ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE IN DISTRICT LAKKI MARWAT PAKISTAN

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Abstract:Existing studies undertaken by researchers have identified a positive correlation between social media and citizen's political participation. But mostly these studies took place in developed states and also neglected social media impacts oncitizens political engagement in rural and marginalized areas. To fill the scientific gap, current research study intends to analyze social media impacts on political engagement in the remote area of Pakistan i.e. LakkiMarwat. Furthermore, Literacy has also been inserted as a control variable. To test the linkage between aforementioned variables, current study utilized a structured interview schedule where 384 respondents were taken as a representative sample. Besides that, for analysis purposechi-square statistic was used atBi and Multivariate levels. Furthermore, correlation test has also been carried out on data to determine association between aforementioned variables. The findings revealed that social media affects individual political behavior; creates political awareness;and develops individual political knowledge hence facilitates their

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participation in civic and political activities. On the other hand, study also hinted that social media platforms expose individuals to the unwarranted political information and manipulative campaign of political parties.These findings contribute to the existing literature by providing new insights into how social media affects individual political participation.

Keywords: Social media, political participation, District LakkiMarwat, online political campaigns.

Introduction

Political participation empowers citizens in a democratic society to notify the government about their perceptions regarding its policies.[1] Political participation is critical for the development of democracy where ordinary people by participating in political activities somehow affect political apparatus.[2] To sum up, political participation entails i.e. participating in campaigns, joining political processions, and also exercising constitutional right of voting at elections.

Research on social media effects on political engagement—including SNS, and political blogs— sparked after Facebook in 2006 and Twitter in 2009 became operational. Newer media provide a platform where netizens could learn about socio-politico matters,[3] besides that, these platforms and other political WebPages-blogs also assist offline political activism. Jiang by analyzing internet impacts on the political spectrum stated that besides developing users' political efficacy, it also induces them toward political and election-related activities.[4] Another identical studyundertaken by Kahne, Middaugh, and Allen also identified thatdigital platform provides an

[1]Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[2] Robert Alan Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

[3] Muhammad Ashraf Khan and Muhammad YasirShahbaz, "Role of social networking media in political socialization of youth of Multan," *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* 35 (2015): 437-449.

[4]Liang Jiang, "The effects of the internet on online and offline political participation among citizens in Australia," *66th Annual International Conference of British Political Science Association*, Brighton, United Kingdom, March 21-23, 2016.

avenue where users can get access to dynamic content and simultaneously engage in political processes.[5]

Regarding social media political effects, the research findings of Kroh and Neiss is consistent with thetheoritical underpinning that digital media platforms act as tool for—rather than an instigator of—political participation.[6] Furthermore, another researcher i.e. Boulianne has also questioned consistency in the association between social media platforms usage and political engagement.[7] Contrary to the aforementioned finding, other research studies on social media political effects, e.g. Earl and Kimport[8] and Pearce and Kendzior[9] have indicated that persistent social media users whether in developing or in developed states are prone toward civic and political activities.

Social media relevance in the political campaign has been acknowledged by political parties. According to Rustad and Sæbø, political parties and politicians extensively utilize newer media to disseminate their political agendas.[10] According to SaqibRiaz, in Pakistan political parties extensively utilize newer media to affect common citizens.[11] Numerous parties' active

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[5] Joseph Kahne, Ellen Middaugh, and Danielle Allen, "Youth, new media, and the rise of participatory politics," *Youth and Participatory Politics Research Network*, 1 (2014): 1-25.

[6] Martin Kroh and HannesNeiss, "On the causal nature of the relationship between Internet access and political engagement: Evidence from German panel data," In *Digital media and political engagement worldwide: A comparative study,* eds. Eva Anduiza, Michael J. Jensen, and LaiaJorba(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 160-176.

[7]Shelley Boulianne, "Social media use and participation: a meta-analysis of current research," *Information, Communication & Society* 18, no.5, (2015): 524-538.

[8] Jennifer Earl and Katrina Kimport, *Digitally enabled social change: Activism in the Internet age*(Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011).

[9] Katy E. Pearce and Sarah Kendzior, "Networked authoritarianism and social media in Azerbaijan," *Journal of Communication* 62 (2012): 283-298.

