half the acknowledgement) as her White counterparts. In America, African American embraced the positive stereotype of super women and accounted for powerful influencers in political elections.

The interplay between DPI and ERI theories highlighted the complexities of civic engagement in the digital age. Digital platforms offered unprecedented opportunities for political participation and mobilization. Yet, digital platforms also posed challenges in managing expectations and ensuring that individuals feel efforts are met with commensurate rewards. Understanding female African Americans political participation was crucial for fostering sustained and meaningful civic engagement in presidential elections.

However, there was a lack of research where the ERI theory was applied to civic engagement. Therefore, my study added to the body of knowledge within the space of

public policy. My population of Virginia African American women who worked for and volunteered in the 2024 democratic presidential election was best suited for the purposes of my study. My population addressed the applied individual efforts of civic engagement, and if the reward based on civic engagement appeared to be imbalanced.

Literature Review

History of Civic Engagement

Historically, civic engagement emerged as both a problem-solving mechanism and a democratic necessity. McNall (2023) argued that addressing social issues through civic participation required compromise, a fundamental democratic value. Civic engagement infringed upon the moral threads of democracy. The roots of civic action in African contexts, as Ibeanu (2022) noted, were traced back to anti-colonial movements and laid the groundwork for global democratic development.

Resistance to oppression was the foundation of African democracy which had worldwide implications. In the U.S., Flanagan et al. (2022) explained how civic opportunities were historically unequally distributed, particularly among people of color and low-income populations, who often bore the burdens of poor infrastructure and environmental injustice. Racism and socioeconomics played an intricate role in the lack of marginalized groups of people's influence in civic engagement. Christophe et al. (2021) demonstrated that for Black Americans, experiences of racial discrimination, combined with identity centrality and familial socialization, fueled engagement in both community and political spheres.

Zukin et al. (2006) observed that while older adults tend to express civic participation through voting, younger individuals were more likely to participate in

volunteerism and community action. The research revealed that civic engagement patterns varied by age and types of participation. Generational differences reinforced the need to distinguish between political engagement and civic engagement as overlapping but distinct behaviors.

Civic engagement encompassed a wide range of actions motivated by an individual's sense of responsibility to a community. As defined by Ajaps and Obiagu (2021), civic engagement included civic sensitivity, active participation in civil society, and efforts to benefit the common good. Therefore, civic engagement did not solely pertain to employed individuals to particular parties. Aligned with earlier frameworks, researchers conceded that civic life was associated with national development and peacebuilding (Jacoby, 2009; Putnam, 2000). The far reach of civic engagement was applied to encompass social change and democracy. While early conceptualizations emphasized civic engagement through formal institutions, recent research expanded to include personalized and digital forms of civic action, particularly through social media and localized digital platforms (Eimhjellen et al., 2018; Kwon et al., 2020). Political digitization impacted on the influence of civic engagement.

Benefits and Challenges of Civic Engagement

Civic engagement had far-reaching effects on both personal well-being and societal health. Thompson et al. (2024) found that civic involvement during early adulthood predicted lower levels of depression and criminal behavior later in life, as well as improved health outcomes. For individuals, it fostered a sense of agency, reduced antisocial behaviors, and promoted healthier lifestyles. For communities, civic participation drove democratic governance, community improvements, and policy change

(Wray-Lake & Ballard, 2023). Civic participation promoted positive changes in impacted communities.

Despite benefits of positive change, access to meaningful civic engagement remained highly unequal, with barriers rooted in race, class, and institutional distrust (Gaby, 2017; Kahne et al., 2006). Social justice movements were often prompted by minority-based civic engagement activities in response to civil injustices. Kiss et al. (2022) argued that although engagement can yield social learning, equity, and inclusion, its success is often constrained by neoliberal systems and rigid institutional norms. With that being said, creating diverse, reflective spaces, and improving institutional trust were essential to overcoming these societal unjust limitations. The conceptual framework of my study combined the DPI and the ERI theories.

Theories Applied in Practice

Effort, Imbalance, and Reward in Civic Engagement

Civic engagement was often shaped by the perceived balance or imbalance between the effort invested and the rewards received, particularly among marginalized populations. Research showed that despite high levels of participation, communities such as African Americans and women frequently encountered systemic obstacles that complicated the return on civic efforts. For example, Hampton et al. (2017) found that African Americans were among the least likely to participate in political conversations online. African American women's contribution to civic engagement was not recognized on online platforms. Hampton et al. also reflected that there was a perceived imbalance between contributions to civic discourse and the responsiveness or inclusivity of political institutions. Historical narratives echoed how political structures in Virginia were

dominated by White elites who actively excluded Black voters and White populists that limited influence (Key, 1949; Echols, 2015).

This structural exclusion created a long-standing imbalance in which the effort to participate was high, but the reward, measured in policy responsiveness or representation, was low. Even in modern contexts, this imbalance persists. For instance, Young (n.d.) documented concerns among Black voters about voter suppression and political violence, which suggested that present day civic participation carried emotional and logistical burdens. Nonetheless, many respondents continued to engage, motivated by a desire to protect communities and enact change, signaling a willingness to invest effort even in an unequal system.

Bouilanne et al. (2019) declared that although women, particularly those involved in digital activism #MeToo elevated critical conversations on gender-based violence and inequality. They also noted that the digital visibility women achieve did not always translate into structural change, which raised concerns about symbolic rewards without a material impact. Gendered dimensions of the ERI were also critical. Similarly, Ajaps and Obiagu (2021) found that while men often showed higher rates of civic participation it was linked to identity relevance. Men viewed civic engagement as an extension of familiar personal identification. Coincidentally, Ajaps and Obiagu indicated that when civic participation caused alignment with personal stakes, the effort became more meaningful and was more likely to be sustained across genders. Political involvement from the masses was not gender specific and was influenced by the betterment of certain societal groups.

Political motivations and influences reached beyond race and gender. Ingoglia et al. (2025) found that empathy and cooperation were positively associated with civic engagement, particularly among women, who often score higher in these traits. The psychological burden of imbalance was also evident in studies on emotional and cognitive motivations. However, gender socialization may further complicate this dynamic: girls are often raised to be nurturing and empathetic, which may predispose girls to feel responsible for civic or community well-being (Carlo et al., 2015; Gilligan, 1982). When these efforts are not matched by policy change or institutional support, the imbalance may lead to burnout or disengagement. Ultimately, the literature highlighted three clear trends. First, the reward for civic engagement was not distributed equally. Secondly, girls who were already marginalized often experienced greater effort for less institutional return. Third, even with less institutional return, girls remained deeply committed to the process of social change. Civic engagement did not reward the efforts put forth by the female gender.

Influence, Motivation, and Reward Imbalances in Civic Engagement

The Effort–Reward Imbalance (ERI) model, originally developed in occupational psychology, suggested that individuals experienced stress or burnout when the efforts individuals invested in a task were not adequately matched by the rewards received. Applied to civic engagement, this model offered a powerful lens to explore how individuals and communities contributed to democratic processes, often without receiving proportional outcomes in representation, policy influence, or social validation. This chapter used the ERI framework to analyze the motivations (efforts), institutional and

psychological outcomes (rewards), and structural disparities (imbalances) that characterized civic engagement today.

Effort: Drivers and Motivation of Civic Engagement

Motivations for civic engagement are shaped by personal identity, sociopolitical context, community connection, and access to empowering tools like digital platforms. Digital media revolutionized civic participation by creating new avenues for connection, mobilization, and visibility. Boulianne (2018) reported that over 300 studies in the past two decades examined how online news, social networking platforms, and messaging tools fostered civic engagement, especially among younger and marginalized groups. In the span of 20 years, political digital devices attracted underrepresented youth groups in ways that enticed civic involvement.

Social movement digital platforms not only amplified individual voices but also transformed collective narratives into powerful acts of civic agency (Boulianne et al., 2019; Istiqomah, 2024; Langone, 2018). Digital platforms enabled social movement mobility among the masses. Similarly, Black civic participation had historically been driven by motivations rooted in resistance, resilience, and communal responsibility. As Chapman-Hillard et al. (2023) observed, civic engagement within Black communities supported both individual growth and collective advocacy. African American civic engagement was used to promote cultural-cause based initiatives. These efforts were often amplified in response to systemic injustices, such as voter suppression and political exclusion, with many who chose to vote and organize despite the obstacles (Young, n.d.). Culture based movements were often rooted in systemic injustices.

Rewards: Intangible and Tangible Outcomes of Engagement

Civic participation was frequently pursued for external outcomes, like policy change, voting influence, or community recognition. Civic engagement also provided important intrinsic rewards, including empowerment, validation, and identity affirmation. For many, especially within marginalized communities, civic engagement offered a space for public voice and personal meaning, even when structural gains were limited. As Nelson et al. (2017) suggested, the restoration of community bonds and belief in political agency can be meaningful rewards that drive continued engagement.

According to Key (1949), Virginia's shifts in the political landscape historically influenced the perceived rewards of civic involvement. Key clarified that in the mid-20th century, restrictive political systems excluded large segments of the population from meaningful participation. Virginia's practices of exclusion demonstrated a form of leveraged political democratic practices. However, federal interventions such as the Civil Rights Act and the election of Republican Governor Linwood Holton in 1969 opened avenues for more equitable civic participation (Echols, 2015). These events signaled a turning point, increasing the rewards of engagement for Black and other marginalized Virginians by making participation both visible and effective in shaping outcomes. Echols (2015) noted that this transformation contributed to Virginia's evolution into a competitive swing state where civic input carried substantial weight.

Imbalance: Disparities in Effort and Reward

Despite widespread participation, civic engagement often entailed a disproportionate ERI, particularly for marginalized populations. Kwon et al. (2020) argued that trust in local organizations and institutions played a crucial mediated role in

this imbalance. When civic motivation was driven by social rather than informational needs, the relationship between trust and participation was stronger, but not always reciprocated by institutional responsiveness. Phan and Kloos (2022) similarly emphasized that many individuals in oppressed communities invested deeply in civic life without seeing equivalent structural change, which highlighted a persistent disconnect between input and outcome.

The digital era added another layer to this imbalance. Howard (2006) warned that while digital media was celebrated for enhancing political engagement, it could also foster the "managed citizen," a participant whose engagement was narrowly directed by targeted messaging rather than empowerment or deliberation. Boulianne (2018) noted that although digital tools had transformed participation, the actual impact on institutional reform and policy influence remained uncertain. Boulianne believed the idea that technological engagement did not always equate to political agency.

This imbalance was further complicated by intersections of race, class, and gender. Structural exclusions, such as historical voter suppression, gender role expectations, and racial discrimination, created additional barriers, even when civic action was high. Young (n.d.) documented this dynamic among Black voters who, despite fears of suppression and violence, remained committed to participating. Yet, emotional, physical, and time investments were rarely matched by institutional change or equitable representation, reinforcing the effort-reward gap.

Applying the ERI framework to civic engagement revealed that while motivation and participation remained high across diverse communities, the rewards, both material and symbolic, are often unequally distributed. To strengthen civic culture and promote

democratic equity, policymakers, institutions, and communities recognized these imbalances and worked to amplify the rewards of engagement, particularly for historically marginalized groups. This included enhancing institutional responsiveness, broadening inclusive digital spaces, and fostering civic trust at both local and national levels.

Civic Engagement, Peer Influence, and Social Media

Social media transformed the way individuals, especially young people, engaged civically by making peer influence a central mechanism in shaping attitudes and behaviors. Unlike traditional forms of civic learning, digital environments enabled users to observe and emulate civic actions taken by peers in real time. Rachmad (2023) conceptualized this as DPI Theory, which posited that individuals were more likely to engage when civic behaviors were modeled by members of social networks. These behaviors included sharing political content, organizing digital petitions, or participating in social campaigns.

Peer influence often functioned through mechanisms like social validation, where users felt affirmed when civic posts received likes, shares, or comments. This created a normative environment where civic behaviors became part of one's digital identity. As Van Duyn et al. (2019) found, men were more likely to post about national issues, while women tended to engage more with local concerns, which illustrated how social cues shape the content and focus of digital participation.

Challenges of Imbalance and Peer Pressure

While peer influence could be a positive force, it could also introduce pressure and feelings of inadequacy. Howard (2006) warned that social media engagement could

be manipulated through managed messaging, creating a “managed citizen” effect where users engage not from genuine motivation, but from curated trends. Digital media influence through inauthentic strategic methods leads to superficial engagement and scripted narratives. Furthermore, Boulianne (2018) highlighted that despite increased engagement, the structural rewards for participation remained uneven, particularly for marginalized communities.

In summary, peer influence on social media represented a double-edged sword in civic engagement. It could inspire, validate, and connect individuals to causes, but it could also create pressure, misdirection, or reinforce existing inequalities. Understanding these dynamics was crucial for developing digital civic strategies that amplified inclusive, equitable engagement.

Algorithms, Effort–Reward Imbalance, and Peer Influence in Civic Engagement

Algorithms and media ads on social media platforms played a pivotal role in mediating how civic behaviors were observed, modeled, and reinforced among peers. Social media algorithms selectively promoted civic content based on users’ prior interactions, effectively shaping the visibility of political discourse and activism within peer networks (Rachmad, 2023). This personalized curation could amplify peer engagement by exposing individuals to causes endorsed by friends or community members, which increases social validation and reinforces civic identity (Van Duyn, Peacock, & Stroud, 2019). However, this algorithmic filtering could also produce echo chambers that limit ideological diversity and perpetuate surface-level engagement. Seeing only activism that matches one’s own views can reduce meaningful civic engagement and limit critical peer discussion.

Although social media users put effort into civic actions like sharing political content, algorithmic factors often limited or unevenly distributed their rewards. Boulianne (2018) explained that although digital media has increased civic activity, the tangible civic outcomes (e.g., policy influence or institutional change) remain elusive for many users, particularly marginalized groups. This imbalance was exacerbated by algorithmic systems that prioritize monetizable content over genuine civic engagement, meaning that users may not receive proportional recognition, impact, or feedback for digital activism. Howard (2006) cautioned against the emergence of the "managed citizen," wherein civic engagement becomes driven by behavioral targeting rather than autonomous political agency. In this way, social media platforms, while enabling peer-based civic activation, simultaneously risked fostering a manipulated and ultimately unrewarding civic experience.

History of the U.S. Democratic Party

The origins of the Democratic Party could be traced back to the Democratic-Republican Party, which was established in 1792 as the nation's first formal opposition party. This early political group maintained control at the national level from 1801 to 1825 and was considered the direct ancestor of today's Democratic Party (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025). During Andrew Jackson's presidency (1829–1837), the term "Republican" was abandoned by his supporters in favor of "Democrats" or "Jacksonian Democrats," and the party officially adopted the name "Democratic Party" in 1844 (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025).

Kazin (2022) characterized the Democratic Party as the world's oldest mass political organization, one that had consistently shaped American life, whether in power

or opposition. Echoing this view, Roberts (2012) noted that the party was present throughout nearly the entirety of U.S. history, evolving alongside the nation's political landscape. Despite dramatic ideological changes over time, the Democratic Party remained a central and enduring force in American politics.

However, the early legacy of the party included significant opposition to civil rights reforms. Storrs (1880) observed that, in the post-Civil War period, the Democratic Party attempted to distance itself from its historical actions but made little effort to adopt a progressive new identity. He wrote, "The Democratic party is now earnestly striving to unload its history; to cast off its old and bad character" (p. 289). Storrs further documented the party's resistance to the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which granted citizenship and voting rights to formerly enslaved people, pointing out that Democrats uniformly voted against the amendments' passage and later opposed enforcement legislation in Congress.

