



RESEARCH PAPER

**Multipatform News Consumption and Political Participation:
Testing O-S-R-O-R Model**

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ABSTRACT

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This study tests the O-S-R-O-R model of communication effects in the political context of Pakistan. The objective of the study is to investigate the mediating role of political discussion, internal political efficacy, interpersonal trust, and political trust between the relationship of multipatform news consumption and political participation. A cross-sectional web-based survey design vis-à-vis quantitative methodology was employed to collect data from 444 university students. Findings through structural equation modeling reveal that political discussion mediates the effects of multipatform news consumption on offline/online political participation. Furthermore, the relationship between news consumption and political participation is mediated by internal political efficacy. However, interpersonal and political trust don't mediate and all paths involving these two constructs are statistically nonsignificant. In addition, the findings of this study suggest that news consumption via conventional and new media enhances political efficacy and political participation.

Introduction

Mass media is considered to have a symbiotic relationship with politics that has a great influence on the government (Willis, 2007). It is regarded as the fourth pillar of the state that plays a significant role in disseminating the latest information regarding newsworthy events. In a democratic society, news media perform multiple functions. It provides up-to-date information, educates the masses, formulates public opinion, publicizes political authorities, and operates as a medium for the advocacy of political perspectives (McNair, 2003). Above all, the media act as a bridge between government and citizens. It strengthens democratic system by providing information and stimulating political interest. Democracy can't survive and thrive in the absence of independent media.

In the present age, people consume news through multiple communication channels (Gottfried & Shearer, 2017). They use different conventional and new mediums to access information related to current political events. News consumption

via different platforms leads to political participation (Diehl, Barnidge, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2018; Martin, 2016). Political participation is a sign of a healthy democracy. Mobilizing information through media strengthens political identities and enhances participation (Lemert, 1989). Communication scholars have always been interested in knowing the effects of media on the political process. A growing body of research has established the significant effects of political communication on political participation. Apart from measuring the direct effects, contemporary communication scholars and political scientists tend towards exploring the effects of different political constructs under the indirect effect paradigm. In this regard, the O-S-R-O-R model provides a comprehensive theoretical framework to investigate different mediating mechanisms.

Drawing on the framework of the O-S-R-O-R model, this study identifies the indirect effects of political discussion, internal political efficacy, interpersonal trust, and political trust in the relationship between multiplatform news consumption and political participation. Previous scholarly studies indicated a positive and direct relationship between multiple communication channels and offline/online political participation (Anduiza, Cantijoch, & Gallego, 2009; Bachmann, Kaufhold, Lewis, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2010; Corrigall-Brown & Wilkes, 2014; Hao, Wen, & George, 2014; Mushtaq & Baig, 2015; Thorson, Swafford, & Kim, 2017; Wang, 2007; Zhang, 2012). The empirical literature on the O-S-R-O-R framework suggests that political discussion and internal political efficacy are potential mediating variables (Ardèvol-Abreu, Diehl, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2017; Cho et al., 2009; Chen, 2019; Jung, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2011; Li & Chan, 2017; Park, 2019). However, we have little understanding of the indirect effects of interpersonal and political trust within the framework of the O-S-R-O-R model. The current study fills this research gap by exploring the mediating role of two new constructs interpersonal and political trust. The goal of this study is to empirically test the O-S-R-O-R model. This model has been tested extensively in the Western context. To the best of our knowledge, no study so far has tested this model in the political context of Pakistan. This study intends to test this model with special reference to Pakistan.

O-R-O-R Framework and Proposed Model

O-S-R-O-R (Orientations-Stimulus-Reasoning-Orientations-Response) model of communication effects was developed to examine the role of campaign communication in the domain of political communication (Cho et al., 2009). The idea behind the development of this model was to suggest a theoretical framework helpful in exploring the indirect effects of different political constructs. Researchers across the world have tested this model in different situations and political backgrounds (Ardèvol-Abreu et al., 2017; Chen, 2019; Jung et al., 2011; Park, 2019). Currently, this model is being tested in other domains of research such as health and environmental communication (Ikhlaz & Ans, 2021; Lu, 2021). Cho et al. (2009) presented the latest version of this model. The O-S-R-O-R model claims that political reasoning and psychological orientation mediate the effects of news consumption and political participation. The entire process starts from initial orientation (O_1) that influences news consumption habits (S_1). News media enhance discussion about political issues (R_1) as a potential mediator which affects other psychological variables (O_2) and subsequently results in political participation (R_2) (Cho et al., 2009; Jung et al., 2011). It is pertinent to mention here that this model provides a theoretical framework to investigate the role of different mediating mechanisms underlying the relationship between news media and political participation. Prior to this framework, the researchers were investigating the direct effects of media exposure on political participation.

