Social Media Use And Political Attitude Formation; A Case Study Of Five Public Sector Universities Of Kpk.

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ABSTRACT

Internet and social media consumption has increased dramatically all over the world. The usage of internet and social media has opened new horizon for political actors and their audiences. The current study explored the usage as well as the power of social media in creating political awareness and formation of political attitude. Five public sector universities of Khyber Pukhtoon Khwa were selected for the study. The sample of 500 students was drawn through the stratified sampling technique. To accomplish the objectives and hypotheses of the current study cross-sectional survey design was adopted. A well structured questionnaire was developed to collect the data of all the dependent and independent variables of the studies. The data was analyzed with the help of SPSS 21.0 Version applying statistical test of Pearson correlation .The results shows that there is a positive correlation between social media and political attitude formation of the respondents. Keeping in view the importance of topic it is recommended that the study should be expanded to the whole country to get more valuable results regarding social media use and political communication.

Key Words: Social media, Political awareness, Political attitude

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has grown into a low-cost and highly effective medium for conveying political messages to a large audience,. Social media is also used to establish and propagate political ideology and preferences. In recent years, the usage of the internet and social media has exploded all across the world. The internet and social media have changed the face of global politics. This is a basic instrument that political activists can use to promote awareness and establish political beliefs in their campaigns. Technology has had a significant impact on our lives in recent decades. The most profound changes have most likely occurred in mass communication. The world's media was virtually non-existent prior to the industrial revolution. When life began to change, however, the mass media began to evolve in a variety of ways. People rely on the media to fulfill specific needs and attain specific goals.

Pakistan has the fastest growing social media users that connect people around the world regularly. So this has opened the minds of the people of Pakistan. They can see what is happening around the world. How different governments are with their people. How people of other countries getting their rights on issues that the people of Pakistan cannot achieve. Over the years we have seen how people have used social media to convey their messages. It can be a simple marketing technique to promote a new brand or raise your voice against the injustices of the politics; social media has become a reliable and consistent source for people to get their thoughts transmitted.

In Pakistan, the emergence of social media is not as pulsating as compared to those countries where Internet is a common utility. But its fusion with cellular phones made it possible to access social networking sites by people living even in the far-flung regions. This connection was made possible by social networks. Social media is a platform that gives people the power to connect, share, discuss and follow the conversations of others. There is no limitation on connectivity as long as both parties are willing to communicate, so that social networks a place where people from all over the world are connected. This vast

connection gives people the opportunity to understand different cultures and different ways of life from all over the world. Pakistan, too, is not far behind in this connectivity.

Social media is one of the most favorite medium for communication among the youth of Pakistan. Political leaders, parties and activists also use for communication for the purpose of engagement of their voters, supporters and followers. Social media is also extensively used by Government officials, ministers, opposition leaders, ISPR and other politicians and directly communicate with their audiences to build their relationship through easy and quick means of communication. It is observed most of the political actors, government officials, and political activists in Pakistan are using Twitter and Facebook for communication to get desire objectives which help them to build relationship with their audience. Social media was started in Pakistan in 1995. According to internet source (We are Social, 2020) the total population of Pakistan is 218.7 million in which 164.9 million (75% of the total population) have mobile connections, 76.38 million are internet users (37% of the total population) and 37 million are social media users (17% of the total population). Different social media tools are used by the people of Pakistan i.e. 37 million are Facebook users having annual growth is + 1 million, 6.4 million use Instatgram, 1.83 million use twitter, 6 million use Linkedin.

Research objectives

- To give the detail demographic profile of the respondents.
- To explore the use of internet by the students of KPK universities.
- Explore the use of social media sites by the youth in terms of frequency of using and time spending on different social media applications.
- To investigate, the role of social media in formation of political attitude of youth.