The party's relationship with African Americans in the post-Reconstruction era was also complex. Meier (1956) analyzed Black support for the Democratic Party between 1875 and 1915, suggesting that motivations ranged from personal ambition and social intimidation. Meier further explained how the desire among higher-status African Americans aligned with the political affiliations of White elites' social circles.

Together, these historical developments revealed that while the Democratic Party was deeply embedded in U.S. political life from its inception, its early role included both progressive ideals and active resistance to racial equity. Its journey reflected not only the evolution of a political institution but also the shifting values of the American nation itself.

History of the Presidential Digital Platform

The use of digital platforms in presidential and political campaigning has evolved dramatically over the last two decades. Early interest in the intersection between politics and the internet was often credited to Howard Dean, the former governor of Vermont, who leveraged a website for his Democratic campaign in the early 2000s. His campaign utilized digital tools such as websites, email lists, and online databases to build support, paving the way for future digital strategies (Dommett, 2020).

However, it was President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign that was widely recognized as the first major political campaign to fully capitalize on the potential of social networking sites (SNS) for fundraising, mobilization, and mass communication (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015). Obama's campaign incorporated platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and others, setting a precedent for what many scholars regarded as the first successful and transformative use of social media in a presidential election (Al-Zaman, 2019). This approach not only energized a younger voting base but also reshaped how candidates could directly engage with the public. By 2011, Obama continued innovating in this space, announcing his re-election bid through a YouTube video and posts on Twitter, reinforcing social media's central role in modern campaigns (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015).

Globally, presidential and political use of digital platforms mirrored this evolution. In Brazil, for example, Mobile Instant Messaging Services (MIMS) were first used in the 2018 elections as tools for political campaigning. Chagas et al. (2021) examined how WhatsApp was employed to encourage public engagement with the

Senate's e-Cidadania Portal, ultimately influencing public discourse and creating participatory distortions aligned with campaign agendas.

In East Asia, the 2020 Taiwanese presidential election illustrated how geopolitical tension, particularly between Taiwan and China, fueled fierce digital engagement. According to Chang et al. (2021), online platforms reflected the polarized political environment, with disproportionate representation of candidate Tsai Ing-wen on Twitter and evidence of partisan manipulation in content regulation. Chang et al. study warned of a growing trend in which citizens, empowered by social media, both amplified and obstructed the spread of misinformation, highlighting the double-edged nature of digital engagement in politics.

Influence, Obstacles, and Successes

The incorporation of social media into presidential campaigning has yielded both profound successes and notable challenges. President Obama's use of SNS in 2008 was credited with capturing the attention of young voters, but scholars such as Gerodimos and Justinussen (2015) observed that while his social media messaging initially drew youth interest, the lack of continued, meaningful dialogue, such as debate or issue engagement, reduced long-term retention and participation.

Beyond technical strategy, the inclusion of marginalized voices in digital political discourse was vital. Brown et al. (2017) emphasized the importance of incorporating perspectives from historically oppressed groups, especially youth, in digital platforms that aim to support democratic development. This focus on participatory inclusion highlighted a major success in digital campaigning: the creation of spaces for underrepresented voices. However, challenges remained, particularly around

misinformation, unequal access, and how these platforms could sometimes reinforce existing inequalities or suppress diverse viewpoints.

As Chang et al. (2021) noted in the Taiwan and China study, while digital tools could promote civic participation and counteract foreign influence, digital tools might also undermine domestic political dialogue. This tension exemplified the broader obstacle facing digital politics today: how to leverage technology to enrich democracy without compromising its integrity.

Virginia Democratic Party

Virginia's political landscape has undergone profound transformations over the past century, moving from one-party dominance to its current status as a highly competitive swing state. Historically, Virginia was considered one of the most tightly controlled states in the country. According to Key (1949), political power in Virginia was long held by an entrenched oligarchy that systematically undermined democratic institutions and denied much of the electorate a meaningful voice. Building on this assertion, Echols (2015) described the Democratic Party machine in Virginia as one of the most well-disciplined and organized political operations in the United States during the mid-20th century. Its dominance was sustained, in part, due to the opposition's failure to present a unified message or credible leadership, which allowed Democrats to maintain control over nearly all aspects of the Commonwealth's political life until the late 1960s.

This Democratic domination was supported by the exclusion of key groups, particularly Black voters, White populists, and Republicans. Such exclusion enabled Virginia's leaders to resist federal civil rights efforts throughout the 1950s and early 1960s (Echols, 2015). However, the enactment of landmark legislation such as the Civil

Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 forced open the state's political system. This shift led to the eventual fracturing of Virginia's Democratic stronghold. Although Republican A. Linwood Holton lost the gubernatorial race in 1965, he returned in 1969 to become the first Republican governor of Virginia in the 20th century. According to Echols (2015), Holton's election marked more than a personal victory; it signaled the emergence of a viable two-party system in Virginia and predicted broader Republican gains across the South.

The political realignment during this era was further accelerated by racial tensions within the Democratic Party. A significant number of White Democrats who supported segregation began defecting to the Republican Party as desegregation laws were implemented (Echols, 2015). These shifts paved the way for Republican dominance at the state level, and after 1964, Virginia would not vote for a Democratic presidential candidate again until Barack Obama's victory in 2008.

In recent decades, Virginia's political history was characterized by increasing competitiveness. Echols (2015) observed that the state's one-party rule had given way to a dynamic and often unpredictable electoral environment. While Republicans maintained strength at the local level, Democratic gains nationally and statewide spurred greater political participation and competition within Virginia. Today, the Commonwealth stands as one of the most important swing states in the U.S., symbolizing the larger political transformation that has reshaped Southern politics over the past half-century.

History of Lark Suite Instrument

Lark Suite (2025) displayed a comprehensive productivity platform that aimed to enhance operational efficiency by providing tools that help streamline workflows,

digitize business processes, and translate strategies into actionable outcomes. With a mission centered on strategizing, collaborating, implementing, and tracking progress, Lark positioned itself as a solution for organizations looking to integrate multiple functions into a single, cohesive system. Described as a "productivity superapp," Lark integrates features such as messaging, virtual meetings, document editing, project management, and automation tools, all designed to simplify workflows and foster effective team communication. In this research study, Lark's structured interview questions, organized by topic and tailored to different job functions, served as the primary instrument for interviewing participants. The questions were particularly useful for exploring individuals' civic engagement experiences and use of digital media, which offered a practical method for capturing real-life insights across diverse roles.

Gender Differences in Civic Engagement

Social Media's Role in Gendered Participation

Digital platforms have increasingly become critical spaces for gender-related civic engagement. As Istiqomah (2024) found, social media served as a powerful instrument in promoting gender equality and empowering women globally. Through visual storytelling, hashtags, and social campaigns, women shared lived experiences and engaged the public in conversations about gender justice. These tools helped to shape narratives and challenged existing gender norms. The #MeToo movement, for instance, demonstrated the impact of digital platforms in raising awareness about sexual violence. With tens of millions of tweets and posts, and being searched in 196 countries, it highlighted the power of collective online activism (Boulianne et al., 2019; Langone, 2018).

Gendered Civic Identity and Motivation

The motivations behind civic participation often varied by gender, influenced by societal expectations and personal identity. Ajaps and Obiagu (2021) found that men generally participated more in civic-related activities, but this gap was tied to civic identity and issue relevance. When causes resonated more deeply with individuals, such as gender or community issues, both men and women were equally likely to engage. This suggested that gender differences in civic behavior may be situational rather than inherent.

Supporting this, Ingoglia et al. (2025) found that traits like empathy and cooperation significantly predicted civic engagement, with girls scoring higher than boys in these areas. Gender also moderated how values such as empathy and respect influenced civic attitudes and behaviors. Findings suggested that girls are often raised to embody compassion and nurturance and feel a greater sense of guilt when failed to act empathetically (Carlo et al., 2015; Flanagan & Stout, 2010; Gilligan, 1982; Van der Graaff et al., 2018).

However, other research challenged the idea of significant gender-based divides. Wiium et al. (2023), for example, found no meaningful gender differences in civic engagement in cross-cultural analyses. This indicated that civic participation may depend more on contextual and cultural factors than on gender alone.

Gender, Intersections of Engagement, and Race,

Race, age, gender, and sexual orientation intersected in shaping how individuals viewed and engaged with political issues. Young (n.d.) emphasized that female participants, particularly Black women, were more likely to prioritize reproductive rights

than male counterparts. Furthermore, despite concerns about political violence and voter suppression, many still expressed strong intentions to vote and encourage others to do so, reflecting a high level of civic responsibility among marginalized groups.

Hampton et al. (2017) observed that African Americans were among the least likely to engage in political dialogue, which might be tied to historical marginalization or distrust in political institutions. Nevertheless, Chapman-Hillard et al. (2023) noted that civic engagement remained a vital tool for collective empowerment among Black communities, especially when culturally specific motivations are considered. Gender also influenced how individuals used social media to participate in political conversations.

Gender, Social Media, and Political Dialogue

Van Duyn, Peacock, and Stroud (2019) used a U.S.-based survey and found that men were more likely to engage in online discussions on national and international issues, while women were more inclined to focus on local matters. This difference in engagement style underscored how gender norms and interests shaped digital political discourse. Despite the empowering potential of social media, there were still limitations.

Lin and Kant (2021) noted that while social media could enhance transparency and inclusion in civic processes, it also carried potential biases and did not replace the need for offline engagement. There were benefits and challenges to digital platforms civic engagement. Lin and Kant study emphasized that combining online and offline participation methods was key to involving diverse groups in planning and decision-making, particularly in contexts where gendered digital divides still existed.

African American Demographic and Civic Factors

Black Americans make up roughly 13% to 15% of the U.S. population Phan and Kloos, 2022), stated civic engagement was both significant and culturally nuanced. Chapman-Hillard et al. (2023) emphasized that civic engagement played a key role in both personal development and collective empowerment within Black communities. Chapman-Hillard et al. research underscored the importance of culture-specific influences, such as community norms, historical experiences, and identity factors, in shaping the ways young Black adults participated in civic life. These findings suggested that understanding civic engagement among African Americans required attention to cultural context, not just political messaging.

Community Needs and Key Priorities

According to Young (n.d.), Black Americans consistently ranked education and criminal justice reform as top political priorities, while expressing less interest in topics like immigration and foreign policy, even when those issues dominated national media. These findings reflected how direct lived experiences and localized concerns drove political behavior within the community. Additionally, Young reported that intersections of race, gender, sexual orientation, and age significantly shaped political perspectives. For example, participants in the study were predominantly women (80%) and highly educated, with 60% holding advanced degrees. This demographic diversity challenged the notion of a politically uniform Black electorate.

Political Engagement and Perceived Risks

Despite fears surrounding voter suppression and potential political violence, many participants in Young's study expressed a continued commitment to civic participation.

The participants shared strong intentions to vote and to mobilize others to do the same, especially in response to recent political events like Vice President Kamala Harris's historic nomination and the implications of conservative initiatives like Project 2025. Importantly, Young (n.d.) highlighted that the Black community was far from monolithic; political attitudes varied greatly based on factors like region, age, and LGBTQ+ identity, which indicated that effective political engagement must be inclusive and responsive to this internal diversity.

Group Belonging and Shared Identity

Engagement often increased when individuals identified strongly with the values and actions of a peer group. Chapman-Hillard et al. (2023) emphasized that civic engagement among Black youth was reinforced through culturally specific motivations and peer support. This reinforced communal values while responding to systemic challenges, making peer dynamics both a social and political force.

Social media not only facilitated civic behavior but also amplified it. Movements like #MeToo gained traction largely due to peer-shared stories and hashtags that created solidarity through shared experiences. As Boulianne, Lalancette, and Ilkiw (2019) observed, this peer-driven visibility empowered individuals to take action and join broader movements even without formal institutional ties. Similarly, Istiqomah (2024) highlighted how women's empowerment was significantly shaped by the way peers engaged and supported one another online.

Peer influence also built trust in civic institutions by connecting individuals with community leaders and organizations through social media. Kwon et al. (2020) found that when social motivations drove digital engagement, individuals were more likely to trust

local institutions and participate more meaningfully. DPI not only motivated action but also reinforced institutional trust.

Gap in the Research

In Virginia, the legacy of racial exclusion and political dominance by White elites profoundly shaped African American civic participation. Despite setbacks, African Americans remained critical to the Democratic coalition in Virginia. While African Americans often engaged in high-effort civic actions ranging from digital protests to voter mobilization, the systemic rewards remained limited. Structural inequities, algorithmic bias, and digital surveillance contributed to a civic landscape where Black digital labor was undervalued, under-acknowledged, or even penalized (Boulianne, 2018; Howard, 2006). These imbalances could fuel burnout or political disillusionment, particularly among younger Black users who navigated the tension between visibility and vulnerability. Platforms like Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram not only served as spaces for political expression but also functioned as arenas of community-building and identity affirmation, where peers amplified shared experiences and mobilized collective action.

This study had two research questions that aimed to add authentic context to the narratives of African American civically engaged women in the Virginia Democratic Party. RQ1 In what ways, if any, do digital platforms influence civic engagement among Virginia Democratic African American women in the 2024 presidential election; and RQ2 what type of influences, if any, impact Virginia Democratic African American women's civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election? Because of the gap in the literature, there was a lack of validated qualitative and quantitative instruments that spoke to the influences responsible for African American involvement in the civic engagement

of political parties. As a result, I used and modified the open-sourced, publicly accessible Lark Suite (2025) community engagement interview questions. The interview questions were modified to capture data as it related to Virginia Democratic African American civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election. African American female campaign paid workers and volunteers who were digitally civically engaged were considered as participants who met the criterion of my study's population. My study explored the influential factors that factored into African American civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election and both research questions were enough to add to the body of knowledge.

Summary

Chapter 2 examined the historical, sociopolitical, and digital contexts of African American civic engagement, with particular attention to the influence of peer networks, social media, and the Democratic Party of Virginia. The chapter synthesized interdisciplinary literature to understand how Black civic agency had evolved from resistance movements rooted in systemic exclusion to digital activism amplified through online platforms. At the core of Chapter 2 was the application of the ERI and DPI theory. Both theories asserted that civic behaviors were often shaped through modeling and validation within one's social network. Chapter 3 discussed my study's methodology.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Although African American narratives of systemic societal problems were present, African American narratives did not wield influence over African American civic engagement. Therefore, the purpose of my study was to explore the influences responsible for African American civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election. Chapter 3 explained my study's methodology and discussed the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, participant logic, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection, data analysis plan, issues of trustworthiness, ethical procedures, and Chapter 3 summary.

Research Design and Rationale

My study had two research questions. Both research questions were enough to add to the body of knowledge. Therefore, the following overarching research questions that guided my study were:

RQ1: In what ways, if any, do digital platforms influence civic engagement among Virginia Democratic African American women in the 2024 presidential elections?

RQ2: What type of influences, if any, impact Virginia Democratic African American women in the 2024 presidential elections?

Research Design

A thick description of qualitative findings was critical to improving the transferability of qualitative research findings as it allowed researchers to assess the applicability to other contexts and settings (Younas et al., 2023). The research design of this qualitative narrative study included online in-depth interviews that provided a thick

description of data collection to respond to my study's research questions. Younas et al. (2023) described an authentic narrative as one that supported the description of study findings in a manner that appeared genuine and representative of the participants' experiences and viewpoints. Therefore, my qualitative study research design used an authentic narrative research design to explore the influences responsible for African American political civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election.

