Pakistan Social Sciences Review
www.pssr.org.pk

RESEARCH PAPER

Social Media and Political Awareness in Pakistan: A Case Study of Youth

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Corresponding Author muzaffarrps@gmail.com	This study was designed to investigate the role of social media in promoting political awareness among the youth of Pakistan, recognizing the fact that new interactive technologies have powerful impacts on youth in augmenting their political knowledge. This study is descriptive in nature and quantitative by approach.The target population of this was students of BS and MS Programmes Public Sectors universities in Gujranwala division. The data was collected with a questionnaire and a test and was analyzed by applying descriptive statistics. The results of the study showed that social media plays a vital role in socializing the Pakistani youth but the results of the Test showed the lower level of political awareness among the students. This study recommends that educational institutions and public departments should share their authentic information via social media to create the political awareness among the students.

Introduction

Many milestones can be achieved with the help of computer or internet which is very useful for present and future prospect. Twentieth century is the century of computer and technology but 21st century is the century of social media and connectivity. In this world, media has a broad, massive and diverse perception. Whenever we describe the media it means, we talk about the persistent as well as constant change, development of the society and technologies. By means of media we come to know what is happening around us we stay updated. Social

media is very beneficial and pleasant invention. It has arisen as one of the most important tools where young people are able to discuss and show their opinion on the matters of daily life as well as the issues of national and international importance. Social media networks, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and others are not only innovative in the world of internet but rapidly increasing their effects on the opinion of masses.

In Pakistan, youth is using the social networks as the platform to acquire the knowledge and to enhance political awareness to float their political ideas. In recent, common man, students, leaders and even political parties had started to use the social media for the spread of their ideas and opinions for national and international issues and to win the support of common man. Owen opined that with the beginning of internet, digital communication technologies have increased the participation of youth in social media. Social Media is like a hot cake for the young and offers them to get connected with their near ones and as a platform to exchange their political views Social Networks are playing vital and vibrant role for the betterment of youth as it helps and provides a platform to gain the basic political knowledge. A few years back in Pakistan, govt. controlled TV, print media, and a very few private channels were there to provide information and to educate the youth and were the only sources for the people to get information and entertainment. Print media was not free and was censored with different tactics of govt. Now it is the time of digital communication, the internet and the social networks have changed the sense of information and communication. In Pakistan, social media is rapidly growing like the other countries of the world and has attracted a number of Pakistani youth and has played vital role in enhancing the level of political socialization among the youth of Pakistan. A number of political leaders and political workers and even political parties have created their personal accounts and official pages to share the views and news of politics. The main objective of this was to find out the impact of social media networks in enhancing the political awareness among Pakistani youth.

Furthermore, Twitter is categorized as a "micro-blogging" social network. That came into existence in March of 2006. The primary idea of Twitter was to share any thought, message or so with the word limit of up to 140 characters. Most of the famous political dignitaries use the twitter to communicate with their fans and followers, to run the campaigns, to share their views for public as well as media. When political people are political parties tweet, their followers also take part in their debate by retweeting, replying, and commenting on their tweets. Tumasjan argued that these features make enable the Twitter users to converse over politics and jump into the political debates with the people discussing the same. It means that Twitter perhaps will increase their political involvement.

During the recent past, these actions have getting appeared significantly in Pakistan and was seen during last two elections.