Research Hypotheses

H.1   Higher the exposure of internet, higher will be the use of social media

H.2   Higher the use of social media, higher will be the political attitude formation.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

We are living in digital age, and the whole world is considered as "Global Village". By the turn of new millennium, internet was became a basic part of everyday life. In recent years, democracy is developing day by day with the help of new information technologies because policy makers and citizens are now directly interact with each other with the help of the new inventions (Loader & Mercea, 2011).

Social media is getting popular day by day and is used for promotional activities. Twitter is extensively used by different political leaders, armed forces, and government officials for conveying their messages to their target audiences(Muntean, 2015). It was also found that Twitter users are more interested and engage in politics and rely on Twitter as compared to the mainstream media like newspaper, TV etc. (Dutta & Bhat, 2016). Similarly Facebook, Whatsapp, YouTube are also used for information, entertainment and for political purposes. Social media has been highlighted in politics and considered to be very influential in political participation (Muntean, 2015). The 2008 and 2012 US presidential election is one of the best example of effectiveness of social media in politics in which Obama and Romeny spent considerable amount of money on social media especially on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (Muntean, 2015). Social media also is also used very affectively in mobilizing the youth for protest. In 2011, youth in London made a protest against unemployment in the country. Another example is protest against the re-election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2009 and Egyptian protest against the long life dictatorship of President Husni Mubarak who shutdown internet for five days (Muntean, 2015). On different occasions, young adults used video sharing and social network sites to get information regarding campaign. These site were also used for exchange of political views and support for a candidate(Kushin& Yamamoto, 2010).The usage of social media like Facebook, Twitter, mobile phone etc. is more than the usage of TV (Kafka, 2012).Social media have great influence not only on opinion formation but also on political participation especially on voting behavior (Zaheer, L. 2016). Social media provide platform to users to express their views, opinions, and participate in open discussion without any restrictions as compared to the traditional media.

To realize the importance of social networking, political parties of Pakistan are also using social media for communication purposes and propagate their messages to the target audience. Politicians as well as political parties in Pakistan use social media to inform the public about their political activities. Social media also use to counter the controversy which is created by the opponents. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) uses social media like Facebook and Twitter to attract and propagate the party's messages to urban and

youngones. Chairman PTI, Imran Khan has more than 3.9 million followers on his official Twitter account, as PTI official twitter account has 2 million followers. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leading official Maryam Nawaz has over 2 million followers on twitter. Bilwal Bhutto has more than 1.3 million followers on twitter. Similarly on Facebook, PTI is well ahead from other political parties with 4.3 million people liking the party page while Shahbaz Sharif alone has 1.3 million likes on his official page on Facebook(Rizvi, 2016).

Social networking websites encourage loyalty and reciprocity standards among users by generating the illusion that they are linked to others and by increasing their understanding of the others (Gil de Zúñiga, 2012). For example, the current links and networks of Facebook users are strengthened by being briefed on what is happening with their contacts (Hayes, Smock, & Carr, 2015; Nabity-Grover, Cheung, & Thatcher, 2020). Such a need for social contact will contribute to "inadvertent meetings" of political knowledge shared across social networking sites (Kushin, 2010).

The main distinction between SNSs and other media is that they ingest political content. While most media have a small audience, SNSs allow people to interfere with their views in a political environment and enter and respond in ways not before imaginable. Bertot, Jaeger, and Hansen (2012) reported that SNSs encouraging people to "make, circulate and comment on their own political material". Research by Pew before 2012 shows that about a quarter of eligible voters use SNSs like Twitter and Facebook to debate and pick votes (Rainie, 2012). According to the Becker, (2012), much of the material available on websites throughout the social network is not comparable to the experiences of the user. This suggests that the bulk (nearly 73 percent) of people of the social network networks disagree with their peers' views and feedback on current affairs and 38 percent of these are genuinely shocked by their political views and findings.