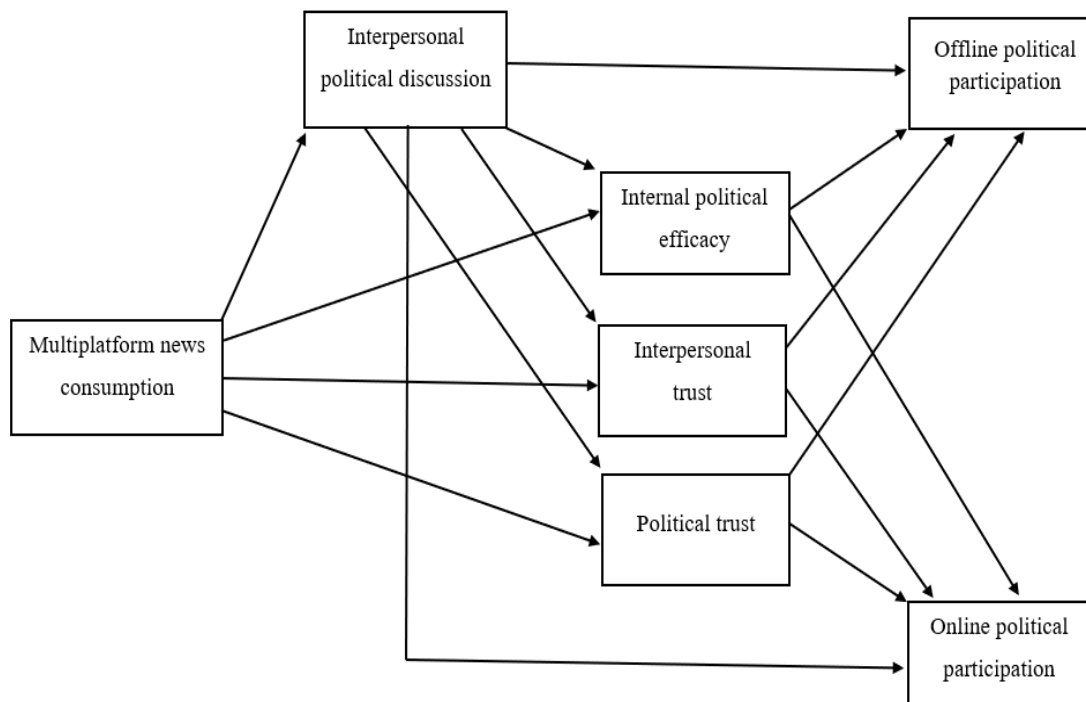


Figure 1. Proposed hypothetical model: O-S-R-O-R model of communication effects with internal political efficacy, interpersonal trust, and political trust

In this study, the components of the O_1 - S_1 - R_1 - O_2 - R_2 model have been treated as follows:

Demographic Characteristics (O_1)

Initial orientation carries motivational, psychological, organizational, and cultural characteristics. These characteristics can affect all political constructs. It includes demographic characteristics and political affiliation. Following previous work (Jung et al., 2011), this study focuses on socio-demographics such as gender, age, qualification, and household income in our proposed hypothetical model as initial orientation. It has also been found in past studies that people of higher socio-economic status are more inclined toward news consumption, political discussion, and participation (McLeod et al., 1996; Mushtaq, Abiodullah, & Akber, 2011).

Multiplatform News Consumption (S_1)

This study treats multiplatform news consumption as stimuli. Multiplatform news consumption refers to the habit of consuming news and public affairs information using more than one information medium (Diehl et al., 2018). Platform refers to the physical technology that is used to transmit messages (Molyneux, 2017). This study operationalizes multiplatform news consumption as the consumption of news related to political affairs or current events using conventional (newspaper, radio, and television) and new mediums (social networking sites (SNS) and the internet).

Reviewing the literature suggests that news consumption has a great influence on political discussion (Ardèvol-Abreu et al., 2017; Kim et al., 1999; Shah et al., 2007; Yamamoto & Morey, 2019). Martin (2016) checked the influence of digital platforms on political participation by collecting data from 1200 participants. The results indicated

that SNS and the internet have a positive association with an online expression which in turn influences engagement in political activities.

H1: News consumption is positively associated with political discussion.

Chen (2019) argued that second screening for information leads to political action by increasing political discussion, knowledge, and efficacy. Moreover, Ahmed (2010) in his study found a strong relationship between news talk shows viewing and political efficacy. In another study, Lee (2006) examined the impacts of infotainment related internet use on political efficacy. The results showed that news site exposure and online political discussion positively predicted internal political efficacy. Similarly, Pinkleton and Austin (2001) also found a positive connection between news sources and political efficacy.

H2: News consumption is positively associated with internal political efficacy.

Gross, Aday, and Brewer (2004) examined the effects of media use on socio-political trust after the 9/11 attack. The results indicated no relationship between news media use and social trust. However, a positive association was observed between television news consumption and political trust. According to Kleinnijenhuis, van Hoof, and Oegema (2006), negative news about political personalities promotes a growing sense of distrust. A low level of political trust has a great influence on voter turnout. Likewise, Cappella and Jamieson (1996) are also of the view that negative coverage of politicians activates cynicism and decreases trust in political personalities and state institutions. Moreover, Ahmed, Beebe, and Ikhlaq (2021) in their study found a positive and direct association between news media and social capital.

H3: News consumption is positively associated with interpersonal trust.

H4: News consumption is positively associated with political trust.

Political Discussion (R₁)

Cho et al. (2009) advanced this framework by making an addition of reasoning between stimulus (S₁) and second orientation (O₂). In this model, R₁ shows expressive/reasoning behavior having characteristics of mental elaboration. Based on previous work (Chen, 2019; Park, 2019), this study situates political discussion as reasoning. It refers to offline and online discussions related to political affairs (McNair, 2003). It is operationalized as the offline discussion on current political issues with family, friends, and teachers.