Literature Review

According to Strandberg (2011) the use of Facebook and Twitter causes a huge consequence to engross within politics. Users of social media, who concentrate and take attention towards the politics, are more likely to be feasible to access the relevant political stuff intentionally via social media. In the context of general elections, the usage of social media for the political actions and activities is one of the predictors and forecasters of political involvement, primarily for engagement of masses in the system as well as the turnout for voting. Vitak (2011) proposed that there is a positive and direct relationship among the "intensity in use of Facebook for political purposes" and "political participation among college students." Facebook makes enable youth and college students to bring together and accumulate political information and to advance their political efficacy. He mentioned quite a few political activities that exist through typical features and functions of Facebook. These political actions are posting and placement of political status updates about politics, sharing the political messages with masses, scripting and distributing the political notes within their networks i.e. the party workers, getting comments from the public on their posts, sharing political opinions, joining political gathering via live streaming, following the contestants as well as downloading the political apps. These political posts subsequently get appear on users' wall in news feed and also may be watched by their friends. Social media users can also witness that, what their followers are talking about and what their concerned people are posting. They can get updates from their fellow party members as well as about the relevant party events by going through the News Feed over their homepage. Similarly, all these activities also get occur in Pakistan. Since Facebook is being updated and modernized, political happenings like following the concerned people the candidate of their constituency changed into click like on the profile of the candidate.

The usage of Internet as well as the social media is a rapidly growing power in the political system of Pakistan, this raises an important question: either this has or surge is good for Pakistani politics or not? While debating the impact of Internet over politics among youth, Nelson says that the power of Internet for spreading the information just has shaped an atmosphere with which anyone can perhaps bargain and inspire compatible and similar, like-minded folks to take part in political system.

Political info-houses have been run usually not by the governments but by third parties, that generally are the individuals, NGO's and non-profit organizations seeking for to encourage the bigger involvement of youngsters in Pakistan's political system. Consequently, social media being used in politics is taking the public together through its swift and multi-way dealings.

Sigel (1965) is of opine that "Political socialization alludes to the learning procedure by which the political standards and practices are adequate to a continuous political framework and are transmitted from age to age. A socialized resident is one who acknowledges (disguises) society's political standards without body legislative issues, so in synchronization with the progressing political morals, a political framework would experience difficulty working easily." "Political socialization is an idea in which individuals think, learn and take an interest in governmental issues". The greater part of the clients feel that through long range informal communication media the positive changes can be gotten the general public and its appropriate use can be useful to illuminate, to teach and to invigorate the clients for helpful occasions and raise voice for their political and social rights. The fundamental information with respect to the political issues is required to process the political socialization of the general public. The establishment of the guidelines of the states is straightforwardly connected with the politically mindful and the educated society. It is appropriate to specify here that without the familiarity of political socialization, the general assessment cannot be molded. For the solid political framework, the educated society is required, mindful of the political culture, social qualities and the protected parameters of the people with regards to the key rights. The cutting edge political framework should have been comprehended, connected with the oppressed society. Through web based life youth become familiar with the essential ideas about political information." In investigating issues appropriate to their experience, and in this manner starting to see how they can impact change, understudies begin to value the motivation behind the legislature. Through the exercises understudies likewise create viable relational abilities and figure out how they can fill in as beneficial and astute capitals" (Merelman, 1986).

The impact of social media and the web is 'gradual, relevant, and intensifying' for gathering political improvements in Pakistan. (Ejaz, 2013). According to Facebook insights of 2013, this information demonstrated that the Face Book clients in Pakistan are achieving 8,055,680. This digit circulated in 70% male clients and 30% female clients in Pakistan and information likewise delineates that the biggest age assemble is youth who are 18-24 years in age. In Pakistan, political gatherings and pioneers utilized online networking to cooperate and include individuals. Particularly, they concentrated on youth and this age

amass is expanding massively via web-based networking media. In Pakistan, various ideological groups like PTI, PPP, PML-N, and others are working and the quantities of these ideological groups utilized internet based life and work their very own records and systems on Facebook, Twitter, and Skype to interconnect and compose individuals to take part in political procedure. PTI and PML-N are among the most loved ideological groups on Face book, Twitter and Blogs. (Kugelman , 2012)

Long range informal communication locales, email administrations, texting, video and photograph sharing destinations and remark posting are the devices that help individuals to interface and associate with family, peers and other network individuals. (Mooney, 2009) Everywhere throughout the world, from 1997 to 2010 there were some 1.5 billion clients of person to person communication sites. The quantity of internet based life clients has unmistakably been expanded from the year 2008. Various individuals particularly youth have been occupied with online networking (Alia, 2010 & Baruah, 2012).