[10]Erik Rustad andØysteinSæbø, (2013) "How, Why and with Whom Do Local Politicians Engage on Facebook?," In Electronic Participation, eds. Maria A. Wimmer, EfthimiosTambouris, and Ann Macintosh (Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg,2013), 69-79, accessed July 4, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-40346-0_7

[11]SaqibRiaz, "Effects of New Media Technologies on Political Communication," *Journal of Political Studies* 1, no.2 (2010): 161.

usage of digital media from 2008 onward has transformed the dynamics of Pakistani politics.[12] Muhammad Atif while observing newer media influence on the 2013 election in Pakistan stated that numerous emerging and established parties in Pakistan e.g. PTI, MQM, PML-N, have utilized digital platforms for campaign purposes.[13] The usage of digital platforms by political parties in Pakistan for campaign purposes since 2008 has changed the electorate's perception toward participating in political and electoral processes. Likewise in District LakkiMarwat's dynamic levels of political activism since the 2008 General election onward has brought into focus possible association between social media and political engagement. Higher political activism was seen during the 2013 election in NA-27 constituency as total turnout was 53%[14] against 47.44% in the 2008 election, only to slide back in the 2018 election i.e. 50.06%.[15]

Current Focus

So the rationale for undertaking this research study has to do with analyzing social media role in affecting political engagement in District LakkiMarwat by employing interview schedule where different questions i.e. digital media affects public opinion; affects political behavior, and facilitates political participation,etc have been asked from sampled population with the view to analyze newer media impacts on citizen's political engagement. In the study, literacy has also been inseted as a control variable to ascertain how does it affect social media and political participation association.

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[12]AbidaEijaz, "Impact of New Media on Dynamics of Pakistan Politics," *Journal of Political Studies* 20, no.1 (2013): 113-130.

[13]Muhammad Atif, "The Role of Social Media in Changing Future of Pakistan," *The Nation*, February 11, 2013.

[14] General Election 2013 NA-27 turnout, Election Commission of Pakistan, accessed July06,2020, https://www.ecp.gov.pk/Documents/Downloads/General%20Election%202013/Detailed%20Gazz ette/Notification%20-%20National%20Assembly.pdf

[15] General Election 2018 NA- 36 turnout, Election Commission of Pakistan, accessed July 06, 2020, https://www.ecp.gov.pk/ConstResult.aspx?Const_Id=NA- 36&type=NA&Election_ID=10070&Election=GENERAL%20ELECTION%2025%20JUL%202 018

Literature review

Regarding the literature on newer media, numerous sociologists, and political scholars have carried out numerous studies on dynamic facets of digital media.[16] Present study is concerned with political aspects of newer media particularly its effects on individualspolitical engagement in rural area i.e.LakkiMarwat.

Social media political effects can be judged by the way it provides access to political information, besides that it also facilitates political awareness and provide users with online voting options.[17] Newer media has become pivotal for the dissemination of information about politics,[18] thus instigates its users to participate in traditional platforms. Another identical study undertaken by Barbara and Thomas also shows that usage of digital platform for news-information acquisition is correlated to dynamic range of political activities.[19] Besides that, studies conducted by Clarissa David[20] and Cleas H. Vrees&Hajo have also revealed similar conclusion: constant news acquisition induces activism by enhancing individual understanding of socio-politico issues and movements.[21]

This paragraph analyzes literature pertaining to social media role in providing mobilizing political information to its users. According to Lemert, mobilizing political content has three

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[16] Guy J. Golan, Phillip C. Arceneaux, and Megan Soule, "The Catholic Church as a public diplomacy actor: An analysis of the pope's strategic narrative and international engagement," *The Journal of International Communication* 25 (2019): 95-115.

[17] Frederic I. Solop, "Digital Democracy comes of Age: Internet Voting and the 2000Arizona Democratic Primary Election," *PS*: *Political Science & amp; Politics* 34, no. 2 (2001): 289-293, doi:10.1017/S104909650100052X

[18] Ian McAllister, "Internet use, political knowledge and youth electoral participation in Australia, *Journal of Youth Studies* 19, no.9 (2016): 1220- 1236, DOI: 10.1080/13676261.2016.1154936

[19] Barbara K. Kaye and Thomas J. Johnson, "Online and in the know: Uses and gratifications of the Web for political information," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 46, no. 1 (2002): 54-71.