Broadly speaking, interpersonal political communication plays a crucial role in enhancing political involvement. Political discussion with family, friends, acquaintances, and colleagues is a stable social behavior (Swanson & Mancini, 1996). It boosts self-confidence and encourages involvement in political activities. Habermas (1989) initiated the discussion of the public sphere, the particular places where citizens gather and discuss their real issues, and then decide the strategy to resolve these issues through pressurizing political actors. In addition, the two-step flow of communication theory highlights the role of opinion leaders in disseminating information to the general public (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). Similarly, agenda-setting theory ascertained that mass media sets the agenda for political discussion and formulate public opinion. In short, political discussion has powerful effects on political behavior.

Kim, Wyatt, and Katz (1999) in their study found that individuals who had a great interest in political affairs were more engaged in political discussion. Offline and online political discussion has profound effects on political efficacy (Rosenberg, 2007). Research also suggests that online discussion networks increase contribution to public affairs and lead the masses toward online political participation (Valenzuela, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2012). Klostad (2015) found a strong connection between political discussion and political engagement. Hao et al. (2014) claimed that interpersonal political communication and efficacy have a positive relationship with political participation.

Thus, this study posits the following hypotheses:

- H5: Political discussion is positively associated with internal political efficacy.
- H6: Political discussion is positively associated with interpersonal trust.
- H7: Political discussion is positively associated with political trust.
- H8: Political discussion is positively associated with both offline and online political participation.

Internal Political Efficacy, Interpersonal Trust & Political Trust (O₂)

The outcome orientations (O₂) represent cognitive and psychological outcomes. It predicts the expected result between news exposure (S₁) and political outcomes (R₂) (McLeod et al., 1994). In simple words, outcome orientation examines political attitude. This study specifies internal political efficacy, interpersonal trust, and political trust as a second orientation.

While understanding American voters in 1954, Campbell and his colleagues presented the concept of political efficacy. They defined it as the feeling which boosts the confidence of individuals and motivates them to realize that their political actions can affect the political process. Niemi, Craig, and Mattei (1991) defined it as the feelings of self-confidence to comprehend and take part in political activities. It is operationalized as the feeling of self-qualification (personal competence) to take part in politics. Political efficacy is an important psychological construct that stimulates behavior related to democratic norms. Efficacious individuals spend more time learning new information (Bandura, 1997). Efficacy is influenced by demographic and cultural factors. News media play a vital role in its formation (Kaid, 2004). It would not be out of place to mention here that the cynical depiction of politicians decreases political efficacy and participation (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995; Opdycke, Segura, & Vasquez, 2013).

Ahmad, Alvi, and Ittefaq (2019) in their study found that online political activities are significantly correlated with political efficacy and real-life participation. The results of their research further revealed that political efficacy has a great influence on political participation. Likewise, Javaid (2017) observed that a higher level of social trust and political efficacy leads to online political participation. In another study, Corcoran, Pettinicchio, and Young (2011) examined the impacts of efficacy on collective action using secondary data from 48 countries. They found that efficacy increases collective participation. This study endorses the role of political institutions in increasing efficacy. Karp and Banducci (2008) also agree with the view that political efficacy increases public participation in political activities. They observed the

relationship between efficacy and participation in twenty-seven democratic countries and concluded that those who had an association with large political parties were more efficacious. Several research studies provide some understanding of the relationships between internal political efficacy and political participation (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954; Delli Carpini, 2004; Niemi et al., 1991; Pinkleton & Austin, 2001; Reichert, 2018).

H9: Internal political efficacy is positively associated with both offline and online political participation.

Interpersonal trust, commonly known as social trust, refers to the level of individuals' belief about relying on the verbal or written statement of others (Rotter, 1967). This study takes it as social trust i.e. how much do people trust others in their daily life? In a democratic system, socio-political trust plays a very constructive role in granting legitimacy to a system and promoting voluntary cooperation (Uslaner, 2018). Democratic institutions are responsible for protecting trust in society. Kaase (1999) argued that individuals having a high level of social trust are more involved in public affairs.

Moy and Scheufele (2000) studied the influence of news media on social and political trust among a sample of 1714 respondents. They found that news media has a great influence on social trust. However, they found no relationship between media exposure and political trust. Norris (2002) is of the view that news media increases social capital. Similarly, Kaase (1999) ascertained that interpersonal trust has a positive impact on political action. Interpersonal and political trust shape perception about public affairs, arouse political actions, and contribute to good governance.

H10: Interpersonal trust is positively associated with both offline and online political participation.

Political trust, the third outcome orientation in this study, refers to the feeling that the government acts in the public's interest (Levi & Stoker, 2000). It shows the expectancy of the public about the functioning of government that is inevitable for the smooth functioning of a democratic system (Hetherington, 1998). Political trust is a significant predictor of political participation (Almond & Verba, 1963). In essence, a lack of trust in political institutions decreases participation in political activities (Hadjar & Beck, 2010). It is operationalized as the belief that the political system especially the national government works for the benefit of the masses regardless of class, caste, creed, or religion. There are two kinds of opinions about this political orientation. Firstly, negative news and critical portrayal of political personalities decrease the feelings of trust and promote political cynicism (Cappella & Jamieson, 1996; Kleinnijenhuis, van Hoof, & Oegema, 2006; Robinson, 1975). Secondly, news media strengthens political trust instead of deteriorating it (Norris, 2002).