Rationale

According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research enabled researchers to uncover general themes from participants' narratives and understand the underlying values, rituals, symbols, beliefs, and emotions that shape behaviors. My study used an exploratory qualitative approach to capture the authentic narratives, experiences, and perspectives of Virginia Democratic Party African American women who engaged in online civic activities during the 2024 presidential election. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) declared that the narrative inquiry emphasized the personal and emotional depth of lived experiences and offered insights that were not reduced to mere statistics or objective measurements. My study consisted of an authentic narrative research design to explore the Virginia Democratic Party's African American ERI experiences and perspectives regarding the 2024 presidential election.

In a private Midwestern university, Wilt et al. (2019) considered that the narrative identity approach to the study added authenticity to potentially better capture some of the idiosyncratic richness and nuance of authentic experience. My study used an authentic narrative research design. A Georgian study of undergraduates explained the four tenets that measured participant authenticity.

> The four components identified were: Awareness, or knowing and trusting in one's motives, feelings, desires, and self-relevant cognitions; Unbiased Processing, or objectivity with respect to one's positive and negative self-aspects; Behavior, which measured the extent to which one behaves in accord with one's values; and Relational Orientation, which measured valuing and striving for openness, sincerity, and truthfulness in one's close relationships. (Kernis and Goldman, 2000)

The population of my study was a cohort of Virginia Democratic African American women who worked in a professional capacity or volunteered during the 2024 presidential election. Therefore, my rationale in using authentic qualitative narrative research was best suited to capture a thick description from the population of these African American civically engaged women.

Role of the Researcher

Creswell and Poth (2018) clearly stated that the researcher watched and recorded behaviors and interactions without fully engaging directly in the process. As an observer, I was an active listener to demonstrate my full participation. As the researcher, I initiated the in-depth conversations using open-ended questions and follow-up questions related to the topics of interest. Therefore, my role as the researcher entailed noting nonverbal observations and capturing an array of qualitative data, without interrupting my participants. I did not have any personal or professional conflicts, nor have any power over my participants that impeded my ability to be objective during the data collection process.

However, one ethical issue that was addressed was based on my professional experience. I proudly served in multiple leadership roles within civic engagement organizations. For example, I led voter education drives, worked as a campaign staffer for local, state, and federal races, chaired a local political committee, served on community boards, and worked as a public servant for local, state, and federal offices. These roles in civic engagement shaped me to become a community organizer and public servant. My civic engagement experience spans over 20 years, where I performed constituent services and outreach work within diverse communities.

My work also involved navigating policy and budget priorities while fostering partnerships with legislators, local officials, and advocacy groups. These experiences have allowed me to observe civic engagement activities from the grassroots level up to the lobbying level for local, state, and federal advocacy. Throughout all these experiences, I maintained an extensive network with African American civically engaged women. As a result, any African American women who were considered close friends were purposefully excluded from research participation to avoid a conflict of interest. Furthermore, I did not foresee any population recruitment issues that impacted my research methodology.

Researcher Bias

My researcher bias was mitigated for this study. Walden University Laureate (n.d.) defined bias as an undesirable influence of the researcher on the participants. I utilized several strategies to prevent biases in the research. According to Ortlipp (2008), reflexive journaling was a valuable tool in qualitative research, particularly for dissertation work, as it encouraged the researcher to remain aware of the researcher's

positionality, assumptions, and emotional responses, ultimately enhancing the credibility and transparency of the study. As a result, I utilized reflexivity through completing my reflexive journal to essentially pull out any unforeseen biases. Another strategy was member-checking.

During the member-checking process, the interviewees were permitted to review and confirm the accuracy of responses before data analysis. This ethical form of transparency managed any researcher's biases.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The authentic narrative research design was used in my general qualitative study. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research helped understand an individual's beliefs and allowed a researcher to pull general themes from the research data. As a result, interview questions focused on African American female Virginia Democratic Party volunteers/workers' experiences using digital platforms during the 2024 presidential election. Hossan et al. (2023) explained that snowball sampling meant that instead of randomly choosing participants for a study, people were asked to refer to known people as participants. Therefore, I used the snowballing sampling method to reach my study's participants.

Creswell (2009) recommended that between 5 and 25 participants were required for phenomenological studies to capture rich, lived experiences. I used a sample size of 10 participants for my study. Patton (2015) emphasized that the sample size in qualitative inquiry should be guided by the study's purpose and the depth of information needed rather than by rigid numerical thresholds. Data saturation was not always based on the

number of participants. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) found that data saturation often occurs within the first 12 interviews, with core themes emerging as early as six.

However, the consensus of the literature stated that at least 5 participants were needed to reach data saturation. Mason (2010) and Marshall et al. (2013) reinforced that smaller samples were effective when the research sought to explore meaning, context, and theoretical depth, as saturation was typically reached within this range. Thus, my sample size was no less than 10 participants and was sufficient in achieving depth, richness, and saturation in qualitative research. The criterion for my study's participants identified as African American female VA Democratic Party workers or volunteers and had social media platforms during the 2024 presidential election.

Participants for this study were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling methods by phone and email, leveraging the researcher's existing professional and political networks within the Democratic Party of Virginia. Palinkas et al. (2015) explained that purposeful sampling was a commonly employed strategy in qualitative research. My study used purposeful sampling. Palinkas et al. noticed that purposeful sampling allowed researchers to identify and select participants who possess deep, relevant knowledge or experience related to the central phenomenon under investigation. My study's purposive sampling method involved civically engaged African American women who met my study's criterion. Goodman (1961) regarded the snowball sampling method approach as particularly effective for reaching individuals within specific political and social communities who were not easily identified through traditional sampling methods. I had associates who are politically affiliated among many parties across the country and who worked in several political capacities.

Noy (2008) explained how snowball sampling was used to identify additional participants through referrals from initial contacts. Therefore, my associates, identified due to direct involvement in civic and political engagement activities, served as entry points for broader recruitment. Noy further noted how snowball sampling allowed researchers access to a broader network of individuals who met the inclusion criteria. With this in mind, the specific criterion my participants met was: (a) African American (or those who identified as Black); (b) female (c) civically engaged; (d) used online platforms for civic engagement involvement; (e) worked or volunteered for the Virginia Democratic Party; (f) for the 2024 presidential election.

Using the purposive snowball sampling approach, I contacted my known civically engaged associates to refer me to acquaintances. The referrals from my associates were people outside of my network who met the criteria and volunteered to participate in my study. Voluntary participants identified through my study's participant criteria were contacted via phone or email for the purpose of recruitment. Once participants were identified and met my study's criterion, and I received IRB approval number 07-02-25-0323875, I officially sent my population IRB-approved Google Document consent and invitations to participate in my study (see Appendix B; Appendix C; Appendix D).

Instrumentation

I used and modified the open-source, publicly accessible, published Lark Suite (2025) community engagement interview questions for my study. Lark Suite appeared to be an application for consumers to use, with individual discretion, and without representative assistance (see Appendix A). My instrument was adopted from the Lark Suite and was modified for the purposes of this study.

This instrument was not a researcher-developed instrument; it was modified without the ability to gain author approval. However, per the Walden IRB requirements, I conducted a pilot study to establish content validity and sufficiency of my pilot data collection tool with friends as participants prior to proposal approval and IRB approval. Additionally, none of the pilot participant data points were included in the analysis. Piloting with strangers as participants was not permitted in the pilot per the IRB. The modified data collection instrument adequately captured qualitative data to respond to my study's research questions, purpose, and problem.

Creswell and Poth (2018) clearly stated that the researcher watched and recorded behaviors and interactions without fully engaging directly in the process. Data collection sources included my computer hardware and software, and an online platform, via Zoom, which was equipped with video and audio recording mechanisms. The interview protocol was the modified Lark Suite instrument, and I used an observation sheet.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) found that observation sheets employed during the Zoom sessions gave researchers the ability to document nonverbal cues, participant demeanor, and contextual nuances. The observation sheet was used to capture my field notes, which included instances of noticeable nonverbal communication during the in-depth interviews. As a researcher and as an active listener, my eyes and ears were considered as data collection sources.

Researcher-Developed Instrument

My study did not use a researcher-developed instrument. Instead, I conducted a pilot study to gain content validity. Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) emphasized that pilot studies served as an essential methodological step in qualitative research that tested

the feasibility, clarity, and alignment of interview questions with research objectives. With this in mind, the modifications of my instrument used a pilot study for sufficiency and content validity. After I conducted each interview with three friends, the instrument was revised based on feedback from the 3 participants. Polit and Beck (2006) determined that scale developers often provided evidence of content validity by computing a content validity index and using ratings of item relevance by content experts.

Thus, by interviewing friends who met my study's participants' criteria, I assisted with feedback during member-checking to ensure my interview protocol adequately represented the proper constructs of data collection. LaDonna et al. (2021) clarified that qualitative data sufficiency depended on both the rigor of the analytical process (analytical sufficiency) and the richness of the data it generates (data sufficiency). Since I had the expert help of my pilot study participants, the modifications made to the Lark Suite instrument established data sufficiency. The modified instrument provided a comprehensive and credible means of data sufficiency to answer the study's research questions.

Methodology

Pilot Study

Prior to proposal and IRB approval, I conducted a pilot study with three friends as participants to establish content validity. I conducted a pilot study with in-depth interview sessions among female African American civically engaged friends to establish content validity for the modified qualitative interview instrument. The participants were contacted by email and by phone regarding invitations to participate in the pilot study. I used purposeful sampling to select three friends as volunteers to assist with instrument

validation. For data collection, I used the online platform Zoom audio and video recordings to conduct in-depth interviews with my friends as participants.

The in-depth interviews lasted 25 to 30 minutes each. I took field notes of nonverbal communication and follow-up notes. After each interview, I debriefed participants and asked whether the questions were understandable and comfortable to answer. The pilot helped me determine the time needed for each interview, so the study's consent form provided an accurate estimate of the study's time commitment for participation. With the audio file, Microsoft Word has free dictation and transcription software built in that provides data collection for all three interviews.

Changes were made to the question to ensure clarity, and the follow-up questions were added to ensure more explanation of the previous answers. Other modifications included verbiage that aligned with my study's conceptual theoretical framework, the influences of civic engagement.

Content Validity

After initial coding, I used member-checking by contacting participants to confirm my interpretations were accurate. Participant clarification assisted with modifications I made, best suited to the ability of data collection for the purposes of my study. The modifications establish sufficiency and align with the research design, public policy, and conceptual framework elements of my study (see Appendix A). The interview questions were modified to best capture data as it relates to African American civic engagement of the Virginia Democratic Party during the 2024 presidential election.

Main Study

The purpose of the pilot study was to establish content validity and instrument sufficiency for data collection. The pilot study only consisted of three participants who met my study's criteria. Pilot study participants assisted the researcher with instrument revisions and verbiage modifications that were best suited for data collection, which responds to my study's research questions. The success of the pilot study allowed the researcher to proceed with the main study. Similar to the pilot study, in the main study, I recruited participants who met the same criterion, with the exception that the main study participants were not my friends.

As previously discussed in the participant logic section, I used a sample size of no less than 10 participants for my main study. The participants for my study were recruited by phone and email through purposive and snowball sampling methods. Using both purposive and snowball sampling methods, I utilized my pool of political resources of existing professional and political networks. Once participants were identified and met my study's criterion, and I received IRB approval, I officially sent out the IRB approved invitations to my population through email and phone to participate in my study.

Procedures for Data Collection, Participation, and Recruitment

My qualitative study used an authentic narrative research design to respond to my study's research questions. RQ1: In what ways, if any, do digital platforms influence civic engagement among Virginia Democratic African American women in the 2024 presidential elections? RQ2: What type of influences, if any, impact Virginia Democratic African American women's civic engagement in the 2024 presidential elections?

Data collection was performed methodically. My population was recruited by phone, email, and on social media that used the snowball sampling method. I sent a digital flyer to my friends and professional network via phone and email, requesting that those who met the participant criteria contact me and be recruited as participants in my study. The digital flyer detailed that participation in my study was voluntary and would take place on an online platform. As a researcher, I was the only person who collected data for the purposes of my study.

Participant interviews took place once per participant, then I conducted member-checking before I conducted initial and secondary coding cycles. Participants were able to review previously received responses as transcripts for purposes of clarity and authenticity. Each in-depth qualitative interview took about an hour to complete and took no longer than 2 weeks to reach data saturation among the 10 participants.

Observation sheets were employed during the Zoom sessions to document nonverbal cues, participant demeanor, and contextual nuances (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data were collected and recorded through interviews conducted via Zoom. Each participant's video and audio recording were stored on a personal cloud drive. Each interview was transcribed verbatim using Microsoft Word to ensure accuracy and consistency in analysis. As a researcher, I utilized Zoom recordings, Word-based transcriptions, and observation sheets as data collection tools that captured participants' online civic engagement experiences.

My study was successful and obtained enough participants to reach data saturation, and as a result, I did not need to implement a follow-up plan for recruitment. No additional flyers were created for the study to be circulated online in various

democratic and African American social groups. However, if needed, these steps would have been used to recruit Virginia residents who met my study's participant criterion. As recommended by Yin (2016), effective debriefing served to reaffirm confidentiality, reiterated the voluntary nature of participation, and provided contact information should participants have follow-up questions or wish to withdraw data after the interview.

Therefore, my interview process included participant debriefing as an exit strategy. For instance, once the in-depth interviews were complete, I thanked my respondents for their individual participation. Next, I advised my population that an opportunity for member-checking in the upcoming weeks was provided for clarity. Then, I concluded the interview session for closure. Following the exit strategy of debriefing, I ensured that participants exited the study in an informed, respectful, and supportive manner.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis began with a multitiered coding process. Saldaña (2021) defined coding as the process of systematically categorizing data to identify themes, patterns, and meanings. I used a coding table to aid in data analysis. Belotto (2018) explained that coding enabled researchers to interpret large text segments and reframed information in meaningful ways, which contributed to a robust analytical process. Saldaña (2009) noted that field notes and other forms of written participant transcripts were useful for all coding methods: emotion, verbal exchange, and domain and taxonomic coding. Table 1. described the qualitative coding methods, sources, occurrences, and purposes that were used during data analysis.

Table 1

Research Coding

Code	Source	Occurrence	Purpose
Emotion Coding: One cannot separate emotion from action; emotions from actions are part of the same flow of events, one leading into the other (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 7).	Goleman, 1995; Prus, 1995	Emotional actions associated with ex-offender applicant	Capture verbal and nonverbal emotional qualitative data that resonates with emotions such as happy, annoyed, disgusted, and empathy regarding the effort reward imbalance
Verbal Exchange Coding: Represents the verbatim transcript analysis and interpretation of the types of conversation and personal meanings of key moments in the exchanges.	Goodall, 2000	Acknowledgement and recognition of authentic narrative reasons, motivations, and influences such as Sharing content and liking posts, etc.	Capture verbal and nonverbal qualitative data that relate to reflections upon reasons and type of digital civic engagement involvement.
Domain and Taxonomic Coding: An ethnographic method for discovering the cultural knowledge people use to organize individual behaviors and interpret personal experiences (Spradley, 1980, pp. 30-31	McCurdy, Spradley & Shandy, 2004; Spradley, 1979; Spradley, 1980	Categorized group domains of common occurrences. Then use taxonomy terms that identify as classifications and relationships to define each domain.	Capture verbal and nonverbal qualitative data that developed into categories that reveal individual sentiments and indications of culture-based influences that result in civic engagement

Microsoft Word's (n.d.) built-in transcription service offered an accessible and efficient tool for converting audio recordings into written text. My data analysis required each interview to be transcribed verbatim using Microsoft Word to ensure accuracy and reliability. The transcription service was useful for researchers conducting qualitative interviews who required accurate and streamlined transcription support (Microsoft Corporation, n.d.). To do so, collected audio data files were organized as an MP4 file and saved on the researcher's laptop for transcription into a Word Document for coding.