The important issue, though, is to the degree that enhanced dissent and disparities in viewpoint will affect the ability of the users to share their political opinions in the sense of social media. Some research (Gajora, 2011; Kalaboukis & Kim, 2011) on the one hand, shows that exposure to various political debates may lead to certain online deliberations (Messing & Westwood, 2014; Tsfati, Stroud, & Chotiner, 2014). However, other research (S. Valenzuela, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2012) indicates a detrimental association between attention to conflicts democratic involvement. In the end, social networking offers an area where people's exposure has a social impact (Kwon, Stefanone, & Barnett, 2014). Another form of sociality can limit or promote person activity and connectivity in SNS (Z. J. I. Papacharissi, Communication & Society, 2016; Whiting & Williams, 2013), which is a decreased privacy and higher degree of peer-to-peer monitoring and an active networking opportunity can be provided at greater pace through offline social contacts. However, there are more interpersonal and community effects as social network platforms provide greater sociality. Mou and Xu (2017) have examined the effects of the usage of SNS and online democratic dialogue in China. They analyze Chinese net users' political practices to understand the effect on political attitudes and political engagement of social media in this region. Their association between the internet platform and the usage of social networking platforms in online political debates was modest but constructive.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology is a way to find out the result of a given problem on a specific matter or problem that is also referred as research problem. In Methodology, researcher uses different criteria for solving/searching the given research problem. Different sources use different type of methods for solving the problem. Methodology is the way of searching or solving the research problem.

Proposed place of work and facilities available

Present research work is conducted in the five universities of KPK named as Kohat University, University of Malakand, University of Peshawar, University of Science and Technology Bannu, and Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. Universities were selected by the researcher seen the time frame and suitability. Researcher also gets help from the administrative departments of these universities. Different internet sources were also used by the researcher to explore the number and characteristics of the target audience. The study was conducted through cross-sectional survey method which is appropriate for the current study.

Methods of data collection

The data was collected through questionnaire. The questionnaire was given to the target audience by hand. All the questions in questionnaire were comprised close ended questions. Different questions were coded with different scales

Sampling technique and procedure

The sample is selected from the population through stratified sampling technique. Stratified Sampling is the probability sampling technique in which the population is divided in different strata and then the sample is selected through simple random sampling technique. In the current study, stratified sampling technique is used. The whole population is the total students of the five public sector universities of KPK.

Sample size

The sample was selected on the basis of Dr. John Curry (2007) formula and500 students were selected from five different universities of KPK.

IV.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table No.1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid %	Cumulative %
Age	18 to 19	190	38.00	38.00	38.00
	20 to 21	204	40.80	40.80	78.80
	22 to 23	102	20.40	20.40	92.20
	More than 24	4	0.80	0.80	100.00
Gender	Male	401	80.20	80.20	80.20
	Female	99	19.80	19.80	100.00
Education	Under Graduate	263	52.60	52.60	52.60
	Graduate	111	22.20	22.20	74.80
	Post Graduate	126	25.20	25.20	100.00
House Hold Income	Less than 15,000	64	12.80	12.80	12.80
	15,000 to 20,000	162	32.40	32.40	45.20
	20,001 to 25,000	54	10.80	10.80	56.00
	25,001 to 30,000	38	07.60	07.60	63.60
	More than 30,000	182	36.40	36.40	100.00
Residential Status	Urban	305	61.00	61.00	61.00
	Rural	195	39.00	39.00	100.00

The above table No. 1 shows the detailed demographic profile of the respondents. The table shows age, gender, education, house hold income and residential status of the students of KPK public sector universities. The table reveals that from the 500 maximum number of students belongs to 18-19 and 20 to 21years age i.e. 38% and 41% respectively. 20.40% falls in22 to 23 years age and only 0.80% falls in More than 24 years age. While 80.20% (401) of the respondents are males and 19.80% (99) are females respondents. 263 (52.60%) are Under Graduate students, 111 (22.20%) are Graduate students and 126 (25.20%) are Post-Graduate Students. As far as their house hold income is concerned table shows that 36.40% of respondent's house hold income remains Rs.30,000, 32.40% of respondent's fall in to the category of 15,000 to 20,000 house hold income ,12.80% of respondent's house hold income is Less than Rs. 15000,10.80% of respondent's house hold income is Rs.20,001 to 25,000, 7.60 of respondent's fall into the category of Rs. 25,001 to 30,000 house hold income . 61% of respondents belong to urban areas and 39% belong to rural areas.The demographic profile of the students shows that most of the students of the study are young, resident of urban areas and having good household income.