Hadjar and Beck (2010) identified factors that influence non-voting behavior. This research reported that several social and motivational factors are responsible for non-voting behavior. The findings suggested that lack of political efficacy, interest, and trust are major factors for non-voting behavior. Putnam (2000) emphasizes the influence of political trust. According to him, political trust is the backbone of a democratic system. People participate in political activities when they believe that the political system is fulfilling their expectations. Another study conducted by Bélanger and Nadeau (2005) found a positive connection between political trust and voters'

choices in Canada. This study claimed that a lack of political trust adversely affects political participation. A positive aspect of this situation is that voters leave supporting traditional parties and give chance to new political parties in case of declining political trust. Hetherington (1998) established that declining political trust is one of the major reasons for democratic frustration. Therefore, trust in political leadership is indispensable for active political involvement.

H11: Political trust is positively associated with both offline and online political participation.

Political Participation (R₂)

R₂ represents a response that is the last constituent of the model. It is the eventual outcome behavior of news consumption. In the current study, offline/online political participation was considered a political outcome. Previous scholarly studies have dealt with political participation in the same way (Jung et al., 2011; Li & Chan, 2017; Yamamoto & Morey, 2019). Political participation refers to any individual or collective action at the local or national level that supports or opposes, intentionally or unintentionally, state authority (Conge, 1988). It is operationalized as any deliberate political act to demonstrate democratic rights which could be performed in both offline and online settings.

More specifically, political discussion and internal political efficacy have been identified as potential mediators (Chen, 2019; Chen & Chan, 2017; Park, 2019). Cho et al. (2009) empirically tested this model by merging two datasets of 2000 and 2004 U.S. elections and concluded that the influence of news consumption and advertising campaign exposure on political outcomes is mediated by political discussion, political messaging, and cognitive reflection. Likewise, Neo (2019) investigated the indirect effects of online political discussion on the political process among a sample of 525 respondents. The results showed that politically like-minded and dissimilar discussions play a significant mediating role between new media use and political participation. Similarly, Memon, Ishak, and Hamid (2018) argued that media influences political participation via interpersonal communication. The study of Xiaoming, Nainan, and George (2014) suggested the positive mediating role of political efficacy between online news and offline/online political participation. In a nutshell, several research studies indicated that political discussion and internal political efficacy play a positive mediating role between news media exposure and political participation (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2019; Jung et al., 2011; Li & Chan, 2017; Neo, 2019; Park, 2019; Shah et al., 2007; Tian, 2011; Xiaoming, Nainan, & George, 2014). Based on the literature review, the study posits the following hypotheses:

H12: Political discussion mediates the relationship between multiplatform news consumption and offline/online political participation.

H13: Internal political efficacy mediates the relationship between multiplatform news consumption and offline/online political participation.

Cho et al. (2009) suggested investigating the mediating role of different outcome orientations (O₂) in future studies. Following his suggestion, this study expands the O-S-R-O-R model of communication effects by investigating two new constructs interpersonal trust and political trust as outcome orientations. The role of interpersonal and political trust has yet to be fully explored. Li and Chan (2017) in their study found

insignificant mediating effects of political trust and suggested exploring it further in future studies. Thus, we're going to measure it in the following way:

H14: Interpersonal trust mediates the relationship between multiplatform news consumption and offline/online political participation.

H15: Political trust mediates the relationship between multiplatform news consumption and offline/online political participation.

Material and Methods

A cross-sectional web-based survey design vis-à-vis quantitative methodology resting in the positivism paradigm was employed to collect data from 444 respondents. The study population is included university students aged 18 to 33. Participants were selected with the help of a non-probability convenience sampling technique. The target population comprised students enrolled in four universities of Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan including Punjab University, University of Central Punjab, University of Management and Technology, and Lahore College for Women University. A questionnaire containing 56 close-ended items was constructed. The questionnaire was originally in English. For a better understanding of respondents, all items were translated into Urdu. The researcher created an online survey with the help of Google Forms. The URL of the survey was shared with 1200 students of the above-mentioned higher education institutes via Email and SNS. Overall, respondents took 10-15 minutes to complete the survey. A first invitation was sent on April 1st, 2020, and a concluding reminder was sent on May 15th, 2020. In the end, the researchers received 444 completed responses.

Measurement

Multiplatform News Consumption

Adopting a scale from the studies of Hao et al. (2014), and Livingstone and Markham (2008), this study measured multiplatform news consumption. Respondents were asked how much time they usually spend on different news mediums such as newspapers, radio, television, SNS, and the internet to get the latest information regarding current political events. Answer categories include (1) none, (2) less than 30 minutes, (3) 30-60 minutes, (4) 60-120 minutes, (5) 120-240 minutes, and (6) more than 240 minutes.

Political Discussion

This study measured political discussion on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*) by adopting a scale from Kim and Kim (2007). Participants were asked how much they had discussed politics or current events with their family, friends, and teachers (*Cronbach's a* = .70, *M* = 8.64, *SD* = 2.78).

Internal Political Efficacy

Internal political efficacy was measured by adopting a scale developed by Niemi et al. (1991). The scale included four items such as "I consider myself to be well qualified to participate in politics" (*a* = .82, *M* = 14.22, *SD* = 3.43).