[20] Clarissa C. David, "Learning political information from the news: A closer look at the role of motivation," *Journal of Communication* 59, (2009): 243-261.

[21] Claes H. Vreese and HajoBoomgaarden, "News, political knowledge and participation: The differential effects of news media exposure on political knowledge and participation", *ActaPolitica* 41, (2006): 317-341.

major kinds: (a) identificational (b) locational, (c) and tactical.[22] Sebastian Valenzuela while analyzing social media role in protest behavior stated that only digital media provide ample opportunities and avenues to access and obtain dynamic kinds of mobilizing political information[23] as classified by Lemart. In contrast, the traditional news media i.e. mass media is usually self-constrained to transmit mobilizing content as they fear being tagged biased violating norms of neutrality.[24]

To analyze political impacts of newer media in the context of Pakistani politics, UsamaKhilji in his article entitled "Polls & Social Media" stated that nature of newer media is more democratic than mainstream media because it enables individual's to freely exercise their right of opinion expression, and also share & receive political content, based on this rationale it can be substantiated that benefits of social media outweigh the challenges it poses for the successful working of Election in Pakistan.[25] Contrary to aforesaid magazine article where social media role in Pakistan is considered non-threatening for both citizens and elections, Ramsha Jahangir while criticizing newer media stated that credibility and authenticity of political content on social media are difficult to determine, besides that it also exposes users to fake information shared and propagated by dynamic political groups.[26] It can be deduced from the analysis of both articles that newer media besides being the repository of political content has also been utilized by dynamic political groups for manipulative campaigns to influence voters.

From the above introductory and literature review sections where social media effects on political participation have been discussed, it is clear that study on the subject has been carried

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[22] James B. Lemert, *Does mass communication change public opinion after all? A new approach to effects analysis* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1981).

[23] Sebastian Valenzuela, "Unpacking the Use of Social Media for Protest Behavior: The Roles of Information, Opinion Expression, and Activism," *American Behavioral Scientist* 57, no. 7 (2013): 920-942, https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764213479375

[24] Lindsay H. Hoffman, "Is Internet content different after all? A content analysis of mobilizing information in online and print newspapers," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 83 (2006): 58-76.

[25] UsamaKhilji, "Polls & social media," *Digital Rights Monitor*, July 25, 2018, accessed June 20, 2020, https://digitalrightsmonitor.pk/polls-social-media/

[26] Ramsha Jahangir, "How political parties manipulate cyberspace for electioneering," *Herald*, July 24, 2018, accessed June 20, 2020, https://herald.dawn.com/news/1398599/how-political-parties-manipulate-cyberspace-for-electioneering

out by prominent researchers and political writers in developed states, while its effects on the rural and marginalized area in Pakistan i.e. LakkiMarwat has not been determined yet. In this context,present study highlights social media impacts on citizens political engagement inmarginalized area of Pakistan i.e. LakkiMarwat.

After analyzing existing literature on the subject of social media impacts on political engagement, research studies pertaining to education effects on political engagement is discussed here, since in this study it acts as a control variable between independent and dependent variables. Yet lack of available studies on subject of determining social media correlation with political participation in comparison to individual level characteristics i.e. "education" has restricted literaure analysis to some studies.Wolfinger and Rosenstone in their research study "In Who Votes?" analyzed different factors to determine which one significantly affect political engagement, their findings revealed that education is the major predictor of political participation.[27] Megan Fountain stated that engagement in political process has not just been influenced by social media, but rather it's the accumulation of dynamic individual characteristics including educational level that determine political attitude towards engaging in voting.[28]

Methodology

Sample size

Present study is quantitative by nature as primary data has been acquired throughstructured interview schedule from 384 sampled respondents in District LakkiMarwat, and later on analyzed with quantatative analysis techniques. According to Roger and Joseph, in quantitative research researcher utilizes fixed measurement tools where every respondent is asked of similar questions.[29] The sample size for the research study has been taken from the table given by Robert V. Krejcie and Daryle W. Morgan, which is a minimum of 384 respondents as a

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[27]Raymond E. Wolfinger and Steven J. Rosenstone, *Who votes?* (New Haven and London:Yale University Press, 1980).