At present, the criticalness of online networking is developing in Pakistan explicitly among the young. As per Kugelman, 2012 online life is considered as a systems administration and correspondence instrument which is utilized in five distinctive ways; helping and sorting out generous parts of issues and issues; creative for social causes; repudiation stories overlooked by obsolete media; enacting individuals for social, political and other related crusades; and quicker correspondence among publics and their government officials. In the cutting edge time, there are extraordinary and various TV slots and quicker electronic media have been created. That is the reason individuals appreciate an extraordinary level of opportunity due to these quick changes just as groups of onlookers typically fulfilling their instructional needs from these private channels. Online networking is for the most part used to mingle ages, however examples and utilization of media relies upon people and countries which might be certain or pessimistic.

It additionally affects legislative issues because of simple methods for imparting on an occasion, making gifts, spurring voters and getting data about governmental issues. This association with the general population and ingestion of data through the use of online life upgrades the political viability among people. In 1952, Angus Campbell utilized the idea of political viability in US National Election (Coleman, 2008). He concentrated on social change in governmental issues through web based life. The political adequacy assumes an essential job on political socialization and its conduct that is "Feeling that political and social change is conceivable and that the individual native can have an impact in

achieving this change." Political viability plays out the central job in taking in procedure of youth rights from their adolescence. Political viability additionally encourages them to end up dynamic natives in future. (Schulz, 2005).

Besides, informal organizations essentially sway on public activity just as political associations with one another. The web and web based life can get a sudden change political and public activity of youth. Additionally, Social systems likewise expanded political investment and political viability in Egypt, Japan and Canada (Attia, et al, 2011, Conroy, et al, 2012, Ikeda, & Richey, 2005, and Lee, 2006).

In 2009, Twitter revolution was effectively utilized in Moldova after the circumstance of phony decisions. The campaigners utilized Twitter, FaceBook, content informing, and Live Journal to help and interconnect with one another to share data on political occasions. In comparative way, Face Book and Twitter assumed a fundamental job in the present change and transformations in Yemen, Tunisia, Libya, Syria, Egypt and Bahrain. New types of media help to advance opportunity quicken the training to engage activists and democratization to challenge against the severe tenets. The Blogs, Twitter, Face Book and YouTube have presented as new internet based life shapes which assumes an imperative job in unyielding forms of publicity and conflicts particularly with reference to Middle East government. The information of WIUPS (World Internet Users and Population Stats) clarify that Egypt is considered to have the most noteworthy number of web clients in nation and it is incorporated into top twenty nations of the world.

It is likewise determined on Facebook that youngsters most of the times discuss the governmental issues at whatever points the races are close. They talk about their interests and contention about ideological groups to utilize this innovation. The young is currently contributing more in the legislative issues of the nation. Young people have begun doing and running developments for the political figures and the gatherings. The political crusades can deeply affect inner and outside political estimation of people and at last can influence their political mindfulness which prompts casting a ballot conduct.

As per Susan Greenfield says that "developing quantities of individuals find the capability of the World Wide Web and as they become active part of it and as innovation turns out to be much further developed, extended, open and modern, current types of correspondence will transform, exploiting the publicly supporting phenomenon. Web innovation has given another outlet to spread of data, and it has repurposed the old substance" (Aday, et al, 2010). Long range

informal communication media has changed the idea of old media. Presently our social orders are utilizing Face Book, Twitter and web journals as a wellspring of data. Long range interpersonal communication media additionally fills in as a data store which encourages its clients to approach assortment of substance. Person to person communication destinations likewise convey the event to build their contacts with whom they can get data and exchange their perspectives.

Today in Pakistan, ideological factions and groups are utilizing the social Networks; the majority of the ideological groups have developed their own official websites and pages. Long range informal communication media has turned into a vital standard for the ideological groups and political workers to charm the general population for their help and to stay contacted with their systems. PTI is the significant case of achievement of person to person communication media in creating impact on the youth of Pakistan (Khan & Shahbaz, 2015).