Interpersonal Trust

Interpersonal trust scale was adopted from the study of Schiffman, Thelen, and Sherman (2010). It included seven items such as "Most salespeople are honest in describing their products". The mean score was calculated ($\alpha = .65$, $M = 20.82$, $SD = 3.82$).

Political Trust

This study measured political trust by adopting a scale from the study of Moy and Scheufele (2000). This scale is comprised of four items such as "The current government is trustworthy" and "Most people in the government are honest" ($\alpha = .84$, $M = 12.08$, $SD = 3.71$).

It is important to mention here that the responses of the above three constructs internal political efficacy, political trust, and interpersonal trust were evaluated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Offline/Online Political Participation

Offline/online political participation was measured by adopting a scale from previous studies of Jung et al. (2011), and Li and Chan (2017). Respondents were asked to rate twenty different political activities on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=never, 5=very often). Offline political participation scale included ten items such as "Participated in the political demonstration" ($\alpha = .84$, $M = 22.22$, $SD = 7.71$). Similarly, the online political participation scale also consisted of 10 items such as "Shared political content on SNS" and "Participated in online polls" ($\alpha = .92$, $M = 22.58$, $SD = 10.09$).

Socio-demographic Variable

In this study, gender, locality, age, ethnicity, sect, qualification, household income, and political party affiliation were measured as the socio-demographic variables.

Data Analysis

After the collection of data, the researchers checked the normality of data through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. To empirically verify hypotheses, the researchers adopted the partial least squares (PLS) based structural equation modeling (SEM) technique. Through this technique, we can test complex measurement and structural models that carry multiple predictors and outcome variables and above all, it works very well with a small sample size (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019). Besides, it can easily handle the reflective measurement model and provide more accurate results having the greatest statistical power (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). The current study adopted a two-stage approach. After controlling socio-demographics, the measurement and structural model were assessed separately. The measurement model was examined through convergent and discriminant validity. After determining model adequacy, the structural model was tested. For this purpose, PLS bootstrapping (number of bootstrap samples is 2000) was run to measure mediation hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

The study sample consisted of 444 respondents (Male=235, Female=209). 49.5% of respondents were aged 18-22, 39.4% belonged to 23-28, and 6% were between 29-33. Most of the participants belong to the urban area ($n=298$, 67.10%). Punjabi is the majority ethnic group ($n=384$, 86.50%). The majority of the respondents 199 (44.80%) had a bachelor's degree. Most of the respondents ($n=221$, 49.80%) had political affiliation with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. Table 1 presents the demographics of the sample.

Table 1
Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants
Sample Characteristics Frequency (N= 444) Percent (%)

Sample Characteristics	Frequency (N= 444)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	235	52.90
Female	209	47.10
Locality		
Rural	146	32.90
Urban	298	67.10
Age group (years)		
18-22	220	49.50
23-28	175	39.40
29-33	27	6.10
More than 33	22	5
Ethnicity		
Punjab	384	86.50
Pashtun	27	6.10
Baluch	5	1.10
Sindhi	7	1.60
Any other	21	4.70
Sect		
Ahle-Sunnat	365	82.20
Ahle-Hadith	32	7.20
Ahle-Tasih	24	5.40
Any other	20	4.50
Non-Muslim	3	0.70
Qualification		
Intermediate	61	13.70
Bachelor	199	44.80
Master	90	20.30
MPhil	84	18.90
PhD	10	2.30
Household monthly income (Rs)		
Less than 40000	129	29.10
40000-80000	143	32.20
80000-120000	86	19.40

More than 120000	86	19.40
Political party affiliation		
PTI	221	49.80
PMLN	47	10.60
PPP	3	0.70
Any other	18	4.10
None	155	34.90

While evaluating the measurement model, the researchers observed convergent and discriminant validity. The convergent validity was determined through composite reliability and AVE. Whereas, the discriminant validity was ascertained through the criteria of Fornell and Larcker (1981). A minimum .70 value for composite reliability and .50 for AVE are required (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2
Assessment of convergent and discriminant validity of reflective constructs

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Internal political efficacy	0.76	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Interpersonal political discussion	0.41	0.76	-	-	-	-	-
3. Interpersonal trust	0.09	-0.04	0.64	-	-	-	-
4. Multiplatform news consumption	0.31	0.37	-0.02	0.61	-	-	-
5. Offline political participation	0.49	0.51	0.09	0.33	0.78	-	-
6. Online political participation	0.50	0.46	-0.03	0.34	0.59	0.71	-
7. Political trust	0.07	0.06	0.32	0.06	0.10	0.07	0.78
Composite reliability	0.85	0.80	0.77	0.73	0.84	0.91	0.86
Average variance extracted (AVE)	0.58	0.58	0.41	0.37	0.35	0.51	0.62

Note. Diagonals (bold figures) are the square roots of average variance extracted. Whereas other entries represent the correlations among latent variables.

As shown in Table 2, three constructs including interpersonal trust, multiplatform news consumption, and offline political participation don't fulfill this criterion as their AVE is lower than .50. The composite reliability of all constructs ranged from .73 to .91. The discriminant validity criteria were also satisfied. In the structural model as shown in figure 2, beta and p -values can be observed in the inner model. A minimum of 1.96 t -value is recommended and the relationship is significant at a .05 level.