I used a coding mechanism table for my data analysis that helped generate patterns, categories, and that became emerging themes. Data triangulation points were my literature review, my reflexive journal, and the findings of my study during thorough data analysis. Data collection coding aligned with my literature review by incorporating each of the three methods of coding for data analysis. Saldaña (2021) mentioned that generating initial codes was done by identifying key phrases of words and assigning labels and categories to the phrases or words.

This study employed an interactive coding strategy for data analysis, beginning with broad categories and then refining the coding strategy into more specific codes as a part of the process. Ravitch and Carl (2016) recommended that the In-Vivo coding method be utilized, relying on participants' exact words to label data, rather than researcher-generated phrases. However, I only coded participant member-checked transcripts to find categories that became patterns and that revealed emerging themes.

Emotion coding was based on Virginia Democratic African American women's emotions, such as happy, annoyed, disgusted, and empathy regarding the ERI, during the 2024 presidential election. Verbal exchange coding was based on authentic narrative

qualitative reflections that conveyed reasons for and type of digital civic engagement that influenced involvement from Virginia Democratic African American female study participants during the 2024 presidential election. Domain and taxonomic coding were based on categories that reveal individual sentiments and indications of culture-based influences that resulted in Virginia Democratic African American women's civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election.

Once the first cycle of the coding process was complete, I applied the second cycle of coding, which reorganized data to determine patterns that were categorized during analysis. Saldaña (2009) established that a compilation of qualitative data from secondary coding demonstrated patterns and categories that ultimately revealed emerging themes. When theme detection was evident, there may be certain discrepancies worth reviewing. Discrepant cases are displayed and discussed in Chapter 4.

During data analysis, I used data triangulation to confirm and disconfirm my participant responses. The concept of data triangulation involves using multiple data sources to identify and address inconsistencies (Lincoln & Guba, 1982; Shenton, 2004). To this end, I used my study's literature review and reflexive journal as data points and my methods of data triangulation. I used NVivo for assistance with theme detection and word cloud generation.

Issues With Trustworthiness

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1982) emphasized the importance of trustworthiness, dependability, transferability, credibility, and confirmability in qualitative research that ensured the rigor and reliability of data. My study defined dependability, transferability,

credibility, and confirmability as each related to data collection. Credibility, as described by Shenton (2004), involved an accurate representation of what occurred in the field of research. My study's internal validity was credible by employing data triangulation, member-checking, peer debriefing, and field note observations.

Transferability

My study was transferable by collecting thick, rich perspectives of African American women civically engaged. Ravitch and Carl (2016) discerned that reliability was maintained from the outset and throughout a study when the stability of participant responses validated data consistency. By using data triangulation and member-checking, I ensured the reliability of my study's data collection. My study's transferability added to the body of knowledge for future research that include civic engagement and influence of African American women.

Dependability

Using Lark Suite (2025) modified instrumentation, this study's results served as the basis of the sample generalizations as transferability to other participants in future replicated studies. With my participants' honest responses, my study was dependable. Korstjens and Moser (2018) acknowledged that dependability ensured consistency and confirmability, which emphasized researcher neutrality, were prioritized.

To achieve data collection transparency, member-checking was the audit trail that maintained the integrity of how data were collected and interpreted. Lincoln and Guba (1982) implied that dependability was integral to establishing trustworthiness because both were required for accuracy and consistency to be present within a study's execution. Therefore, my study was dependable.

Confirmability

Rubin and Rubin (2012) established that confirmability was present when researchers reported research findings in a transparent manner that allowed the audience to understand the process of collecting and analyzing the data. I applied coding, pattern, and theme detection during data analysis in ways that affirmed both dependability and confirmability. I documented confirmability based on my participants' perceptions and allowed participants to verify individual responses that outline personal contributions to my study. Using my reflexive journal was also used to determine confirmability. I ensured that my research findings were reliable and unbiased.

Ethical Procedures

My participants received a formal invitation to participate in my study as directed by Walden University IRB. My IRB approval number was displayed to demonstrate formal acceptance of my data collection process. Online platform participants received an invitation to participate in my in-depth interviews, which did not require any partnership agreement.

Alternatively, participants recruited using the snowball sampling method were invited to participate and provided a consent form. Ethical concerns regarding data collection were addressed during the recruitment of participants for my study. Ethical concerns were addressed by ensuring that no social, emotional, or physical harm would occur to my participants during the interview process, as conveyed in the formal invitation.

Also, my informed consent form entailed that participation was voluntary, and participants may quit participating at any time. The consent form explained that no

participant descriptions would be reported in my study regarding the personal identifications of Virginia Democratic African American workers/volunteers. As for the protection of confidential data, the hard data that consists of printed transcripts would be secured in a locked box for 5 years, then destroyed. Soft data were be archived into an MP4 file and saved on my laptop for transcription that was then be saved into a Word Document. During the 5-year period, soft copies of the digital consent forms, audio recordings, video files, and hard copies of field notes will be kept secure using a data-encrypted flash drive and in a locked box for safekeeping.

There was no financial compensation for any participants in the study. However, in the event that I have in-person in-depth interviews, lunch may be provided. Otherwise, voluntary participants interviewed over the phone or online were not compensated for the time spent with the researcher.

Summary

Chapter 3 discussed the role of the researcher, rationale, methodology, participant logic, procedures for pilot studies, instrumentation, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical considerations of my study. Chapter 3 was used as a step-by-step guide for data collection, as approved and directed by Walden University's IRB. Chapter 4 displays my study's results based on the data collection of my respondents.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of my study was to explore the influences responsible for African American women's civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election. Knowing what influenced African American civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election was essential content that added to the body of knowledge. My study's research question answers provided authentic context from the narratives of Virginia democratic African American civically engaged women. This chapter presents the findings from the qualitative interviews conducted with ten African American women affiliated with the Virginia Democratic Party. Data were analyzed using three qualitative coding approaches known as emotion coding, verbal exchange coding, and domain & taxonomic coding that explored influences on civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election.

The findings were organized thematically and aligned with the two research questions guiding the study. (RQ1) In what ways, if any, do digital platforms influence civic engagement among Virginia Democratic African American women in the 2024 presidential election? (RQ2) What type of influences, if any, impact Virginia Democratic African American women's civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election?

Chapter 4 discussed the purpose of the study, research questions, conduct of the pilot study, setting, participant demographics, and characteristics relevant to the study, and data collection procedures. The chapter then outlined the data analysis process and described the measures taken to ensure trustworthiness. The final section discussed the study's findings (results) and summary that led to Chapter 5.

Pilot Study

I conducted a pilot study for instrument construct validity. Per Walden policy, a pilot study was conducted with 3 participants who were considered friends to assess the clarity of the interview questions and the functionality of the data collection tools. Based on participant feedback, minor modifications were made to the interview protocol, including rephrasing three questions for clarity for the main study. Other modifications included verbiage that aligned with my study's conceptual theoretical framework, the influences of civic engagement. The pilot also helped to determine the time needed for each interview, so the study's consent form provided an accurate estimate of the study's time commitment for participation.

Setting

The political climate during data collection of my study impacted African American in federal leadership roles. Pro Publica (2025) reported that in February 2020, President Donald Trump's first education secretary issued a memo to employees emphasizing the department's policy. The memo highlighted:

> …to ensure that diversity, inclusiveness, and respect are integral parts of our day-to-day management and work." Diversity and inclusion are the cornerstone of high organizational performance," Betsy DeVos continued, adding that "all people were welcome in the Department of Education." The memo ended with "a call for employees to "actively embrace" principles of diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI. (Pro Publica, 2025)

That presidential memo had positive connotations like diversity, equity, and inclusion. Pro Publica (2025) admitted that 5 years later, as Trump entered office a

second time, his administration's tune on DEI had changed. The current administration issued the following statement:

> Illegal DEI and DEIA policies not only violate the text and spirit of our longstanding Federal civil-rights laws, they also undermine our national unity, as they deny, discredit, and undermine the traditional American values of hard work, excellence, and individual achievement in favor of an unlawful, corrosive, and pernicious identity-based spoils system. (The White House, 2025)

Given the climate of the current administration, participant responses may be skewed with fear of reprisal. With this in mind, all 10 participants voluntarily participated in my study and responses appeared to be honest and forthcoming. Data collection was conducted in an efficient manner.

Data were collected and recorded through interviews conducted virtually via Zoom. Each participant's video and audio recording were stored on a personal cloud drive. Interviews lasted 30–45 minutes and were transcribed verbatim using Microsoft Word to ensure accuracy and consistency in analysis. This study was conducted 8 months after the U.S. presidential elections of 2024, where an African American female candidate, who was currently serving as vice president, lost the election.

Demographics

My study's demographics were established. The study included a total of 10 participants. Table 2 summarizes key demographic characteristics. Table 2 described civic engagement roles as paid (2), volunteer (8); years of experience 0-10 (7), 10-20 (1), declined to state (dts) (2); highest education associate (1), bachelor's (1), master's (6), doctoral (2); gender female (10); race African American (10); generational age baby

boomer (2), Generation X (7), millennial (1). These demographics provided a diverse and contextually relevant sample to explore the research questions thoroughly.

Table 2

Participant Demographics

Participants Numbers	Paid / Volunteer	Generational Age	Race	Gender	Highest Education	Years in Role
Participant 1	Volunteer	Gen X	African American	Female	Doctoral	3
Participant 2	Volunteer	Gen X	African American	Female	Master's	1.5
Participant 3	Volunteer	Baby Boomer	African American	Female	Associate	12-17
Participant 4	Paid	Baby Boomer	African American	Female	Master's	0-5
Participant 5	Paid	Gen X	African American	Female	Bachelor's	0-5
Participant 6	Paid	Gen X	African American	Female	Master's	0-5
Participant 7	Volunteer	Gen X	African American	Female	Doctoral	0-5
Participant 8	Volunteer	Gen X	African American	Female	Master's	0-5
Participant 9	Volunteer	Millennial	African American	Female	Master's	DTS
Participant 10	Volunteer	Gen X	African American	Female	Master's	DTS

Data Collection

Data were collected from 10 participants. The location of my interviews was conducted in the privacy of the researcher's place of residence. Interviews were done virtually using Zoom and links were sent to participants the day before and again several minutes prior to the interview. The frequency of interviews was as follows: two participants for Week 1, and eight participants for Week 2. Week 3 of data collection was reserved for member checking where participants abided by the 5-day review requested by the researcher to complete data analysis.

Participant interviews were conducted over 2 weeks at various times of the day selected by the participants from time slots set up through my private Google calendar. In addition to the Zoom built-in recording software, I used a personal audio recorder to

record each interview. Each session lasted approximately 30–45 minutes. Video and audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and securely stored.

No significant variations occurred in data collection from the plan detailed in Chapter 3. Therefore, there were no unusual circumstances encountered in data collection. Next, there will be an overview of the data analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with participant coding analysis. My study also focused on participants' digital civic activities during the 2024 presidential election. Table 3 demonstrates participants digital civic engagement activity. Years as a Democrat was 18-25 years (3), 26-above years (7); digital platforms were Bluesky (2), Facebook (10), GroupMe (2), Instagram (8), LinkedIn (4), Nextdoor (1), Pinterest (1), Reddit (2), Signal (1), Sirius (1), Spotify (1), Substack (1), Threads (1), Tik Tok (3), WhatsApp (1), X (Twitter) (1), YouTube (1), and Zoom (1); civic engagement daily frequency were 0-5 times/day (1), 6-11 times/day (2), 12-17 times/day (2), 18-25 times/day (1), and 26-above (3).

Table 3

Participant Digital Civic Engagement Activity

Years as a Democrat		Digital platforms		Civic engagement frequency	
18-25	3	Bluesky	2	0-5 times/day	1
26-above	7	Facebook	10	6-11 times/day	2
		GroupMe	2	12-17 times/day	2
		Instagram	8	18-25 times/day	1
		LinkedIn	4	26-above times/day	3
		Nextdoor	1		
		Pinterest	1		
		Reddit	2		
		Signal	1		
		Sirius	1		
		Spotify	1		
		Substack	1		
		Threads	2		
		TikTok	3		
		WhatsApp	1		
		X (Twitter)	1		
		YouTube	1		
		Zoom	1		

Data analysis began with a multitiered coding process based on the coding table identified in Table 1. Transcripts were first coded line-by-line using hand coding and I used NVivo for assistance with theme detection and word cloud generation. Codes were then grouped into broader categories, which were further refined into emergent themes.

Figures 2–4 summarize the three-tiered coding approach. The emotion coding represented the range of emotions experienced by participants regarding the 2024 presidential election. Figure 2 alludes to the positive and negative emotion coding based on Virginia Democratic African American women's emotions. There were instances of hope (8), pride (6), empathy (5), frustration (7), and exhaustion (6) that reflect the ERI among all participants.

Figure 2

Emotion Theme Frequency Bar Graph

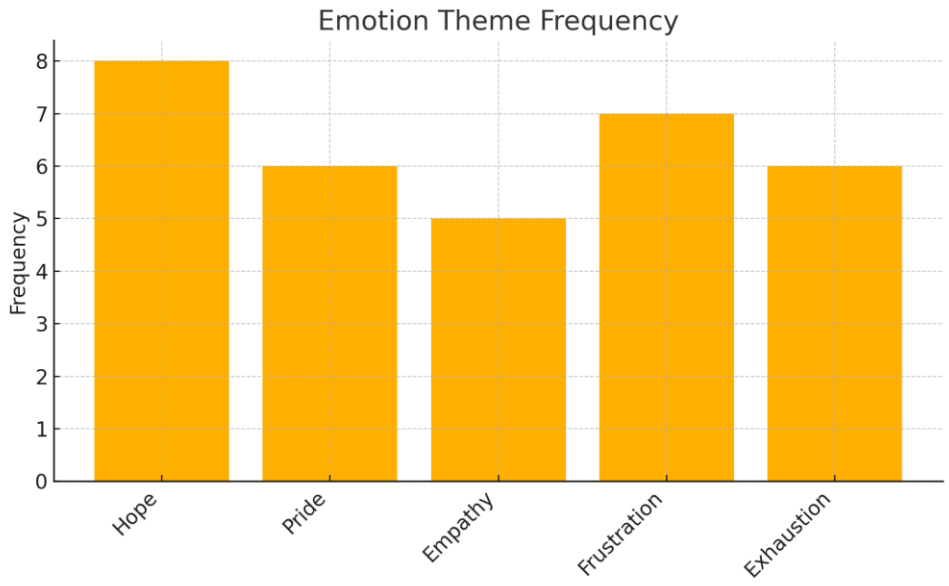


Figure 3 demonstrates the magnitude of civic engagement as it related to verbal exchanges. Verbal exchange coding was based on authentic participant narrative qualitative reflections that conveyed three sole reasons for and type of digital civic engagement that influenced involvement. Response occurrences of digital civic engagement from Virginia Democratic African American women ranged from *active digital organizing* (5), to *passive observing* (3), to *digital disengagement* (4).