[28] Megan Fountain , *Social Media and its Effects in Politics: The Factors that Influence Social Media use for Political News and Social Media use Influencing Political Participation*, The Ohio State University, December 2017, accessed 14, July, 2020, https://kb.osu.edu/bitstream/handle/1811/81616/Thesis_Megan_Fountain.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[29] Roger Wimmer and Joseph Dominick, *Mass media research: An introduction 9th ed* (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011)

representative sample for any unknown population.[30] The sampling technique was purpose base i.e. those who were 18 years of age or above, and having some knowledge and understanding of social media role in the political spectrum. Purposive sampling comes under the non-probability sampling category. This type of sampling does not adhere to non-zero probabilities of selection.

Conceptual framework

Conceptual framework of the present research was designed with the independent variable (Social media), dependent variable (Political Participation) and control variable (Literacy). To determine social media effects on political participation, tests ranging from uni-bi- and multivariate were done on data, later on correlation testing was alsobing applied on data to ascertain association between independent variable;control variable, and dependent variable.

Table 1, Conceptual framework

Control Variable	Independent variable	Dependent variable
Literacy	Social media	Political Participation

Indexation and realiability testing

All statements of the dependent variable at the bi-variate levelwasindexed by combining all the items into a single variable for measurement. Likewise, at multivariate level, dependent and independent variable was alsoindexed for analysis. After that, reliability testing was also carried out to ascertaininternal consistency of all items viaCronbach's alpha. Though, Cronbach's alpha coefficient results show the value of independent and dependent variables more than 0.7.

Data analysis techniques

Primary data was converted to SPSS 25 version, where multiple analysis tests rangingfrom uni-bi-and multivariate were run on it for analysis purpose. At Bi-variate and Multivariate level, significant and non-significant data was being drawn by running chi-square

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[30] Robert V. Krejcie and Daryle W. Morgan, "Determining sample size for research activities," *Educational and psychological measurement* 30, no.3 (1970): 607-610, https://doi.org/10.1177/001316447003000308

tests,meanwhile to confirm the relationship between independent and dependent variables, correlation analysis testing was carried out. while at univariate analysis, percentages and frequency distribution tests were run on data, after that univariate and bi-variate results were inserted in separate tables for a better presentation of study findings.

Results and discussion

Data is analyzed in order of (a) Demographic profile of the respondents (b) Uni-variate analysis (c) Bi-variate analysis (d) Multivariate. Research findings were also being compared with existing literature to ascertain their accuracy.

Demographic profile of the respondents

Determining individual age is critical to ascertain their understanding of prevalent socio-politico matters. The statistical data in the below table shows that 53.4% of respondents belonged to the age group of 18-30, after that 24.2% to 31-40 group, 9.6% to 41-50 group, while 8.1% and 4.7% belonging to the age groups of 51-60, and 61-above respectively. Besides that, statistical results as shown in table 2 indicated that 59.9% of individuals were married, while 40.1% belonging to the category of unmarried. Moreover,majority of respondents were government officials as shown in the following table, after that 10.2% were Farmers, 11.5% individuals were Businessmen, while 22.1% and 24.7% were Students and Any others. Determiningrespondent's education status is critical because usuallysurvey consists of complex questions and where relevant responses on some questions are difficult to obtain without taking into consideration educational status of the study population. In this regard, 90.9% of sampled respondents were literate. On the question of vote casting, 47.9% of individuals showed their interest in it, followed by 20.8% who responded in no, while 31.3% of individuals were unsure about it. Notwithstanding aforementioned finding where individuals were positive towards casting vote in election, onquestion about their interest in joining political and election campaigns, 36.7% individuals responded in not interested, 24.5% shown interest just in organize campaigns, where 26.0% individuals responded in don't know at all, while 12.8% respondents were in favor of participating in general political and election campaigns.