As hypothesized in H1, the relationship between multiplatform news consumption and interpersonal political discussion was significant ($\beta = .377, t = 9.24, p < .001$). Similarly, the relationship between news consumption and internal political efficacy was significant ($\beta = .184, t = 3.92, p < .001$). H2 was supported. However, the relationship between news consumption and interpersonal trust was not significant ($\beta = -0.006, t = 0.07, p = .939$). H3 was not supported. Hypothesis 4 predicted to have a positive association between news consumption and political trust. The results indicated no association between news consumption and political trust ($\beta = .052, t = 0.89, p = .372$).

Table 3
Results of direct effects

Hypotheses Path	β	SD	t value	Sig.
News consumption -> Political discussion	.377	.041	9.24	.000
News consumption -> Internal political efficacy	.184	.047	3.92	.000
News consumption -> Interpersonal trust	-0.006	.078	0.07	.939
News consumption -> Political trust	.052	.059	0.89	.372
Political discussion -> Internal political efficacy	.341	.046	7.38	.000
Political discussion -> Interpersonal trust	-0.041	.097	0.42	.672
Political discussion -> Political trust	.041	.061	0.69	.490
Political discussion -> Offline political participation	.378	.041	9.18	.000
Political discussion -> Online political participation	.296	.045	6.55	.000
Internal political efficacy -> Offline political participation	.334	.045	7.42	.000
Internal political efficacy -> Online political participation	.386	.041	9.33	.000
Interpersonal trust -> Offline political participation	.074	.063	1.17	.240
Interpersonal trust -> Online political participation	-0.07	.070	1.26	.317
Political trust -> Offline political participation	.028	.046	0.61	.538
Political trust -> Online political participation	.045	.049	0.91	.358

Hypothesis 5 assumed that political discussion would directly affect internal political efficacy. As shown in Table 3, the result confirmed that political discussion was significantly related to internal political efficacy ($\beta = .341$, $t = 7.38$, $p < .001$). H6 posited a positive association between political discussion and interpersonal trust that was not supported ($\beta = -0.041$, $t = 0.42$, $p = .672$). As predicted in H7, the relationship between political discussion and political trust was not supported ($\beta = .041$, $t = 0.69$, $p = .490$). Thus, H6 and H7 were not supported. Results supported H8, which predicted that political discussion was significantly correlated with both offline and online political participation. Political discussion was found to have a positive association with offline political participation ($\beta = .378$, $t = 9.18$, $p < .001$) and online political participation ($\beta = .296$, $t = 6.55$, $p < .001$). Likewise, internal political efficacy had a significant relationship with offline ($\beta = .334$, $t = 7.42$, $p < .001$) and online political participation ($\beta = .386$, $t = 9.33$, $p < .001$). H9 was supported. Moreover, the relationship of interpersonal trust with both offline ($\beta = .074$, $t = 1.17$, $p = .240$) and online political participation ($\beta = -0.07$, $t = 1.26$, $p = .317$) was nonsignificant. H10 was not supported. H11 also received no support as political trust was not positively associated with offline ($\beta = .028$, $t = 0.61$, $p = .538$) and online political participation ($\beta = .045$, $t = 0.91$, $p = .358$).