Figure 3

Verbal Exchange Theme Frequency Bar Graph

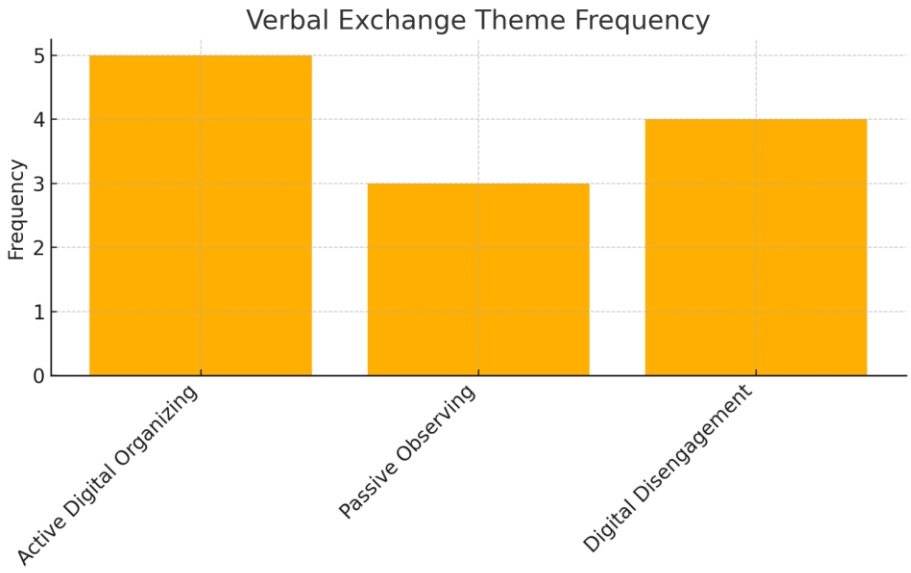
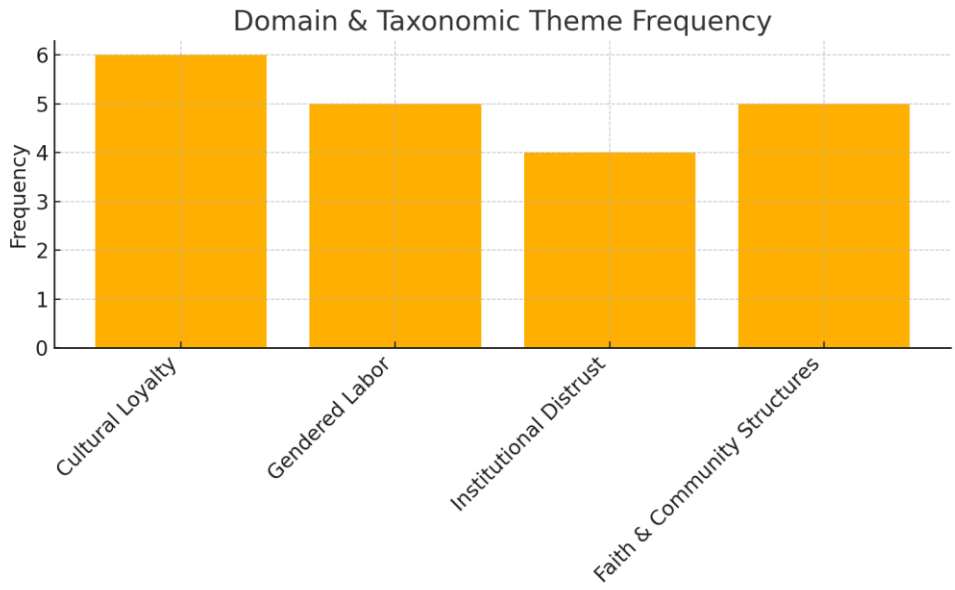


Figure 4 represents the final coding of the domain and taxonomic coding. Codes were based on participant sentiments and indications of personal reasons for civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election. There were four reasons revealed as *race-based cultural loyalty* (6), *gender labor* (5), *institutional distrust* (4), and *faith-based and community structures* (5).

Figure 4

Domain and Taxonomic Frequency Bar Graph



Once the first cycle of the coding process was complete, I applied the second cycle of coding, which reorganized data to determine patterns that were categorized during analysis. I used data triangulation to confirm and disconfirm my participant responses. To this end, I used my study's literature review and reflexive journal as data points and my methods of data triangulation.

Thematic analysis revealed the following major themes as seen in Figures 2–4, using qualitative coding across 10 interviews using emotion coding, verbal exchange coding, and domain & taxonomic coding. The synthesis addressed the two core research questions on the influence of digital platforms and broader motivations on civic engagement by African American women in Virginia during the 2024 presidential election. Despite having many participants sharing common themes, a few provided alternate perspectives that were identified as discrepant cases.

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant cases were evident among participant responses. Some participant narratives deviated from dominant patterns. While the majority of participants aligned with the dominant themes, several cases offered alternative perspectives. Participant P3 maintained an emotionally neutral stance, stating that her civic engagement was consistent but detached. Participant P6 avoided social media due to ethical concerns but continued civic involvement through offline avenues. Participant P10, after years of high-level engagement, withdrew due to feelings of exploitation and invisibility. These cases do not contradict the central findings but rather enrich them by revealing edge conditions. By following my data collection steps from Chapter 3, my study's credibility and confirmability represented the evidence of trustworthiness**.**

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility was enhanced by employing data triangulation and member checking. Credibility, as described by Shenton (2004), involved an accurate representation of what occurred in the field of research. Consistent with Chapter 3, participants were given the opportunity to review transcripts and validate interpretations within 5 days and then return to me with any corrections or clarifications. Minor clarifications were made as a result of their feedback. Additionally, my study had evidence of transferability.

Transferability

My study was transferable by collecting thick, rich perspectives of African American women civically engaged. Ravitch and Carl (2016) discerned that reliability was maintained from the outset and throughout a study when the stability of participant

responses validated data consistency. As described in Chapter 3, I used data triangulation and member-checking and ensured the reliability of my study's data collection. My study's transferability added to the body of knowledge for future research that include civic engagement and influence of African American women.

Dependability

Using Lark Suite (2025) modified instrumentation, this study's results served as the basis of the sample generalizations as transferability to other participants in future replicated studies. Since I conducted the pilot study that established instrument construct validity, my participants' honest responses were collected and together those factors ensured that my study was dependable. Korstjens and Moser (2018) acknowledged that dependability ensured consistency and confirmability, which emphasized researcher neutrality, were prioritized. As described in Chapter 3, to achieve data collection transparency, member-checking was the audit trail that maintained the integrity of how data were collected and interpreted. Lincoln and Guba (1982) implied that dependability was integral to establishing trustworthiness because both were required for accuracy and consistency to be present within a study's execution. Therefore, my study was dependable.

Confirmability

Reflexive journaling was used to minimize researcher bias and enhance the objectivity of the findings. Rubin and Rubin (2012) established that confirmability was present when researchers reported research findings in a transparent manner. Confirmability allowed the audience to understand the process of collecting and analyzing the data. Raw data and coding matrices were retained for verification As

described in Chapter 3; I used my reflexive journal in ways that determined confirmability.

I applied coding, pattern, and theme detection during data analysis in ways that affirmed both dependability and confirmability. I documented confirmability based on my participants' perceptions and allowed participants to verify individual responses that outline personal contributions to my study. I ensured that my research findings were reliable and unbiased.

Results

Chapter 4 presented the results of the study. Both research questions were sufficiently addressed from participant response themes. RQ1 and RQ2 participant quotes were also included in ways that substantiated content that added to the body of knowledge. Participant results explored and highlighted the intersectional nature of African American women's civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election.

Research Question 1

The first research question that guided my study focused on digital platform influences. (RQ1) In what ways, if any, do digital platforms influence civic engagement among Virginia Democratic African American women in the 2024 presidential elections? There were three emerging themes associated with the first research question.

Theme 1: Digital Platforms as Amplifiers, Not Primary Drivers

Participants described digital platforms not as primary motivators of civic engagement but as tools that enhanced the impact of already trusted networks. Social media messages from peer organizations such as the NAACP, Win With Black Women (WWBW), and the Black Women's Roundtable were particularly influential. For

instance, one volunteer (P2) shared, “If it came from a sister in WWBW, I knew it was worth my time.” Paid staff echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the use of platforms for maintaining communication rather than persuasion. As P5 explained, “We used Facebook Live not to convince people to join but to keep our base informed.”

Gendered patterns emerged, with women favoring platforms that affirmed cultural identity and emotional safety. Older participants viewed digital tools as extensions of offline organizing, with less enthusiasm for newer platforms perceived as less aligned with their organizing goals. Older participants also spent more time online on the preferred platforms Facebook and Instagram. The second theme was related to digital platform avoidances and preferences.

Theme 2: Avoidance and Platform Preferences

Participants expressed deliberate choices in digital platform use. Facebook was widely used for organizing and sharing political information, while Instagram served as a celebratory and visual space. As one volunteer noted, “Instagram was where we celebrated wins and showed our unity. Facebook was where the real organizing happened” (P4). In contrast, TikTok was often dismissed as irrelevant or distracting, particularly by staff such as P7, who said, “TikTok’s not where our base is—it’s more noise than strategy.”

The preference for certain platforms was shaped by participants’ desire for emotional safety and culturally affirming interactions. Younger participants were more open to experimenting with platforms like Instagram, while older participants stuck to familiar and purpose-driven digital environments like Facebook and Zoom. Reluctance

for some digital platforms was shared during interviews. The last theme was established with the mention of digital boundaries and safety.

Theme 3: Digital Boundaries and Safety

Some participants expressed reluctance or refusal to engage on digital platforms due to concerns about professional ethics and privacy. One volunteer, P6, noted, “I avoid social media because of privacy and professional ethics. My political work stays offline.” While no paid staff reported full digital disengagement, several indicated that safety concerns influenced their decisions around online visibility.

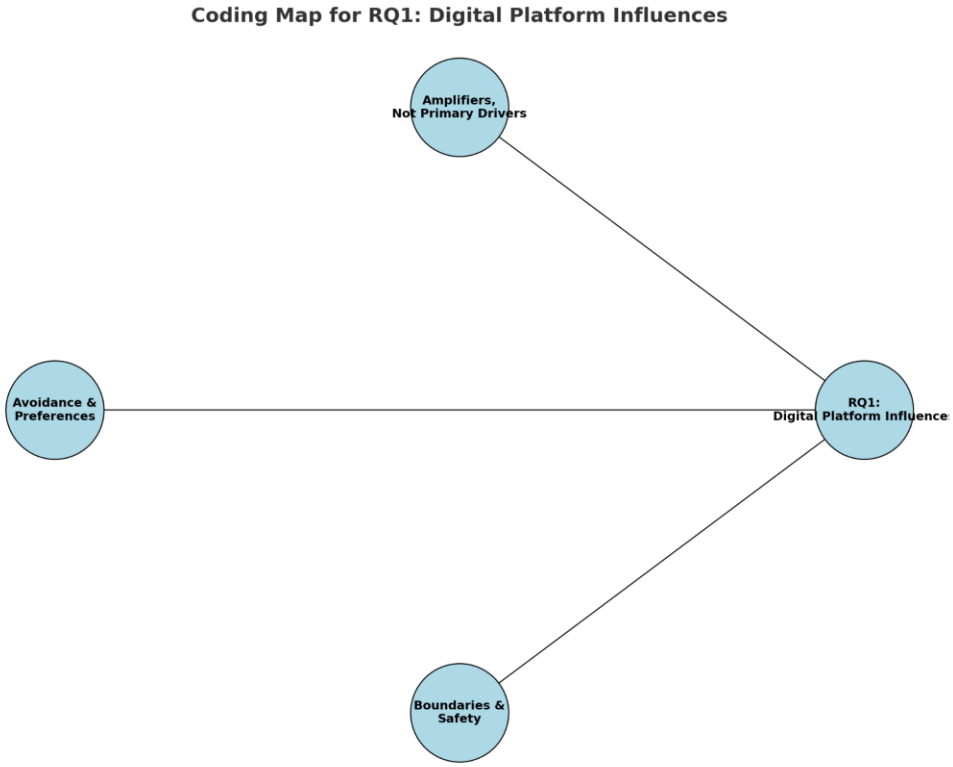
These boundaries reflected broader patterns in which older participants and those in professional roles reported stronger reservations about public political expression online. The intersection of race and gender further intensified concerns about exposure to harassment or misrepresentation in digital spaces. Offline engagement provided more insight into participants’ civic engagement behavior.

Figure 5 illustrated how participants’ themed responses answered the first research question. Digital platforms amplified existing civic networks rather than initiating engagement. Facebook and Instagram served as trusted spaces for organizing and celebrating community.

Messages from peer organizations enhanced credibility and motivated participation. Older women emphasized familiar, purpose-driven platforms for political activity. Platforms maintained communication flow, sustaining engagement without acting as primary motivators.

Figure 5

Coding Map for RQ1: Digital Platform Influences



Research Question 2

My study's second research question was based on African American civic engagement and engagement influences regarding the 2024 presidential election. (RQ2) What type of influences, if any, impact Virginia Democratic African American women's civic engagement in the 2024 presidential elections? There were four emerging themes associated with the second research question.

Theme 1: Emotional Constraints and Motivations

Civic engagement was shaped by a range of emotions, including hope, pride, frustration, and fatigue. Participants reported that emotional highs were associated with community victories, being seen, and valued. However, emotional lows were often

triggered by invisibility and burnout. A volunteer described this tension succinctly: “It’s exhausting to give so much and feel unseen” (P8). For paid staff, emotional exhaustion was often the result of online hostility. P1 shared, “The trolling was relentless; it wears you down.” These emotional burdens reflected the broader theme of gendered emotional labor. Some participants stated they avoided civic engagement activity, preferring to disengage.

Theme 2: Disengagement and Withdrawal

Despite deep cultural and political investment, some participants chose to disengage due to sustained emotional exhaustion and political party neglect. P10, a volunteer, described this experience: “I felt used and unseen. Years of work, and they never acknowledged us. I had to walk away.” Civic disengagement was recorded as personal slights experienced by participants. However, motivations for civic engagement were rooted in cultural and faith-based causes.

Theme 3: Cultural and Faith-Based Anchors

Faith institutions, sororities, and cultural organizations provided grounding and mobilization infrastructure. P3 stated: “My church sisters kept me grounded—we pray together, we vote together.” P9 described her sorority as “our mobilization machine.” These organizations also acted as culturally affirming and women-led environments where participants felt safe and valued. Some participants even drew parallels between their civic labor and historical exploitation. P3 shared, “Sometimes it felt like modern-day slavery, the work was endless, and the recognition was nowhere to be found.” Civic engagement was compared to extreme labor without wages under the worst social

conditions in America. On the other hand, civic engagement also aligned with participant self-identification and candidate reliability.