Table 2, Personal information of respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18 to 30	205	53.4%
31 to 40	93	24.2%
41 to 50	37	9.6%
51 to 60	31	8.1%
61 and onward	18	4.7%
Total	384	100.0%
Martial Status		
Married	230	59.9%
Unmarried	154	40.1%
Total	384	100.0%
Profession		
Government profession	121	31.5%
Farmer	39	10.2%
Businessman	44	11.5%
Student	85	22.1%
Any other	95	24.7%
Total	384	100.0%
Literacy rate		
Literate	349	90.9%
Illiterate	35	9.1%
Total	384	100.0%
Participation in voting		
Yes	184	47.9%
No	80	20.8%
Don't Know	120	31.3%

Total	384	100.0%
Participation in political-election campaigns		
Participate only in organize political and election campaign	94	24.5%
Participate in general political and election campaign	49	12.8%
Not Interested at all	141	36.7%
Don't Know for sure	100	26.0%
Total	384	100.0%

Source: Structured interview schedule

Findingsanalysis from uni-variate perspective

In this section, research findings have been analyzed and compared with previous research studies. Onquestion of whether using digital platform affects individual political behavior, on this 46.4% acknowledged it, followed by 19.3%, and 34.4% responded in disagree and unsure respectively. On a question about whether they acknowledge social media's role in disseminating political awareness, on this 39.6% agreed, 20.1% disagreed, while 40.4% selected unsure option regarding its influence onindividual's awareness. On the question of whether you feel being exposed to unwarranted political contents and manipulative campaigns of parties on digital platform i.e. Facebook, on this 45.6% considered themselves as exposed to it, while 20.6% and 33.9% individuals selected disagree and unsure options. 45.6% of individuals acknowledged that digital platform harnesses political knowledge and facilitates politico-civic engagements, contrary to that 20.6% thought indifferently, while 33.9% were unsure about it. Research finding regarding whether on digital media individuals are susceptible to mobilizing political news and information shows that 35.7% individuals acknowledged it, others 22.4% disagreed, while 41.9% of individuals were unsure about it. 49.2% of respondents agreed, others 14.8% disagreed, while 35.9% were unsure when questioned regarding do newer media i.e. Facebook, and Twitter affects opinion construction and individual mobilization. On a question about do younger generation is gradually abstaining from institutionalized forms of activism, and instead drawn towards social media for political activism, on this 50% agreed, 10.2% disagreed, while 39.3% were unsure about it. Regarding the question do social media platform produces politically networked younger cohorts, majority of respondents i.e. 58.6% agreed with the statement, followed by 8.3% disagreed, while 33.1% chooses an unsure option. Regarding the

question do others users political opinion on the political matter at social media somehow influences individual opinion, on this 26% responded in agreed, followed by 30% disagreed, while 43.2% remained undecided. Regarding the question do parties campaigns on social media at election eve affects individual political orientation, on this 20.6% stated yes, followed by 32% disagreed, while 47.4% individuals were oblivion about its effects on their political orientation. 20.6% of respondents agreed, 32% disagreed, while 47.4% remained unsure concerning the possible linkage between patterns of political participation on social networking sites and political identity construction. On a question about do you support Government initiative to provisionally shutdown digital media e.g. Facebook ahead of 2018 election, on this 24.7% agreed, 30.7% individuals disagreed, while 44.5% were unsure about it.

The aforementioned findings indicated that social media platform affects individual political attitude. Besides that,negative role of social media in exposing users to unwarranted political content has also raised questions about its relevance.Notwithstanding aforementioned finding, research study indicated that respondents acknowledged social media role in developing their political knowledge and also facilitating their engagement in civic and political activities, the finding is somehow in consonance with the study of Gbue Doris: on newer media, the availability of political content besides developing citizen's political understanding also influences their mobilization.[31] Contrary to that, Ramsha Jahangir stated that political content on these platforms could be threatening for ordinary people because on social media authenticity of information is judged based on how many people have shared it.