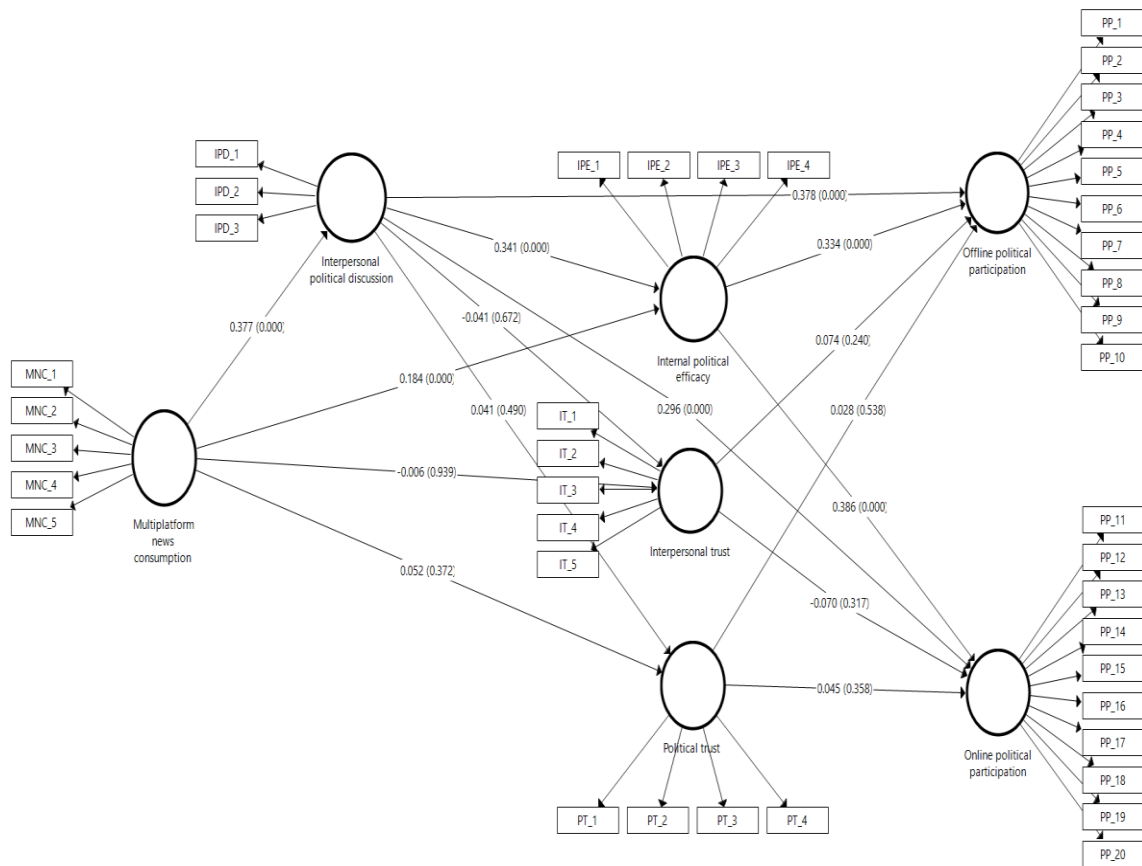


Figure 2. Structural model

Table 4
Results of indirect effects

Hypotheses Path	β	SD	t value	Sig.
News consumption -> Political discussion -> Offline political participation	.142	.023	6.05	.000
News consumption -> Political discussion -> Online political participation	.112	.022	5.01	.000
News consumption -> Internal political efficacy -> Offline political participation	.061	.019	3.24	.001
News consumption -> Internal political efficacy -> Online political participation	.071	.021	3.34	.001
News consumption -> Interpersonal trust -> Offline political participation	.010	.007	0.06	.948
News consumption -> Interpersonal trust -> Online political participation	.001	.007	0.06	.952
News consumption -> Political trust -> Offline political participation	.001	.004	0.36	.719
News consumption -> Political trust -> Online political participation	.002	.005	0.51	.604

As predicted in H12, the relationship between news consumption and offline political participation was mediated by political discussion ($\beta = .142, t = 6.05, p < .001$). Similarly, political discussion was also a significant mediator between news consumption and online political participation ($\beta = .112, t = 5.01, p < .001$). H12 was supported. H13 predicted the mediating effects of internal political efficacy on the relationship of news consumption and offline/online political participation. These results indicated that news consumption had an indirect positive relationship with

both offline and online political participation through internal political efficacy ($\beta = .061, t = 3.24, p = .001$ and $\beta = .071, t = 3.34, p = .001$, respectively). H13 was supported. With regards to the mediating role of interpersonal trust, findings showed that interpersonal trust was not a significant mediator between news consumption and political participation offline ($\beta = .010, t = 0.06, p = .948$) and online ($\beta = .001, t = 0.06, p = .952$). H14 was not supported. H15 was also not supported as no mediating effects of political trust were found on the relationship of news consumption and political participation offline ($\beta = .001, t = 0.36, p = .719$) and online ($\beta = .002, t = 0.51, p = .604$). Thus, these results support H1, H2, H5, H8, H9, H12, H13. However, the results of this study don't support H3, H4, H6, H7, H10, H11, H14, H15.

Discussion

Based on the results stated above, it is clear that multiplatform news consumption encourages the masses to discuss political issues. In line with previous studies (e.g. Ahmed, 2010; Kim et al., 1999; Martin, 2016; Pinkleton & Austin, 2001), these results indicate that news consumption has a positive and direct impact on political discussion and political efficacy. A famous theory of communication study agenda-setting theory posits that mass media sets an agenda for public discussion. In Pakistan, mass media has formulated a public opinion on important national issues such as Panama Leaks (Arshad, Ramzan, Ans, & Adeeb, 2019). Similarly, the results of this study endorse the previous studies which suggest that news media increases political efficacy.

This study measures interpersonal and political trust as outcome orientations. The results of these two constructs are not in line with prior scholarly studies. The relationship between news consumption and interpersonal trust is insignificant. Contrary to the findings of previous studies (e.g., Gross, Aday, & Brewer, 2004; Moy & Scheufele, 2000; Norris, 2002), the researchers have found no relationship between news consumption and interpersonal trust. Likewise, the relationship between news consumption and political trust is statistically nonsignificant. The empirical literature suggests that a high level of interpersonal trust leads people towards community involvement. It creates a prosperous, stable, and flourishing society. Moreover, trust in political leadership promotes political stability. A government can only claim to be a truly public representative when the majority of the masses endorse its policies. A high level of political trust strengthens the government and creates a suitable atmosphere for political actions.

In light of the results of this study, we can assume that mass media is not playing a considerable role in building political trust, especially at a time when there is a dire need to bring all stakeholders on the same page. Mass media seems not to have given priority to community affairs. It is the responsibility of the media to provide a platform to all stakeholders where they can openly discuss public issues. Needless to say, there is a lack of unity and consensus even on important national issues. Another important point that needs to be considered equally important is that negative media coverage decreases political trust and promotes feelings of negativity and cynicism (Cappella & Jamieson, 1996; Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2006). In Pakistan, media, especially electronic media, generally portrays a negative picture of politicians. While analyzing the political scenario, so-called intellectuals pass negative comments on the personal lives of politicians for gaining a cheap television rating point. They violate the code of ethics in the name of freedom of expression. As far as new media is concerned, there is no check and balance until you criticize the 'sacred cows' like the powerful military

establishment. On SNS, everyone is allowed to say whatever he wants. Political parties have established social media cells where their workers propagate incorrect information and photoshop images against rival parties. These nefarious activities on social media decline political trust. These results need to be examined keeping in view the performance of the PTI government during the COVID-19 outbreak. It seems that the ex-government lost its credibility due to its poor governance in Punjab. In this grave situation, it is not surprising to observe the insignificant results of interpersonal and political trust.