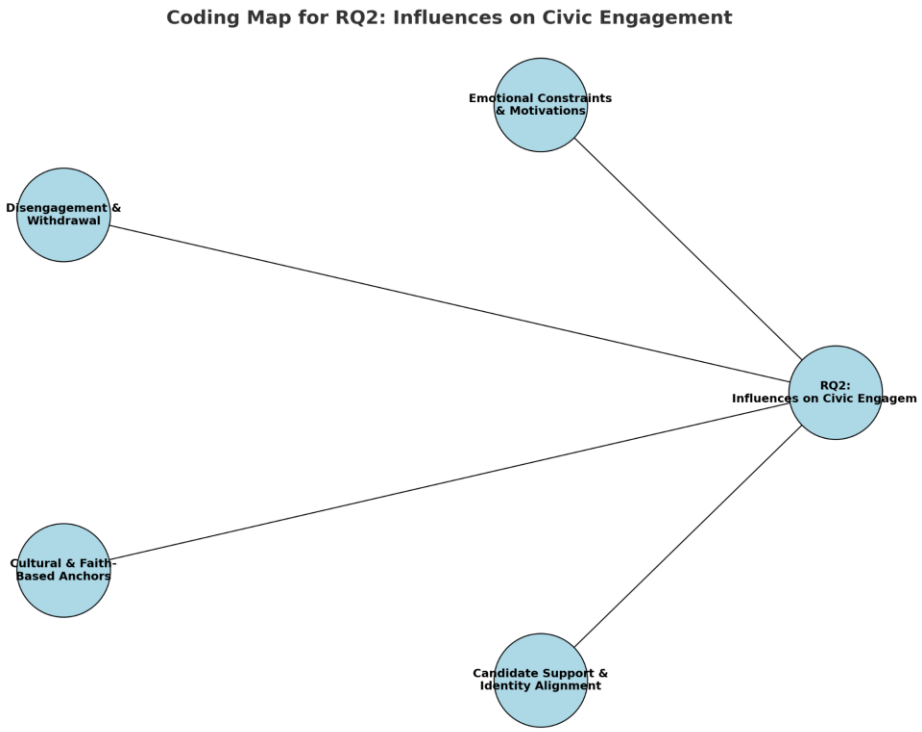
Theme 4: Candidate Support and Identity Alignment

Participants were more engaged when they felt candidates authentically reflected their identities, experiences, and values. Political commitment was driven not merely by party affiliation but by a candidate's perceived cultural and emotional alignment with their communities. P2 stated, "It wasn't just about the party—it was about who truly saw us." Another participant, P9 reflected, "The candidate just so happens to also be a part of the same sorority… it was just simply because of the candidate that was running for president." Paid staff reinforced the importance of this alignment, as P10 explained, "Her views and her commitment… not so much party related — that influenced me to vote and to be involved with the campaign." Personal projection and positive reflection were some influences for civic engagement.

Figure 6 described how participants' themed responses answered the second research question. Trusted peer organizations, like WWBW and NAACP, strongly influenced participation. Cultural affirmation and emotional safety shaped platform preferences. Generational differences guided openness to newer tools versus traditional spaces. Privacy, professional ethics, and safety concerns created digital boundaries. Offline networks and identity-affirming spaces reinforced civic commitment beyond online activity.

Figure 6

Coding Map for RQ2: Influences on Civic Engagement



Participant data adequately responded to both of my study's research questions. Participant themes were described as a compilation of similar responses. Although seven themes were defined, my study was not without its share of discrepant cases.

Discrepant Cases and Nonconforming Data

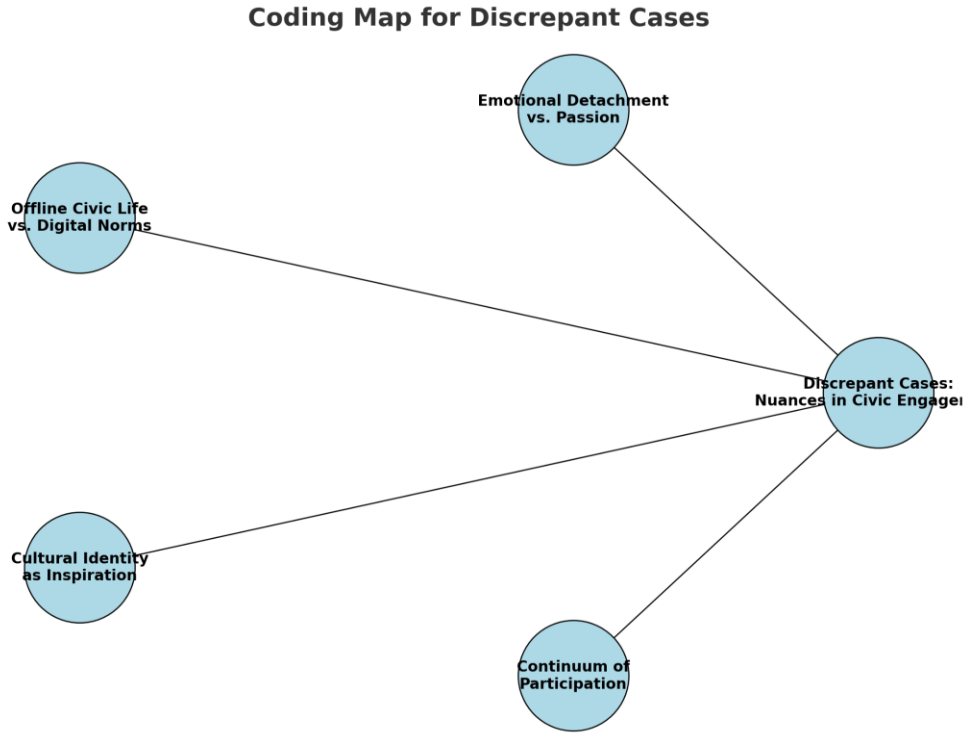
Discrepant cases were essential to my study's data collection. Emotional detachment existed alongside passion and burnout, offline civic life remained vital despite growing digital norms, and cultural identity inspired engagement. Discrepant cases illustrated that civic participation exists on a continuum, from passionate activism to emotionally detached engagement. Discrepant case anomalies, or nonconforming data, highlighted the continued relevance of offline organizing despite digital norms.

Discrepant cases added nuance to the findings and provided insight into the variability of participant experiences.

Figure 7 displayed the coding map for discrepant cases in civic engagement. This diagram illustrates the discrepant cases that added nuance to the study's findings on civic engagement. It shows how participants' experiences ranged from emotional detachment versus passion. Another discrepancy referred to reliance on offline civic life despite digital norms. The role of cultural identity as inspiration did not conform to the majority of responses regarding the motivation for civic engagement. These discrepant cases and nonconforming data demonstrated that civic engagement existed on a continuum of participation which added to the body of knowledge.

Figure 7

Coding Map for Discrepant Cases in Civic Engagement



Summary

Chapter 4 presented the findings of the study that explored the influences responsible for African American women's civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election. The results, structured by research questions and emergent themes, indicated that participants expressed a range of emotions connected to their civic engagement. While many felt hope, pride, and a sense of purpose, others reported frustration, burnout, and emotional fatigue.

I noticed strong emotions, especially when outcomes did not reflect participant efforts or when facing racial and gendered online barriers. Civic participation ranged from active digital organizing (e.g., Facebook Live, Zoom, Instagram) to passive content sharing and digital silence. Constraints such as job visibility, emotional safety, and online hostility shaped most of these behaviors. Facebook and Instagram were the preferred platforms, while TikTok was generally avoided.

Deep connections to faith institutions, sororities, and community groups served as powerful motivators for civic engagement activity. Cultural loyalty, collective identity, and peer accountability sustained both online and offline civic behaviors. Conversely, emotional labor, gendered expectations, and lack of political party recognition led to disengagement.

The following thematic trends were derived across 10 interviews. The data aligned with the two research questions, framework, and literature. Chapter 5 will interpret these findings in more detail in relation to the existing literature, discuss their implications, and provide recommendations for practice, policy, and future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study explored the factors that influenced civic engagement among African American women during the 2024 U.S. presidential election. The nature of my study was based on the Lark Suite (2025) community engagement interview questions. The interview questions were modified to capture data as it related to the Virginia Democratic African American civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election. To this end, interviews were conducted with 10 participants, at which point data saturation was achieved.

Understanding the influences and motivations that shaped participants' political participation contributed meaningfully to the broader scholarly discourse on civic engagement, race, and digital political behavior. Chapter 5 presented a synthesis of the study's major findings while interpreting them in light of existing literature and theoretical frameworks. Recommendations for future research and practical applications for political organizers, advocacy groups, organizations, and scholars were shared to further research knowledge in this area.

The analysis uncovered a trifold of themes across interconnected dimensions: emotional experiences, patterns of engagement behavior, and deeper motivational or cultural underpinnings. Participants' motivations with digital civic engagement were complex marked by both empowerment and emotional fatigue. These experiences were strongly informed by identity, sociopolitical context, and social roles.

Participants reported a spectrum of emotional responses, ranging from pride and hope to frustration and burnout. Those embedded in civic and cultural institutions such as

historically Black sororities, churches, and advocacy organizations tended to express pride, resolve, and a sense of collective mission. In contrast, emotional exhaustion and disillusionment were common among those who encountered misinformation online, felt politically marginalized, or struggled with competing personal and professional obligations.

Civic engagement behaviors varied across participants. Some identified as Active Engagers (e.g., P1, P4, P7), were at the forefront of digital activism, utilizing tools such as live video, Zoom calls, and social media campaigns to mobilize their communities. Others categorized as Passive or Observational Participants (e.g., P3, P9, P10) were more reserved in their engagement due to burnout, fear of professional backlash, or emotional strain. Facebook and Instagram were the most frequently used platforms, with TikTok rarely utilized due to concerns over misinformation and safety.

Cultural loyalty and identity-based affiliations emerged as critical influences on civic behavior. Participants grounded in shared cultural experiences particularly through Black women's networks, sororities, and faith-based communities demonstrated higher levels of consistent engagement both online and offline. However, signs of political exhaustion were evident among participants who invested heavily in the election but perceived a lack of institutional appreciation or tangible outcomes (e.g., P6, P9, P10). Gendered challenges, including the burden of emotional labor and workplace constraints, also shaped civic participation.

Interpretation of the Findings

Discussion of RQ 1

In response to RQ1 “In what ways, if any, do digital platforms influence civic engagement among Virginia Democratic African American women in the 2024 presidential election?” The study confirmed that digital platforms such as Facebook and Instagram served as amplifiers of existing motivation rather than initiators of political action. While digital tools were pivotal in visibility and outreach, RQ1 findings demonstrate that civic action often began offline or through relational networks.

Social media tools enhanced outreach, awareness, and event coordination, but effective mobilization occurred most frequently when embedded in trusted networks, such as the NAACP, historically Black sororities, Win With Black Women, the Black Women’s Roundtable, and the Democratic Party of Virginia. The platforms themselves did not spark civic action; instead, they amplified existing commitments and relationships.

Discussion of RQ 2

In response to RQ2 “What types of perceptions and influences, if any, impact Virginia Democratic African American women’s civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election?” the study revealed a complex interplay of motivating and inhibiting factors. Key motivators included cultural identity, religious leadership, sisterhood, and representation among political candidates. Conversely, engagement was often hindered by online misinformation, racialized hostility in digital spaces, emotional fatigue, and a perceived lack of institutional recognition. Notably, organizational

affiliation emerged as a strong predictor of sustained engagement across both digital and in-person contexts.

The findings of this study broadly align with and extend existing literature on civic engagement among African American women in the context of digital platforms and cultural identity. Participants' civic behaviors varied: some were active digital organizers, while others passively shared or observed due to professional, emotional, or privacy-related constraints. Most preferred Facebook and Instagram; TikTok and Twitter were rarely used, reflecting safety and misinformation concerns. These behavioral patterns reinforce that digital engagement is complex and contextually shaped. RQ2 further showed how religious values, misinformation, and organizational leadership shaped political attitudes and behaviors.

Alignment With Existing Literature

The findings of this study broadly align with and extend existing literature on civic engagement among African American women in the context of digital platforms and cultural identity. The emotional landscape of participants' civic engagement revealed a range of sentiments from hope and pride to burnout and frustration. This constellation of emotions reflects and expands upon Ge et al.'s (2021) ERI model, which describes how sustained effort with insufficient reward fosters emotional fatigue. In this study, participants reported such fatigue when electoral outcomes or political recognition failed to meet expectations, mirroring Chance's (2022) research on the gendered burdens placed on Black women.

Participants' civic behaviors varied: some were active digital organizers, while others passively shared or observed due to professional, emotional, or privacy-related

constraints. Most preferred Facebook and Instagram; TikTok and Twitter were rarely used, reflecting safety and misinformation concerns. These behavioral patterns reinforce that digital engagement is complex and contextually shaped.

Cultural loyalty, organizational ties, and gendered experiences strongly influenced civic engagement decisions. The findings support Ajaps & Obiagu (2021) and Chapman-Hillard et al. (2023), who asserted that intersectional identity and community connection drive civic behavior. The burdens of emotional labor and systemic exclusion also resonated, showing the limits of engagement sustainability without institutional recognition or support.

Participants were most responsive when engagement came through trusted networks such as the NAACP, Black Women's Roundtable, or faith-based groups, affirming the DPI theories advanced by Rachmad (2023) and Nelson et al. (2017). This finding nuances the notion of platforms as inherently mobilizing tools by showing their effect was mediated by existing social trust and offline organizational roots. These findings also support Boulianne's (2018) and Howard's (2006) concerns that digital engagement does not always translate into policy responsiveness or institutional visibility.

Connection to Conceptual Frameworks

This study validates and extends multiple theoretical models. First, the DPI theory was confirmed, as civic actions were more likely to emerge when participants were engaged through trusted digital networks rooted in offline communities. Platforms alone did not mobilize action; rather, engagement hinged on preexisting interpersonal trust and cultural connection. Second, the ERI model (Ge et al., 2021) was supported by findings

of burnout, especially when participants' civic contributions did not yield tangible results. This suggests emotional disillusionment as a key barrier to sustained engagement. Finally, intersectionality emerged as a foundational lens for interpreting participant experiences. Chapman-Hillard et al. (2023) and Ajaps & Obiagu (2021) frameworks align with the ways race, gender, cultural heritage, and faith intersect in shaping civic motivation and barriers.

Insights From Data Collection and Interviews

Interview data enriched the understanding of how digital civic engagement is experienced personally and collectively. Participants frequently highlighted the role of offline relationships in sustaining their motivation, with many political involvements tracing to family upbringing, church leadership, sororities, or local grassroots groups. Religious values and misinformation were central themes raised during interviews, often cited as either reinforcing civic motivation or generating skepticism. Participants expressed a preference for platforms perceived as safer and more community-oriented, such as Facebook and Instagram. TikTok and Twitter were associated with risk, misinformation, or political hostility.

The data revealed that although digital tools expanded reach, civic action typically originated offline or within relational contexts. Participants described emotional investments, but also a lack of institutional recognition, reinforcing the notion that digital activism often remains invisible to power structures. As supported by Boulianne (2018) and Howard (2006), the gap between online engagement and political influence persists. This study confirms the relevance of DPI theory, validates emotional burnout through the ERI model, and affirms the role of intersectionality in shaping civic engagement.

However, it also reveals limitations, especially where cultural loyalty fails to offset emotional disillusionment and digital participation lacks institutional acknowledgment.

Unintended Findings

Generationally, civic disengagement was most prevalent among elder, or seasoned, participants who had contributed for decades. While seasoned participants emphasized the importance of church networks, younger participants leaned more on sorority affiliations and peer-driven organizing structures. This narrative underscored how the emotional and practical toll of civic engagement often echoed longstanding patterns of unrecognized labor in Black women's political history. Younger participants emphasized shared identity, while more seasoned participants prioritized policy alignment and historical trust. This theme illustrated the limits of cultural loyalty. Although strong, the emotional demands and gendered expectations placed on the female participants ultimately led some to step back. When appreciation and tangible support were absent, it led some participants to feel unseen and unrewarded, supporting the effort reward imbalance theory.

Limitations of the Study

The first limitation was the modified use of the Lark Suite engagement instrument. The second limitation was the use of an authentic narrative research design, which was best suited for my study. The third limitation was the use of the DPI theoretical framework to align with the purposes of my study. Even with limitations, my study's findings added to the current body of knowledge regarding influences responsible for African American civic engagement in the 2024 presidential election. Despite this study's methodological rigor and relevance, several limitations to trustworthiness

emerged during the research execution. These limitations do not negate the study's value, but they define its interpretive boundaries and highlight areas for refinement in future research.