Table No.2: Frequency of Internet Use by Students of KPK Universities

Category	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid %	Cumulative %
Very Frequently	132	26.40	26.40	100.00
Frequently	306	61.20	61.20	73.60
Occasionally	46	09.20	09.20	12.40
Rarely	14	02.80	02.80	03.20
Never	02	0.04	0.04	0.04

The above Table No. 2 shows the Frequency of Internet Use by Students of KPK Universities 61.20% students Frequently use internet, 26.40% student use internet Very Frequently, 09.20% students use

internet Occasionally, 02.80% students use internet Rarely and 0.04% of students Never use internet. In the light of above findings, most of the respondents use internet "Very Frequently" and "Frequently" i.e. more than 80% of respondents use internet very frequently and frequently and very little percentage i.e. 02.80 use internet rarely.

Table No. 3: Frequency of using social media Applications by the Respondents

Social Media	Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Facebook	190(38 %)	190(38 %)	41(8.2 %)	45(9 %)	34(6.8 %)
Twitter	32(6.4 %)	26(5.2 %)	49(9.8 %)	62(12.4%)	331(66.2 %)
YouTube	204(40.8 %)	171(34.2 %)	55(11 %)	51(10.2 %)	19(3.8 %)
Email	20(4 %)	92(18.4 %)	61(12.2 %)	151(30.2 %)	176(35.2 %)
Blogs	0(0 %)	0(0 %)	39(7.8 %)	31(6.2 %)	430(86 %)
LinkedIn	39(7.8 %)	0(0 %)	5(1 %)	16(3.2 %)	440(88 %)
WhatsApp	323(64.6 %)	144(28.8 %)	1(0.2 %)	5(1 %)	27(5.4 %)
Instagram	96(19.2 %)	65(13 %)	8(1.6 %)	23(4.6 %)	308(61.6 %)
Viber	0(0 %)	0(0 %)	4(0.8 %)	31(6.2 %)	465(93 %)
LINE	0(0 %)	0(0 %)	4(0.8 %)	22(4.4 %)	474(94.8 %)
Any other	0(0 %)	0(0 %)	0(0 %)	16(3.2 %)	484(96.8 %)

The Table No 3 shows the frequency of using social media applications by the students of KPK universities. The table reveals that 76% use Facebook frequently, 17.20% use "Occasionally and Rarely" and only 6.8% never use Facebook. Similarly 11.60% use twitter frequently, 22.20% rarely and 66.20% never use Twitter. 75% of YouTube frequently, 21.20% use occasionally and only 3.8% never use YouTube. The above table also reveals that 93% of the respondents use Whatsapp frequently and very little number of students use use it occasionally. The rest of the social media applications have very little percentage usage as mentioned in above table. According to the above results it is found that majority of the respondents of the study use only facebook, youtube and whatsapp for their communication with others.

Table No.4: Per Day Time spending on Social Media

Social Media	Less than one hour	1 to 2 hours	3 to 4 hours	More than 4 hours	Never
Facebook	108 (21.6%)	165 (33%)	71 (14.2%)	147 (29.4%)	9 (1.8%)
Twitter	304 (60.8%)	69 (13.8%)	4 (0.8%)	5(1%)	118 (23.6%)
YouTube	140 (28%)	132 (26.4%)	122(24.4%)	64(12.8%)	42(8.4%)
Email	312(62.4%)	41(8.2%)	21(4.2%)	21(4.2%)	105(21%)
Blogs	229(45.8%)	37(7.4%)	0(0%)	21(4.2%)	213(42.6%)
LinkedIn	173(34.6%)	5(1%)	21(4.2%)	0(0%)	301(60.2%)
WhatsApp	74(14.8%)	28(5.6%)	114(22.8%)	245(49%)	39(7.8%)
Instagram	113(22.6%)	8(1.6%)	35(7%)	52(10.4%)	292(58.4%)
Viber	100(20%)	11(2.2%)	0(0%)	21(4.2%)	368(73.6%)
LINE	171(34.2%)	0(0%)	11(2.2%)	0(0%)	318(63.6%)
Any other	156(31.2%)	12(2.4%)	2(0.4%)	0(0%)	330(66%)