In addition, the results revealed that political discussion has a significant relationship with offline/online political participation. This is in line with what has been found in previous studies. These results clearly show that discussions related to political affairs encourage individuals to participate in the political process. Internal political efficacy is significantly correlated with offline/online political participation. This result is directly in line with the findings of Corcoran, Pettinicchio, & Young, 2011; Karp & Banducci, 2008; Reichert, 2018. Contrary to the study of Kaase (1999), the relationship between interpersonal trust and offline/online political participation is not statistically significant. The direct effects of political trust on offline/online political participation are not statistically significant. There is no relationship between political trust and political participation. The results contradict the claims of Kaase (1999) and Putnam (2000) that political trust increases contribution to political activities. In this scenario, the analysis of Hetherington (1998) seems true who asserted that a low level of political trust deteriorates contribution to political activities. Another factor responsible for declining political trust is negative media coverage that decreases political trust and promotes feelings of cynicism.

As per the claim of the communication mediation model, the results verify that political discussion is a potential mediating mechanism. A similar pattern of results is obtained in previous scholarly studies (see Ardèvol-Abreu et al., 2017; Cho et al., 2011; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2019; Li & Chan, 2017; Neo, 2019; Park, 2019; Shah et al., 2007; Tian, 2011). In line with previous studies (e.g. Chen 2019; Jung et al., 2011; Park 2019), the results of this study support the proposition proving that internal political efficacy significantly mediates between the relationship of news consumption and political participation. In other words, the significant mediating effects of political discussion and internal political efficacy show the relevancy of the communication mediation model in the political context of Pakistan. However, the mediating effects of interpersonal and political trust are not supported. Consistent with Li and Chan (2017), the researcher found that political trust is not a significant mediator between multiplatform news consumption and political participation. It can be inferred from the results of this study that news consumption via conventional and new media has profound effects on different political constructs. Consequently, multiple communication channels especially conventional and new media can be utilized to promote political discussion, impart political knowledge, disseminate political narratives, create awareness, formulate public opinion, enhance political efficacy, shape voting behavior, and above all increase political participation.

Validity and Usefulness of the O-S-R-O-R Model

Summarizing the above discussion, it can be said that the overall results are compatible with the O-S-R-O-R framework as we have observed significant indirect effects of political discussion (R_1) and internal political efficacy (O_2) between news

consumption (S_1) and political participation (R_2). As mentioned earlier, the pioneers of this model suggested measuring other variables as outcome orientations. In this study, two new constructs interpersonal trust and political trust have been examined as outcome orientations. The results reveal that both interpersonal and political trust are non-significant mediators. This study was conducted at a time when the COVID-19 outbreak was on the rise. The entire country remained under lockdown. The situation was out of control because the number of Corona cases was rising rapidly. In these adverse circumstances, how can people trust each other as well as political leadership? Interpersonal trust and political trust are two important constructs that encourage political activities. The future investigation must explore the role of interpersonal and political trust in post-Covid conditions.

Limitations, Implications, and Future Agenda

Like all studies, this research is also not free from limitations. In this study, a cross-sectional survey design was employed to obtain data from respondents. It is a fact that longitudinal design provides more causally strong evidence. Due to the limitations imposed by COVID-19, researchers had to collect data through an online self-administered questionnaire from university students. Similarly, the selection of participants was finalized through a non-probability sampling technique '*convenience sampling*'. Therefore, this study is unable to generalize results to all young people in Pakistan. Another important limitation is that this study tests the political communication effects model in a non-election year. Data was collected during the COVID-19 lockdown that might disturb the results. A low response rate is also a major issue in online surveys. The researcher shared the survey's URL with 1200 respondents. In the end, only 444 complete responses were received.

Despite limitations, several theoretical and practical implications can be drawn from this research. This study has made a theoretical contribution to the existing literature of the O-S-R-O-R model by exploring the role of two new constructs interpersonal trust and political trust. The study adds to the body of knowledge in the area of political communication. In addition, political campaign planners can utilize the results of this study to make their election campaigns effective. Media practitioners can also take help from this study. They can reshape editorial policy by concentrating on content quality, style, and news presentation.

In future, a researcher should employ a longitudinal research design and check the level of political participation by collecting data before and after the election. A two-wave panel survey will improve our understanding of how political communication affects political action. Future investigations should generalize results by having a true representative sample. In addition to measuring demographic characteristics in initial orientation, future studies can evaluate motivational factors such as guidance, social utility, entertainment, and surveillance. Future studies can investigate the role of second screening for news *i.e.* mobile phones as the stimulus. Future investigations should explore other forms of reasoning such as social media expression. The upcoming research should shed more light on outcome orientation by investigating the role of different constructs such as political knowledge, political interest, political cynicism, and attitude strength. Future studies should take into consideration other dimensions of efficacy such as political information efficacy and collective efficacy. Other forms of political action such as political protest need to be examined. It also remains for future researchers to test this model in the election year.

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