Lark Suite, a digital collaboration and communication tool, was modified from its original design to explore digital platforms' influence on civic engagement. While this offered flexibility and accessibility, it may have influenced participant responses or constrained spontaneity in expression due to its structured digital format. This may affect the authenticity of emotional immediacy and informal engagement behaviors. The study employed an authentic narrative inquiry framework appropriate for capturing the lived experiences and emotional contours of African American women's civic engagement.

However, the narrative design inherently emphasizes subjectivity and personal meaning-making over generalizability. While this approach yielded thick, rich data, it may limit broader applicability across other populations or contexts. The DPI framework provided a valuable lens for examining how trusted networks shaped participants' online engagement. Consequently, relying solely on this framework may have constrained interpretive scope by prioritizing social amplification while underrepresenting structural or institutional dynamics. As a researcher sharing cultural or gender identity with participants, rapport was enhanced.

This may introduce confirmation bias, affect how participants framed their responses to align with perceived expectations, or avoid disclosing disengagement. Despite these limitations, this study contributed meaningfully to understanding African American women's civic engagement during the 2024 presidential election. The findings

provide direction for digital strategy, organizational outreach, and identity-based civic empowerment.

Recommendations

This study contributed unique insight into the civic engagement patterns of African American women affiliated with the Virginia Democratic Party during the 2024 U.S. presidential election. Grounded in authentic narrative accounts and supported by DPI theory, this research revealed rich emotional, cultural, and structural factors that shaped participants' civic behaviors. My study's findings resonate with my conceptual framework because participants' experiences with ERI were acutely described as political work performed without the receipt of appropriate recognition. While the findings offer clarity and nuance, they also point to areas where further research is needed to deepen and diversify our understanding of this important political demographic.

Participant Recommendations

Participant recommendations regarding how to navigate civic engagement in the current climate were very telling. Some participants noted that remaining quiet and expressing support offline as a safe route of civic navigation. A few participants clarified that remaining quiet meant keeping heads low, careful not to attract unwanted political attention.

Several participants recommended the need for providing formal recognition, stipends, or logistical support for community organizers, especially Black women volunteers. Also shared was the need for improving coordination between universities and election boards to ensure students receive ballots and clear guidance. Developing targeted educational campaigns that explain how policy affects daily life, especially for

young and marginalized voters was a recommendation by some of my more seasoned participants. As it related to digital tools, a recommendation was made to use a mix of platforms (Zoom, Signal, YouTube, etc.) to engage diverse digital communities, not just mainstream social media, was insightful.

Political trolling and offline attacks happened to several of the participants, so the recommendation was to strengthen digital moderation and safety protocols in civic forums, especially identity-based ones. Participants also suggested year-round investing in long-term partnerships with grassroots organizations, not just during election seasons. As it related to civic engagement and voter registration, a recommendation was made to simplify these processes and to increase clarity around rules for first-time and out-of-state voters was shared by many participants. Lastly, a recommendation to audit and reform local party structures was suggested as a way to ensure minority voices were meaningfully included and elevated.

Researcher Recommendations

My suggested recommendations requested an exploration between the differences and comparative analysis of civic engagement between rural, suburban, and urban settings. Future recommendations should explore how Black women in Republican-leaning states or battleground states differ in digital civic behaviors. Differences across party lines, especially for independents or politically unaffiliated Black women, may reveal regional and ideological variances not captured in this study. While this study addressed race and gender, future research should explore how class, sexuality, disability, or age intersect with digital civic engagement. Understanding variations in behavior and

barriers among younger, LGBTQ+, or economically precarious Black women will help expand current findings.

This study emphasized digital engagement, but many participants also referenced offline organizing. Future research could examine how digital and physical engagement intersect and compare civic influence and satisfaction between those engaged in hybrid activism and those primarily digital or offline. This study captured reflections specific to the 2024 presidential election. Future recommendations could track engagement across multiple election cycles or use longitudinal interviews to explore whether patterns persist or evolve. Future work could focus on platform-specific civic engagement strategies, such as using TikTok, Threads, or WhatsApp, and how algorithmic structures or platform bias may impact visibility and participation.

Given this study's qualitative approach, future researchers could develop surveys or mixed-methods tools to measure emotional burnout, civic loyalty, or digital risk aversion across larger samples for empirical validation. These recommendations remain grounded in the current study's boundaries while offering clear directions to expand scholarly understanding of African American women's civic engagement. My study's plethora of future recommendations did not exceed my scope of research.

Implications

This study contributes meaningfully to understanding how African American women affiliated with the Virginia Democratic Party engaged civically during the 2024 presidential election, particularly through digital platforms. Findings indicated several potential positive social change levels, each supported by emergent data and literature. Participants described gaining personal confidence and agency through their civic

involvement, especially when using social media tools to educate, organize, or motivate others. This suggests that digital empowerment can enhance political self-efficacy among African American women. Targeted digital training (e.g., on misinformation resistance or livestream advocacy) could further amplify engagement among hesitant users. Strengthening individual digital civic literacy has the potential to sustain engagement beyond elections and contribute to a cycle of peer-to-peer empowerment.

Participants often mentioned intergenerational influence, passing civic values to youth, or learning from elders. Churches, sororities, and civic groups played critical roles in shaping and sustaining this political socialization. Supporting existing culturally embedded civic groups, such as Black women's organizations, can lead to stronger family and community-level civic continuity. Investing in these "civic families" could bolster long-term democratic participation.

Participants affiliated with structured groups (e.g., Sororities, Win With Black Women, NAACP) demonstrated more sustained engagement. However, they also experienced burnout due to overextension and lack of recognition. Civic and political organizations that engage African American women should adopt emotional wellness protocols, acknowledgment strategies, and safe digital policies to protect their most active contributors. Empowering digital ambassadors within these networks while respecting labor boundaries can improve member retention and output.

Empirical Implications

The study adds to a limited body of research documenting how Black women use digital platforms for civic engagement in U.S. swing-state politics. It offers new evidence of Platform preference (Facebook and Instagram), Cultural motivation (faith, sorority,

identity), and Emotional nuance (hope, exhaustion, restraint). These findings affect political campaigns, policy organizers, and digital engagement strategists. Messaging that aligns with culturally affirmed networks is more likely to elicit engagement.

Additionally, care must be taken to reduce emotional and logistical burdens on overextended civic actors, especially Black women, to ensure sustainability of their efforts. Future studies should explore longitudinal digital engagement among African American women beyond election cycles. Campaigns should also invest in community-rooted digital ambassadors to build trust and authenticity. Lastly, emotional wellness strategies should be integrated into organizing structures to mitigate burnout and disillusionment.

Conclusion

Amid digital noise and systemic fatigue, African American women remain architects of democratic change grounded not in algorithms but in identity, purpose, and collective history. African American authentic narratives revealed hope, pride, frustration, and resilience that drive online and offline political behaviors. Digital platforms amplified but did not originate from participants' civic agency. Instead, trusted peer networks, cultural loyalty, and a legacy of community leadership remained the most potent forces that sustained individual political voices. African American women affiliated with the Virginia Democratic Party in the 2024 presidential election demonstrated that civic engagement is not simply a digital trend but a deeply rooted cultural and emotional commitment.

In conclusion, I recommend political consulting based on the recommendation provided to develop, enhance, and empower African American multigenerational civic

engagement experiences in digital education initiatives and throughout other political spaces. Based on participant suggestions and the researcher's professional experiences, an African American civically engaged cooperative could positively mobilize and operationalize this group of people. For instance, it could target civic educational campaigns that explain how policy affects daily life, using a mix of platforms (Zoom, Signal, YouTube, etc.).

Another aspect of outreach could be to engage diverse digital communities, strengthen digital moderation and safety protocols in civic forums, especially identity-based ones. Perhaps formal recognition, stipends, or logistical support for community organizers, distribution among African American female volunteers. As a performance of authentic checks and balances, the organization should audit and reform local party structures, while increasing clarity around rules for first-time and out-of-state voters. This proposed symbolic cultural entity could play a transformative role in closing race-based and gendered-based civic engagement gaps in these United States

References

Ajaps, S., & Obiagu, A. (2021). Civic identity and volunteering: Exploring gender differences. *Journal of Civic Studies, 14*(2), 45–60.

Allen, D., & Light, J. S. (Eds.). (2015). *From voice to influence: Understanding citizenship in a digital age*. University of Chicago Press.

Al-Zaman, M. S. (2019). Digital disinformation and communalism in Bangladesh. *China Media Research, 15*(2).

Baek, Y. M., Wojcieszak, M., & Delli Carpini, M. X. (2012). Online versus face-to-face deliberation: Who? Why? What? With what effects? *New Media & Society*, *14*(3), 363–383. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444811413191

Bakker, T. P., & De Vreese, C. H. (2011). Good news for the future? Young people, Internet use, and political participation. *Communication Research*, *38*(4), 451–470. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650210381738

Ballotpedia. (2020). *Voter turnout in United States elections*. https://ballotpedia.org/Voter_turnout_in_United_States_elections

Banet-Weiser, S. (2021). Misogyny and the politics of misinformation. In H. Tumber & S. Waisbord (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to media disinformation and populism* (pp. 211–220). Routledge.

Belotto, M. J. (2018). Data analysis methods for qualitative research: Managing the challenges of coding, interrater reliability, and thematic analysis. *Qualitative Report, 23*(11), 2622–2633. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3492

Bejarano, C., & Smooth, W. (2022). Women of color mobilizing: Sistahs are doing it for themselves from GOTV to running candidates for political office. In *Women of*

Color Political Elites in the US (pp. 8–24). Routledge.

Boddy, C. R. (2016). Sample size for qualitative research. *Qualitative Market Research*,17 (4), 426–432. http://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-06-3016-0053

Boichak, O. (2023). Mapping the Russian political influence ecosystem: The Night Wolves biker gang. *Social Media + Society*, *9*(2), 20563051231177920. https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231177920

Boulianne, S. (2015). Social media use and participation: A meta-analysis of current research. *Information, Communication & Society*, *18*(5), 524–538. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118x.2015.1008542

Boulianne, S. (2018). Twenty years of digital media effects on civic and political participation. *Communication Research, 47*(7), 947–966. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650218808186

Boulianne, S., Lalancette, M., & Ilkiw, D. (2019). Social media use and its impact on civic engagement: The case of #MeToo. *Social Science Computer Review, 39*(2), 175–180. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439319865511

Brown, M., Ray, R., Summers, E., & Fraistat, N. (2017). # SayHerName: A case study of intersectional social media activism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *40*(11), 1831–1846. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1334934

Carlo, G., White, R. M., Streit, C., Knight, G. P., & Zeiders, K. H. (2015). Longitudinal relations among parenting styles, prosocial behaviors, and academic outcomes. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 44*(8), 1547–1560.

Chance, N. L. (2022). Resilient leadership: A phenomenological exploration into how Black women in higher education leadership navigate cultural adversity. *Journal*

of Humanistic Psychology, *62*(1), 44–78. https://doi.org/10.1177/00221678211003000

Chagas, V., Freire, F., & da Silva, T. (2021). The political use of mobile instant messaging services in Brazil's 2018 elections: WhatsApp and the new frontier of digital campaigning. *Journal of Digital Media & Policy, 12*(2), 287–305. https://doi.org/10.1386/jdmp_00061_1

Chang, H. C. H., Haider, S., & Ferrara, E. (2021). Digital civic participation and misinformation during the 2020 Taiwanese presidential election. *Media and Communication*, *9*(1), 144-157. DOI: 10.17645/mac.v9i1.3405 https://www.cogitatiopress.com/mediaandcommunication/article/viewFile/3405/1956

Chapman-Hillard, C., Henry, T. D., & Washington, N. C. (2023). Culture-specific influences on civic engagement among Black emerging adults. *Journal of Black Psychology*.

Chapman-Hilliard, C., Hunter, E., Adams-Bass, V., Mbilishaka, A., Jones, B., Holmes, E., & Holman, A. C. (2022). Racial identity and historical narratives in the civic engagement of Black emerging adults. Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, *15*(2), 230–240. https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000251 https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2020-44102-001

Christophe, B., Nelson, J., & Stewart, D. (2021). Racial identity and critical civic engagement among Black youth. *Journal of Adolescence, 88*, 32–45.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research. Jossey-Bass.

Constitution Annotated. (n.d.). United States Constitution Twenty-Second Amendment section 1. https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-22/

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Organizational Research Methods, 12(3), 614-617. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428108324514 (Original work published 2009)

Creswell, J. W. (2009). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Creswell, J.W. & Poth, C.N. (2018). Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation (4th ed.). Jossey Bass.

Dilliplane, S. (2011). All the news you want to hear: The impact of partisan news exposure on political participation. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *75*(2), 287-316.

Dolan, J., Deckman, M. M., & Swers, M. L. (2021). *Women and politics: Paths to power and political influence*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Dommett, K. (2020). Roadblocks to interactive digital adoption? Elite perspectives of party practices in the United Kingdom. *Party Politics*, *26*(2), 165-175.

Echols, A. (2015). *The transformation of Virginia politics*. University of Virginia Press.

Eimhjellen, I., Wollebæk, D., & Strømsnes, K. (2018). Growing apart? The alleged decline of bridging social capital in voluntary organizations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 47*(5), 1031–1055.

Flanagan, C., Gallay, E., & Pykett, A. (2022). Urban youth and the environmental commons: rejuvenating civic engagement through civic science. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *25*(6), 692-708.

Flanagan, C. A., & Stout, M. (2010). Developmental patterns of social trust between early and late adolescence: Age and school climate effects. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *20*(3), 748-773

Gaby, S. (2017). The civic engagement gap(s): Youth participation and inequality in democratic life. *Sociology Compass, 11*(12), e12507.

Gause, C., Maffly-Kipp, J., Needy, L., Vess, M., Schlegel, R., Stitchter, M., & Hicks, J. A. (2025). Feelings of authenticity and civic engagement. *Motivation and Emotion*, *49*(1), 94-102.

Ge, J., He, J., Liu, Y., Zhang, J., Pan, J., Zhang, X., & Liu, D. (2021). Effects of effort-reward imbalance, job satisfaction, and work engagement on self-rated health among healthcare workers. *BMC Public Health*, *21*, 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-12281-0

Gerodimos, R., & Justinussen, J. (2015). Obama's 2012 Facebook campaign: Political communication in the age of the like button. *Journal of information technology & politics*, *12*(2), 113-132.

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Harvard University Press.

Goleman, D., & Intelligence, E. (1995). Why it can matter more than IQ. *Emotional intelligence.*

Gong, Z., Sun, F., & Li, X. (2021). Perceived Overqualification, emotional exhaustion, and creativity: a moderated-mediation model based on effort–reward imbalance theory. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(21), 11367. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182111367

Goodall, H. L. (2000). Writing the new ethnography (Vol. 7). Rowman & Littlefield.

Goodman, L. A. (1961). Snowball sampling. *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics, 32(1), 148–170.* https://doi.org/10.1214/aoms/1177705148

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18(1), 59–82.* https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903

Hampton, K. N., Shin, I., & Lu, W. (2017). Digital media and political expression: African Americans' low engagement in online political discussion. *Information, Communication & Society, 20*(10), 1589–1606.

Hargittai, E., & Shaw, A. (2013). Digitally savvy citizenship: The role of internet skills and engagement in young adults' political participation around the 2008 presidential election. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *57*(2), 115-134.

