

Twitter/X in Political and Commercial Marketing: An SLR

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Abstract

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This study conducts a systematic literature review (SLR) to examine the evolving role of Twitter, recently rebranded as X, in political and commercial marketing. The review synthesizes peer-reviewed studies published between 2021 and 2023 to capture contemporary insights into the platform's transformation and strategic applications. Findings show that Twitter/X has been pivotal in political communication, enabling agenda-setting, voter mobilization, and the amplification of discourse through real-time interactions, hashtags, and algorithmic visibility. In the commercial context, the platform fosters customer engagement, brand awareness, and offline consumer behavior when message design and interactivity are effectively utilized. However, challenges such as shifting platform features, monetization strategies, and regulatory changes create uncertainties for consistent political and marketing outcomes. This review highlights both the opportunities and limitations of Twitter/X, proposing future research to explore platform governance, algorithmic dynamics, and cross cultural user behaviors. By doing so, it provides an updated synthesis of the platform's dual role in shaping digital communication strategies across political and commercial domains.

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1. Introduction

The transformation of Twitter into X in July 2023 marked a new phase for the platform, yet its role as a strategic arena for political and commercial marketing had been established long before. In the political sphere, studies highlight that Twitter/X facilitates campaigning, agenda-setting, and voter mobilization through real-time interactions and symbolic tools such as hashtags and mentions (Jungherr, 2016; Bossetta, 2018). Conceptual frameworks linking new media and politics emphasize mediatization how the logic of social media shapes style, rhythm, and tactics of political actors and its implications for the digital public sphere (Enli, 2017; Bruns & Highfield, 2016). The rebranding to “X” underscores the platform’s ambition to become an “everything app,” while simultaneously introducing ecosystem shifts and audience dynamics that require systematic examination in recent scholarship (Reuters, 2023)

In the commercial domain, digital marketing literature positions Twitter/X as a key channel for driving engagement and business outcomes, although its effectiveness depends on message design, social cues, and algorithmic dynamics across platforms (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Liadeli et al., 2023). Empirical evidence at the message level shows that tweet features text length, sentiment, hashtags/mentions, and visuals correlate with engagement, offering tactical insights for brands (Han & Peng, 2019). At the retail level, social media conversations have been linked to increases in physical store visits, showing that digital word-of-mouth on Twitter/X can translate into offline behaviors (Weinandy et al., 2023). In the post-rebrand landscape, changes in features, monetization strategies, and user structures directly

affect advertising reach and consumer behavior factors that must be synthesized through a systematic literature review (SLR) to address fragmented findings across political and commercial contexts.

Building on this background, this SLR aims to: (1) map key themes and research gaps regarding the use of Twitter/X in political marketing (e.g., candidate strategies, agenda-setting, mobilization, and discourse quality) and commercial marketing (e.g., message design, engagement, and business impacts); (2) compare dominant methodologies from digital trace data to experimental and quasi experimental designs; and (3) propose a future research agenda post-rebrand that accounts for changes in platform architecture, regulations, and cross-national user behaviors. By doing so, this review provides a timely synthesis relevant to both academics and practitioners seeking to understand the effectiveness, limitations, and ethical implications of Twitter/X as a tool for political and commercial marketing.

2. Literature Review

Twitter, which rebranded as X in 2023, has become a significant platform for both political and commercial marketing due to its unique features that facilitate real time communication and audience engagement. In the political context, scholars note that Twitter has transformed campaigning strategies by enabling direct interaction with voters, enhancing agenda-setting, and shaping political discourse (Larsson, 2016). Moreover, the platform's interactive architecture, such as hashtags and mentions, has allowed political actors to amplify messages and mobilize support rapidly (Kreiss, 2016).

From a commercial perspective, Twitter/X has been recognized as an effective medium for fostering customer engagement and brand loyalty. Research indicates that message design, emotional tone, and the use of multimedia significantly affect consumer responses and online engagement (Pentina et al., 2018). In addition, studies show that brand conversations on Twitter contribute not only to online interactions but also to offline consumer behaviors, such as purchase intentions and store visits (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2019). More recently, attention has shifted to how platform reconfigurations and algorithmic changes alter marketing effectiveness, making it critical to reassess Twitter/X's role in digital strategies (Kaplan et al., 2010).