Muzaffar (2016) in his study "Educational Institutions and Political Awareness in Pakistan: A Case Study of Punjab" has found that Pakistani educational institutes, their environment and curriculum, is not inculcating the information in the students of secondary school certificate. The results of this study showed that the level of political awareness was 7.17%. This study is very comprehensive but it determined the political awareness through educational institutions but this study is designed to determine the effects of social media in enhancing the level of political awareness among the students of BS and M. Phil program.

Today, messages can reach to crowds and target bunches progressively and they can make changes and inclinations. Masses are winding up progressively definitive through innovation, since innovation can join them. This review paved the way for the solid and comprehensive research. Different philosopher, thinkers and the experts from the area of social media and political awareness have tried to explain but their discussion about (Social media and political awareness in Pakistan: A case study of youth) has been precise. The proposed topic needs a full-fledged research due to its importance as now a day the social media is playing a significant and fundamental role in enhancing political awareness of a youth to become an active member of a state.

Material and Method

This study concentrates on social media networks and political awareness among youth, therefore the population of this study was the students of BS and MS/M. Phil in the Faculties of Social and Natural sciences enrolled in public sector

universities of Gujranwala division and enrolled in university during the session 2018-2019.

Minimum sample size, by using Cochran Bach Formula, of this study with 95% confidence level was collected 384.Public sector universities were in the nine different divisions of the Punjab. To approach all the target population was very difficult. Keeping in view all the situation random and convenient sampling technique was used to obtain the representative sample for this study.

The Public sector universities of Gujranwala division were selected to acquire the representative sampling. In third stage all the students of BS and M. Phil/ MS Social and Natural Sciences were selected as target population. The minimum sample of 384 male and female students from urban and rural area of the running semesters was selected for this study. A questionnaire comprised of 32 statements on five point Likert type was developed for students to collect the data. Keeping in view the nature of questionnaire, an achievement test comprising of 15 multiple choices related to the political science and basic knowledge of day to day politics was developed with the help of the expert of the department of Political Science GC Women University Sialkot and was conducted with the questionnaire.

The content validity and face validity are usually determined by the expert opinion. Keeping in view the requirements of the study the first version of the instrument was developed. All the items of the questionnaire were mixed and developed plain form of questionnaire in the second stage, this plane questionnaire was distributed for the sake of pilot testing in November, 2018 in the department of Political Science GC Women University Sialkot. The face and content validity was got checked by the committee of expert.

After pilot testing, the committee of the experts analysed the results and suggested to exclude some items having poor relationship from the questionnaire to make it reliable. The Coefficient value calculated was 0.805 with the help of SPSS was calculated as .805

The mid value (Norm Score) of the statements was fixed 3 for normal level of the impact of social media on political awareness of the students. The obtained data were tabulated and analysed with the help of Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

Hypotheses

H_{o1} There is no significant difference between the opinion of respondents (Male) and (Female) regarding the important role of social media in the process of political socialization.

H_{o2} There is no significant difference between the opinion of male (U) and (R) respondents regarding the important role of social media in the process of political socialization

H_{o3} There is no significant difference between the opinion of female respondents (U) and (R) regarding the important role of social media in the process of political socialization.

H_{o4} There is no significant difference among the level of political awareness among the male and female respondents

H_{o5} There is no significant difference among the level of political awareness among the male (Urban) and male (Rural).

H_{o6} There is no significant difference among the level of political awareness among the female (Urban) and female (Rural).

Results and Discussion

The results of the study showed that social media plays a vital role in socializing the Pakistani youth.The results of the study show that social media has politically socialized the students but yet the level of political knowledge is poor.