Table No. 4 shows the time consumed per day on by students of KPK universities on social media. The table shows that 20% of the students of KPK universities use Facebook, 49% use Whatsapp for more than 4 hours per day. Similarly more than 10%, 20%, of the students of KPK universities use Facebook, YouTube and Whatsapp respectively for 3 to 4 hours per day. The above table also reveals that except Facebook, YouTube, twitter and WhatsApp, rest of the mentioned social media applications are used by the of the students of KPK universities for less than one hour per day. According to results, it is found that most of the students use Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp for different purposes.

Correlations

Table No.5: Correlation between Internet use and Social Media use

		Internet Use	Social Media Use
Internet Use	Pearson Correlation	1	.520[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	500	500
Social Media Use	Pearson Correlation	.520[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	500	500
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

In the above table No. 5 Pearson correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between internet use and social media use. The table shows that there is a significant relationship between internet use and social media use at alpha = 0.01. For the relationship between internet use and social media use (r^2 = 0.52 p, 0.01) suggests that the two variables have explained 52 percent of relationship. So the research hypothesis which states "Higher the exposure of internet, higher will be the use of social media" is accepted.

Table No.6: Correlation between Social Media use and Political Attitude Formation

		Social Media Use	Political Attitude
Social Media use	Pearson Correlation	1	.514[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	500	500
Political Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.514[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	500	500
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

In the above table No. 6 Pearson correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between social media use and political attitude formation. The table shows that there is a significant relationship between social media use and political attitude formation at alpha = 0.01. For the relationship between social media use and political attitude formation (r^2 = 0.514 p, 0.01) suggests that the two variables have explained 51 percent of relationship. So the research hypothesis which states "Higher the use of social media, higher will be the political attitude formation" is accepted.

V. DISCUSION

The usage of internet and social media has changed the politics in the world. This is used as a basic tool for political campaign for political activists to create awareness, political opinion formation. Social media has become costless and extremely effective tool for propagation of political message to mass audience. According to the results, the correlation between internet use and social media use, it is clear that there is positive correlation between internet use and social media. According to current study, political attitude is dependent on social media use. The results of the study conducted by Swigger, (2013) suggest that the content on social media can shape the attitude of the individuals. Lindgren, (2017) said that online media have a great impact on the life of our society. Ahmad & Ittefaq, (2019) noted that almost everyone has a smart phone and use internet and social media in any form. People like to participate in debate on social media and express their views

VI. CONCLUSION

It is concluded that most of the students use internet frequently. It is also concluded that maximum students use Facebook and WhatsApp for more than 4 hours a day. Similarly very little ratio of the students use social media for less than one hour which means students like to use social media and spend maximum available time on social media. It is also concluded that there is a positive correlation between social media and political attitude which means that political attitude formation is dependent on social media use.

VII. RECOMENDATIONS

The current study recommends some key suggestions for future research in the discipline of social media and political communication that are following:

1. The study should be expanded to the whole country and compare with other developed country studies.

2. The current study was limited only to the students of different universities, in future, the study should be extended to other youth of the country.
3. Universities should regularly conduct this kind of research as most of the people rely on social media.
4. The data of this study was collected in 2018 and at that time the social media was new phenomena but now Social Media become part and parcel of all the social activities. So future study in this field will give more valuable results regarding social media use and political communication.

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