The result shows that 41.9% study population was oblivion whether digital media exposes individuals to politically mobilizing content. This is contradictory to the findings of Bennett and Segerberg: social media platform besides being providing politically mobilizing content also facilitates its member's participation in political movements.[32] The study identified that digital media exert influence on public opinion and also individual's political mobilization,

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[31]Gbue Doris, *An assessment of the role of social media in political education and mobilization*, Department of Mass Communication, Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria, February 2014, Accessed July 06, 2020, https://makurdijournal.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/an-assessment-of-the-role-of-social-media-in-political-education-and-mobilisation-by-doris-gbue.pdf

[32] W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg, "Digital media and the personalization of collective action: Social technology and the organization of protests against the global economic crisis," *Information, Communication & Society* 14 (2011): 770-799.

this is in consonance with the study where it was observed that newer media besides affecting opinion also influences an individual's engagement in politics, particularly when it comes to voting behavior.[33]

Research study identified that younger generation is gradually abstaining from institutionalized forms of activism, and instead drawn towards social media for political activism, this is compatible with existing research finding i.e. optimists argued that in present time digital political platforms e.g. political webs have the potential to transform politics, it implies that besides bringing dynamic groups of people in politics, it also provides ample avenues for more political activism.[34] The research finding shows that digital media produces politically networked younger cohorts, this finding is identical to the research study conducted by Ayesha Karamat and Ayesha Farooq, they analyzed correlation between usage of social media and political activism by stating that majority of individuals reported that prior to social media usage they were not active in political processes, while other's stated indifferently, thus it concluded that social media platforms instigate younger cohorts political activism.[35]

According to Stieglitz, Brockmann, and Xuan, forging of political communication among politicians and common individuals on digital media has a strong correlation to each other.[36] Likewise,Ramsha Jahangir in the context of Pakistan stated that manipulation of digital media platforms by parties for campaign was started since2013 General election,[37]based on this rationale, citizens at election-eve could be easily accessible via social media platform by political

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[33]AindrilaBiswas, Nikhil Ingle, and Mousumi Roy, "Influence of Social Media on Voting Behavior," *Journal of Power, Politics & Governance* 2, no.2 (2014): 127-155.

[34]Arthur Sanders, The Internet and National Elections: "A Comparative Study of Web Campaigning," *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 5, no. 1 (2008): 147 148, DOI: 10.1080/19331680801979062

[35] Ayesha Karamat and Ayesha Farooq, "Emerging Role of Social Media in Political Activism: Perceptions and Practices," *South Asian Studies* 31, no. 1 (2016): 381-396.

[36]Stefan Stieglitz, Tobias Brockmann, and Linh Dang-Xuan, "Usage of social media for political communication," *16th Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems (PACIS)*, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July 2012.

[37]Ramsha Jahangir, "How political parties manipulate cyberspace for electioneering," *Herald*, July 24, 2018, accessed June 20, 2020, https://herald.dawn.com/news/1398599/how-political-parties-manipulate-cyberspace-for-electioneering

parties. Another identical research finding of Marcus Michaelson also revealed that in Pakistan numerous parties' members have active digital media accounts which they use for informing voters about their political manifestos.[38] These findings indicate that during election time political parties via digital media can easily influence and change citizen's political orientation, these results clearly contradict current research finding where the study population was oblivion about whether political parties' campaigns on social media platform at election-eve affect their political orientation.

Table 03 Uni-Variate analysis (Social media)

S. No	Social media	Agree	Disagree	Unsure	Total
1	Does usage of social media platform affects your political attitude?	178(46.4%)	74(19.3%)	132(34.4%)	384(100%)
2	Do you acknowledge social media role in creating and disseminating political awareness among citizens?	152(39.6%)	77(20.1%)	155(40.4%)	384(100%)
3	Do you feel being exposed to unwarranted political information and manipulative campaign of parties on digital platform e.g. Facebook?	175(45.6%)	79(20.6%)	130(33.9%)	384(100%)
4	Is social media platform harnesses political knowledge and facilitates citizen participation in civic-political activities?	175(45.6%)	79(20.6%)	130(33.9%)	384(100%)
5	Do digital media platform exposes you to politically mobilizing news and content?	137(35.7%)	86(22.4%)	161(41.9%)	384(100%)
6	Do digital media exert influence on public opinion and also individual's political mobilization?	189(49.2%)	57(14.8%)	138(35.9%)	384(100%)
7	Do you agree that younger generation is gradually abstaining from institutionalized forms of activism, and instead drawn	194(50. %)	39(1O.2%)	151(39.3%)	384(100%)