Testing of Hypotheses

Table 1
Summary Z Test Analysis

Category	N	Mean Score ($\overline{X}$)	SD	Z	Hypotheses
Male	161	82.75	40	0.06	Accepted
Female	223	80.06	33		
Male (U)	95	80.96	21	0.69	Accepted
Male (R)	68	85.38	17		
Female (U)	101	82.20	17	0.83	Accepted
Female (R)	121	78.28	21		

Z – Test Analysis

Z = 0.06, CV = 0.06, TV = 1.96 hence CV < TV

Table value found the insignificant difference within the sample therefore null hypothesis is accepted. The opinion of the both sample male $\overline{X}_1$=82.75> norm score 63, female $\overline{X}_2$=80.06> norm score 63 showed high level of acceptance.

Z = 0.69, CV = 0.69, TV = 1.96 hence CV < TV

Table value indicates that difference is insignificant therefore Null hypothesis is accepted no significant difference is found in the opinions of Male (U) and Male (R) respondents regarding the role of social media in enhancing the level of political awareness. The opinion of the both sample showed male U $\overline{X}_1$=80.96> norm score 63, male R $\overline{X}_2$=85.38> norm score 63.

Z = 0.83, CV = 0.83, TV = 1.96 henceCV < TV

Table value indicates that difference is insignificant therefore Null hypothesis is accepted no significant difference is found in the opinions of Female (U) and Female (R) respondents regarding the role of social media in enhancing the level of political awareness. The opinion of the both sample showed female U $\overline{X}_1$=82.20> norm score 63, female R $\overline{X}_2$=78.28> norm score 63.

Table 2
Summary Achievement Test

Respondents	Correct Answer		Incorrect Answer		Chi Square Value	Hypotheses
Male	44.76	A	55.24	B	0.12	Accepted
Female	42.96	C	57.04	D		
Male (U)	45.35	A	54.65	B	0.08	Accepted
Male (R)	43.90	C	56.10	D		
Male (U)	45.35	A	54.65	B	0.08	Accepted
Male (R)	43.90	C	56.10	D		

Chi Square Test

Chi Square = 0.12, CV = 0.12, Table Value = 3.841 hence CV< TV

The comparison of CV and TV find that difference is insignificant therefore null hypothesis is accepted; this result showed that the level of basic knowledge in Male and Female students concerning political awareness had slight difference as 44.76 % of male and 42.96 % female respondents had given the correct answer.

Chi Square = 0.08, CV = 0.08, Table Value = 3.841 hence CV< TV

The comparison of CV and TV found that difference is insignificant therefore null hypothesis is accepted, this results showed that the level of basic political knowledge in Male (U) and male (R) students had slight difference as 45.35 % of male urban and 43.90 % male rural respondents had given the correct answer.

Chi Square = 3.12, CV = 3.12, Table Value = 3.841 hence CV< TV

The comparison of CV and TV found that difference is insignificant therefore null hypothesis is accepted, anyhow this results showed that the level of basic political knowledge in female (U) and female (R) students had a clear difference as 47.85 % of male and 38.91 % female respondents had given the correct answer.

Conclusion and Recommendations

To concluded it can be said that the social media in some extent do contribute to increase the political awareness among the youth of Pakistan, it is true that people gained the political awareness by using social media but in contrast there is hostile and adverse evidence that people are less knowledgeable and are not competent up to as much optimum level as it was assumed. Although social media is making the youth socialize but they are not as much knowledgeable as it was expected.

In the light of the conclusion and the above mentioned discussion it was recommended that, Institutions should be asked to post the political content on social media to educate the youth.There should be accurate material on political process and the political system should be available in media web sites for youth access. Digitizing should have more and more public departments and making them easily accessible for public. Youngsters should must participate in politics and consider social media as a friend because media upgrade them through various sites and try to get political knowledge.Political parties should engage young people in political process also through social media as well as through community socialization.Government should have available more quality content and share it via social media for the educational purposes.There should be sharing the worthy and credible political information with the followers to enhance political knowledge. There should be following the social media accounts of political parties as they regularly share the political content.

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