Heller, J. C., Givens, M. L., Johnson, S. P., & Kindig, D. A. (2024). Keeping It Political and Powerful: Defining the Structural Determinants of Health. *Milbank Quarterly*, *102*(2).

Hossan, D., Dato'Mansor, Z., & Jaharuddin, N. S. (2023). Research population and sampling in quantitative study. International Journal of Business and *Technopreneurship (IJBT), 13(3), 209-222.*

Howard, P. N. (2006). *New media campaigns and the managed citizen*. Cambridge University Press.

Howell, W., Krasa, S., & Polborn, M. (2022). *Expressive politics: a model of electoral* competition with animus and cognitive dissonance. Working paper. Available at

http://www. econ.uiuc.edu/skrasa/utility_externality. pdf.

Ibeanu, O. (2022). Civic activism and post-colonial democracy in Africa. *African Journal of Political Science, 25*(2), 76–89.

Ingoglia, S., Coco, A. L., & Liga, F. (2025). Empathy and civic engagement: Gender as a moderator. *Journal of Youth Development*.

Istiqomah, F. (2024). Gender equality and digital platforms: The global role of social media in women's empowerment. *Global Media Studies Journal, 12*(1), 34–52.

Jacob, G., Faber, S. C., Faber, N., Bartlett, A., Ouimet, A. J., & Williams, M. T. (2023). A systematic review of Black People coping with racism: Approaches, analysis, and empowerment. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *18*(2), 392-415. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/17456916221100509

Jacoby, B. (2009). *Civic engagement in higher education: Concepts and practices*. Jossey-Bass.

Jennings, W., McKay, L., & Stoker, G. (2021). The politics of levelling up. *The Political Quarterly*, *92*(2), 302-311.

Jingwen, L. (2023). The Impact of Anchoring Effects, Loss Aversion, and Belief Perseverance on Consumer Decision-Making. *Advances in Economics,* Management and Political Sciences, 62, 77-83. https://doi.org/10.54254/2754-1169/62/20231321

Kahne, J., Chi, B., & Middaugh, E. (2006). Building social capital for civic and political engagement: The potential of high school government courses. *Canadian Journal of Education, 29*(2), 387–409.

Kazin, M. (2022). *What it took to win: A history of the Democratic Party*. Farrar, Straus

and Giroux.

Kernis, M. H., & Goldman, B. M. (2006). A multicomponent conceptualization of authenticity: Theory and research. Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, *38*, 283-357.

Key, V. O. (1949). *Southern politics in state and nation*. Alfred A. Knopf.

Kiss, S., DeCleene, D., & Martinez, T. (2022). Rethinking public participation: Culture, trust, and the transformation of civic life. *Journal of Public Deliberation, 18*(1), Article 5.

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice, 24(1),* 120-124.

Kwon, K. H., Shao, C., & Nah, S. (2020). Localized social media and civic life: Motivations, trust, and civic participation in local community contexts. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 18*(1), 55–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2020.1805086

LaDonna, K. A., Artino Jr, A. R., & Balmer, D. F. (2021). Beyond the guise of saturation: rigor and qualitative interview data. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education, 13(5), 607-611*.

Langone, A. 2018. #MeToo and Time's Up Founders Explain the Difference Between the 2 Movements— And How They're Alike. Retrieved from https://time.com/5189945/whats-the-difference-between-the-metoo-and-times-up-movements/

Lark Suite. (2025). Interview Questions.

https://www.larksuite.com/en_us/topics/interview-questions/interview-questions-for-community-engagement-specialists

Lin, Y., & Kant, S. (2021). Using Social Media for Citizen Participation: Contexts, Empowerment, and Inclusion. *Sustainability*, *13*(12), 6635. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13126635

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1982). Establishing dependability and confirmability in naturalistic inquiry through an audit.

Marshall, B., Cardon, P., Poddar, A., & Fontenot, R. (2013). Does sample size matter in qualitative research? A review of qualitative interviews in IS research. *Journal of Computer Information Systems, 54(1), 11–22.* https://doi.org/10.1080/08874417.2013.11645667

Mason, M. (2010). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 11(3), Article 8. https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-11.3.1428

McCurdy, D. W., Spradley, J. P., & Shandy, D. J. (2004). The cultural experience: Ethnography in complex society. Waveland Press.

McNall, S. G. (2023). Democracy and problem-solving: The evolving nature of civic action. *Journal of Social Change, 29*(1), 12–23.

Meier, A. (1956). The Negro and the Democratic Party, 1875–1915. *Phylon (1940-1956), 17*(2), 173–191. https://doi.org/10.2307/272592

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Microsoft Corporation. (n.d.). Transcribe your recordings in Word. Microsoft Support.

https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/transcribe-your-recordings-7fc2efec-245e-45f0-b053-2a97531ecf57

Miller, K. K., Shramko, M., Brown, C., & Svetaz, M. V. (2021). The election is over, now what? Youth civic engagement as a path to critical consciousness. *Journal of* Adolescent Health, 68(2), 233-235. https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(20)30650-9/pdf

Nelson, J., Bell, A. M., & Stuart, R. (2017). Community re-engagement and the revival of political agency. American Sociological Review, 82(4), 716–743.

Noy, C. (2008). Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 11(4),* 327–344. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570701401305

Ortlipp, M. (2008). Keeping and using reflective journals in the qualitative research process. *The Qualitative Report, 13(4), 695–705.* https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol13/iss4/8

Paek, H. J., Yoon, S. H., & Shah, D. V. (2005). Local news, social integration, and community participation: Hierarchical linear modeling of contextual and cross-level effects. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *82*(3), 587-606.

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 42(5), 533–544.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Patton, M. Q. (2015). Qualitative research & evaluation methods (4th ed.). Sage

Publications.

Phan, V., & Kloos, B. (2022). Civic engagement and social change. In *Community Psychology: Linking Individuals and Communities* (5th ed.).

Phan, V., & Kloos, B. (2023). Examining civic engagement in ethnic minority youth populations: A literature review and concept analysis. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *71*(1-2), 54-78.

Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2006). The content validity index: Are you sure you know what's being reported? Critique and recommendations. *Research in Nursing & Health, 29(5), 489–497*. https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.2014

Pro Publica (2025). Trump DEI. https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-dei-black-women-minorities-careers-jobs-dismissed

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of the American community*. Simon & Schuster.

Prus, R. (1995). Symbolic interaction and ethnographic research: Intersubjectivity and the study of human lived experience. State University of New York Press.

Rachmad, Y. E. (2023). *Digital Peer Influence Theory*. https://doi.org/10.17605/osf.io/nbpkj

Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). Qualitative research: Bridging the Conceptual, Theoretical, and Methodological. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Roberts, C. (2012). *The Democratic Party: A historical overview*.

Ronceray, M., Tine, L., Salzinger, M., & Bakari, R. M. (2023). *The ECOWAS democracy agenda: Channels, lessons and digital technologies for civil society engagement*. Discussion paper 350. Maastricht: ECDPM.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Saldaña, J. (2009). The coding manual for qualitative researchers. London: Sage.

Saldaña, J. (2021). The coding manual for qualitative researchers (4th ed.). SAGE

Santa Maria, A., Wolter, C., Gusy, B., Kleiber, D., & Renneberg, B. (2021). Reducing work-related burnout among police officers: the impact of job rewards and health-oriented leadership. *The Police Journal*, *94*(3), 406-421.

Scott, J., Brown, N., Frasure, L., & Pinderhughes, D. (2021). Destined to run? The role of political participation on black women's decision to run for elected office. *National Review of Black Politics*, *2*(1), 22-52.

Shah, P. P. (1998). Who are employees' social referents? Using a network perspective to determine referent others. *Academy of Management Journal*, *41*(3), 249-268.

Shah, D. V., McLeod, J. M., & Yoon, S. H. (2001). Communication, context, and community: An exploration of print, broadcast, and Internet influences. *Communication research*, *28*(4), 464-506.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. Education for Information, 22(2), 63-75.

Siegrist, J. (1996). Adverse health effects of high-effort/low-reward conditions. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *1*(1), 27.

Siegrist, J. (2016). Effort-reward imbalance model. In *Stress: Concepts, cognition, emotion, and behavior* (pp. 81-86). Academic Press.

Slaughter, C., Crowder, C., & Greer, C. (2024). Black women: Keepers of democracy, the democratic process, and the Democratic Party. *Politics & Gender*, *20*(1), 162-

181.

Spradley, J. P. (1979). Interviewing an informant. *The Ethnographic Interview, 46, 55-68.*

Spradley, B. W. (1980). Managing change creatively. *JONA: The Journal of Nursing* Administration, 10(5), 32-36.

Storrs, H. (1880). Reconstruction and the Democratic Party. [Publisher not listed], p. 289.

Thompson, M., Barnes, L. D., & Choi, H. (2024). Long-term effects of civic engagement during emerging adulthood. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 53*(1), 88–101.

Upward News. (2020). Gen Z and political information: How young voters get their news. https://www.upward.news/gen-z-political-information

Van der Graaff, J., Carlo, G., Crocetti, E., Koot, H. M., & Branje, S. (2018). Prosocial behavior in adolescence: Gender differences in development and links with empathy. Journal of youth and adolescence, 47(5), 1086-1099.

Van Duyn, E., Peacock, C., & Stroud, N. J. (2019). Engaging women and men in digital political discussion. *Social Media + Society, 5*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119867445

Van Teijlingen, E., & Hundley, V. (2001). The importance of pilot studies. *Social Research Update, 35, 1–4. http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU35.html*

Walden University, Laureate Education. (n.d.). Theoretical and conceptual frameworks: What's the difference? Walden University. Retrieved from *https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/osra/theoreticalframework*

Warren, R., & Wicks, R. H. (2011). Political socialization: Modeling teen political and civic engagement. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 88(1), 156-175.

https://doi.org/10.1177/107769901108800109

White House. (2025) Presidential DEI actions. https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/ending-illegal-discrimination-and-restoring-merit-based-opportunity/

Wiium, N., Kristensen, S. M., Årdal, E., Bøe, T., Gaspar de Matos, M., Karhina, K., Bogsnes Larsen, T. M., Bjørnøy Urke, H., & Wold, B. (2023). Civic engagement and mental health trajectories in Norwegian youth. Frontiers in Public Health, 11, Article 1214141. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1214141

Wilt, J. A., Thomas, S., & McAdams, D. P. (2019). Authenticity and inauthenticity in narrative identity. *Heliyon*, *5*(7).

Wray-Lake, L., & Ballard, P. (2023). The civic imperative: Why engagement matters. *Annual Review of Psychology, 74*, 245–268.

Yin, R. K. (2016). Qualitative research from start to finish (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.

Younas, A., Fàbregues, S., Durante, A., Escalante, E. L., Inayat, S., & Ali, P. (2023). Proposing the "MIRACLE" narrative framework for providing thick description in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *22*, 16094069221147162.

Young, R. (n.d.). *Black perspectives in the 2024 election cycle: Community priorities and political engagement* [Unpublished manuscript].

Zhang, B & Pinto, J. (2021): Changing the World One Meme at a Time: The Effects of Climate Change Memes on Civic Engagement Intentions, *Environmental Communication,* (15)6, 749-764. DOI: 10.1080/17524032.2021.1894197

Zuckerman, E. (2014). New media, new civics? Policy & Internet, 6(2), 151-168.

Zukin, C., Keeter, S., Andolina, M., Jenkins, K., & Delli Carpini, M. (2006). *A new engagement? Political participation, civic life, and the changing American citizen*. Oxford University Press

Appendix A: Lark Suite Modified Instrument

1) Can you share an example of a successful civic engagement online platform, such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or LinkedIn, that influenced you to participate as a Virginia Democratic Party member for the 2024 presidential election?

2) Please describe what influenced you to participate in online civically engaged community networks in support of the 2024 Presidential Democratic candidate.

3) Please describe a time when you encountered resistance or challenges with civic engagement online during the 2024 Presidential election, and in what ways did it influence you to remain or abstain from civic engagement during the 2024 Presidential election?

4) With regard to individual efforts used in the 2024 Presidential election, how did you evaluate the election outcome? And what online civic engagement metrics did you find the most valuable influences used in the 2024 Presidential election? Please explain?

5) Please describe what peer influences online were responsible for your involvement in civic engagement activities for the Virginia Democratic candidate during the 2024 Presidential election?

6) How did you ensure online civic engagement activities were balanced, inclusive, and accessible to your digital community during the 2024 Presidential election?

Demographic Questions:

What generation were you born in?

- 1995 - 2005 (Generation Z) - 1980 - 1994 (Millennials) - 1965 - 1979 (Generation X) - 1945 - 1964 (Baby Boomers) - 1926 - 1944 (Silent Generation)

What is your gender?

- Female - Nonbinary - Transgender Woman - Other: _____

What is your race?

African - African American / Black - Afro Caribbean - Afro-European -Afro-Latina/ Hispanic - Black and Other /Biracial - Other: _____

What was your civic engagement role /or title during the 2024 Presidential election? How many years of service in this role?

- 0 - 5 years - 6 - 11 years - 12 - 17 years - 18 - 25 years - 26 - above

How many years have you been a democratic party volunteer?

- 0 - 5 years - 6 - 11 years - 12 - 17 years - 18 - 25 years - 26 - above

What digital platforms do you use? _____

How often do you go online to access the digital platform in a day?

0 - 5 times - 6 - 11 times - 12 - 17 times - 18 - 25 times – 26 - above

What is your highest level of education?

- High School - Associate Degree - Some College - Bachelor's Degree - Master's Degree - Doctoral Degree - Professional Certification - Other (Type of Certification): _____

Appendix B: Invitation by Email

Subject line: Research participants needed: Interviewing Virginia Democratic African American females who worked or volunteered for the 2024 Presidential Election

Email message:

You are invited to take part in a research study to explore the influences responsible for AA women's civic engagement in the 2024 Presidential election. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

Study Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to explore the influences responsible for AA women's civic engagement in the 2024 Presidential election.

This study seeks participants who are:

- Virginia Democratic African American females (or those who identified as Black).
- Use online social media platforms for civic engagement.
- Worked or volunteered for the 2024 Presidential Election in Virginia.

Procedures:

This study would involve you completing the following steps:

- Complete a 45 - 60 minute virtual interview on Zoom that will be video, and audio recorded.
- Provide 45 - 60 minutes to review the interpretation of your interview via email and return within 5 days of the sent date.

This interview is part of the doctoral study for ArQuena Dailey, a Ph.D. student at Walden University. Interviews will take place during **July 6th – July 19th**.

Appendix C: Invitation for Social Media

****<u>**Participants Needed:**</u> Interview Study of Virginia Democratic African American (AA) females who worked or volunteered for the 2024 Presidential Election****

You are invited to take part in a research study to explore the influences responsible for AA women's civic engagement in the 2024 Presidential election. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

<u>Study Purpose:</u>

The purpose of this study is to explore the influences responsible for AA women's civic engagement in the 2024 Presidential election.

<u>This study seeks participants who are:</u>

- Virginia Democratic African American females (or those who identified as Black).
- Use online social media platforms for civic engagement.
- Worked or volunteered for the 2024 Presidential Election in Virginia.

<u>Procedures:</u>

This study would involve you completing the following steps:

- Complete a 45 - 60 minute virtual interview on Zoom that will be video, and audio recorded.
- Provide 45 - 60 minutes to review the interpretation of your interview via email and return within 5 days of the sent date.

This interview is part of the doctoral study for <u>ArQuena Dailey</u>, a Ph.D. student at Walden University. Interviews will take place during **July 6th – July 19th**.