Taken together, prior research underscores the dual function of Twitter/X as both a political communication channel and a commercial marketing tool. However, findings remain fragmented, highlighting the need for a systematic literature review that synthesizes cross-domain insights and provides direction for future investigations.

3. Methods

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to analyze and synthesize existing research on the use of Twitter/X in political and commercial marketing. The review focuses on peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers published between 2021 and 2023 to ensure that the findings reflect the most recent developments in the platform's transformation and its role in digital communication strategies. The method includes three main stages: planning,

conducting, and reporting. In the planning stage, the research questions were formulated to guide the review toward identifying key themes, methodological approaches, and research gaps. During the conducting stage, a structured search was performed across major academic databases using relevant keywords such as “Twitter marketing,” “political communication,” “digital engagement,” and “Twitter/X branding.”

Articles were screened based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, focusing on studies that provided empirical evidence or conceptual insights into political campaigning, agenda-setting, consumer engagement, and commercial outcomes. The selected studies were then coded and categorized to capture recurring themes, methodological trends, and emerging debates. Finally, in the reporting stage, the findings were synthesized to highlight the dual role of Twitter/X as a tool for political and commercial marketing, as well as to propose a future research agenda that addresses the evolving features of the platform, its monetization strategies, and global user behaviors.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings of this systematic review indicate that Twitter/X continues to serve as a pivotal platform in both political and commercial marketing, though its effectiveness is highly contingent upon message design, platform dynamics, and user interaction. In the political sphere, studies reveal that Twitter has been instrumental in shaping public discourse and mobilizing voters, with hashtags and symbolic cues enabling campaigns to amplify visibility and foster real-time engagement (Stier et al.,

2022). Recent research further suggests that algorithmic amplification on Twitter/X influences agenda-setting by prioritizing certain issues, thereby extending the reach of political communication beyond traditional media channels (Rauchfleisch & Kaiser, 2021).

On the commercial side, Twitter/X has demonstrated strong potential in enhancing consumer engagement and brand awareness, particularly when companies leverage interactivity and emotional resonance in their messaging (Liu et al., 2021). The integration of visuals, multimedia, and personalized tone has been shown to significantly increase user interactions, translating online engagement into measurable business outcomes such as purchase intentions and offline store visits (Alalwan, 2022). However, challenges remain: studies point out that frequent changes to platform features and advertising policies, particularly after the rebranding to X, have created uncertainty for marketers seeking consistent strategies (Rauschnabel et al., 2022).

Overall, the discussion highlights that while Twitter/X serves dual roles facilitating political communication and driving commercial value it also raises questions about long-term sustainability, ethical concerns, and the implications of platform governance. The review underscores the need for future research to investigate how evolving platform architectures, shifting regulatory environments, and global variations in user behavior will reshape the efficacy of Twitter/X in both political and commercial domains.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights that Twitter, now rebranded as X, continues to play a dual role as both a political communication channel and a commercial marketing tool. In the political domain, the platform enables agenda setting, voter mobilization, and the amplification of political discourse through interactive features such as hashtags, mentions, and algorithmic visibility. In the commercial context, Twitter/X supports customer engagement, brand awareness, and even offline consumer behaviors when message design and interactivity are effectively employed. However, the review also underscores several challenges, including shifting platform features, monetization strategies, and regulatory changes, which create uncertainty for both political actors and marketers.

Overall, the synthesis of recent studies from 2021 to 2023 reveals that while Twitter/X holds strong potential for enhancing engagement and outcomes across domains, its long-term effectiveness depends on how users, organizations, and policymakers adapt to the evolving platform ecosystem. Future research should therefore focus on the implications of the rebrand, the impact of algorithmic governance, and cross cultural user behaviors to provide a deeper understanding of how Twitter/X will shape political and commercial marketing in the years ahead.

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