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[38] Marcus Michaelsen, *New Media vs. Old Politics The internet, Social Media, and Democratisation in Pakistan* (Berlin: fesmedia Asia and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2011).

	towards social media for political activism?				
8	Do you find social media role in producing politically networked younger cohorts?	225(58.6%)	32(8.3%)	127(33.1%)	384(100%)
9	Do you find user's opinion on political matter at digital media somehow influences your opinion?	100(26%)	118(30.7%)	166(43.2%)	384(100%)
10	Do you think that political parties' campaign on digital platforms at election eve affects your political orientation?	79(20.6%)	123(32%)	182(47.4%)	384(100%)
11	Do you find a link between patterns of political participation on social networking sites and political identity construction?	79(20.6%)	123(32%)	182(47.4%)	384(100%)
12	Do you support Government initiative to provisionally shutdown digital media e.g. Facebook ahead of 2018 election?	95(24.7%)	118(30.7%)	171(44.5%)	384(100%)

Source: Structured Interview Schedule

Analysis from the bi-variate perspective

The statistical technique of chi-square has been employed to identifysignificant and non-significant association between independent and dependent variables. Usage of social media affects individual political attitude is significantly ($P=0.003$) correlated with political participation, followed by other research questions correlation with participation i.e. digital media role in creating and disseminating political awareness among citizens ($P=0.000$), exposed to unwarranted political information and manipulative campaign of parties on digital platform e.g. Facebook ($P=0.002$), digital media platform develop understanding of political matters and facilitates civic-political participation ($P=0.000$), digital media affects formulation of public opinion and also individual's political mobilization ($P=0.000$), younger generation gradually abstaining from institutionalized forms of activism, and instead drawn towards social media for

political activism (P=0.000), social media role in producing politically networked younger cohorts (P=0.000), political parties' campaign on digital platforms at election eve affects political orientation (P=0.000), relationship between patterns of political participation on social networking sites and political identity construction (P=0.000), and Government initiative to provisionally shutdown digital media e.g. Facebook ahead of 2018 election (P=0.000).

The research finding pertaining to social media platforms exert influence on public opinion and also individual's political mobilization is significantly (P=0.000) associated with the dependent variable, this result is identical to the findings of Masahiro Yamamoto, he stated that on social media those individuals who join socio-political causes and movements receive mobilizing political information, as a result, this creates dynamic opportunities for citizens to participate in political activities.[39]Contrary to aforementioned paragraphs, a non-significant association exists between digital platform exposing users to mobilizing political news (P=0.330) and political participation. This research finding is inconsistent with existing findings of Michael Xenos and Patricia: social media even encourage neutral individuals to take part in socio-politico movements, thereby further mobilizing them on both online and offline platforms.[40]

Non-significant correlation also exists between an individual's opinions on the political matter at social media somehow influences other's opinion expression (P=0.012), and dependent variable.

Social media harnesses political knowledge and facilitates citizen participation in civic & political activities is significantly (P=0.000) related tothe dependent variable, yet this finding is not supported by either existing findings of Malcolm Gladwell or John. B Alterman. According to Malcolm Gladwell, no such relationship exist b/w digital media and political change, as it does not bring about citizens political activism.[41] Likewise the findings of John Alterman also

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[39]MasahiroYamamoto, "Weblogs as agents of political participation: Mobilizing information in weblogs and print newspapers," *Annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication*, San Francisco, August 2006.

[40] Michael Xenos and Patricia Moy, "Direct and differential effects of the Internet on political and civic engagement," *Journal of Communication* 57 (2007): 704-718, doi:10.1111/ j.1460-2466.2007.00364.x

[41] Malcolm Gladwell, "Small Change: why the revolution will not be tweeted." *The New Yorker*, October 4, 2010, accessed June 21, 2020, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/04/small-change-malcolm-gladwell

support skeptical approach toward social media political effects, according to him the surge in political movements in early 2011 has not been brought by social media, but rather by mass electronic media e.g. TV. He further argued that digital media has not played any new role in political activism, but rather somehow identical to one played by traditional media.[42]

Table 04, Bi-variate: association between social media and political participation

S,N.	Statements	Responses	Political Participation			Total	
			Agree	Disagree	Unsure		
01	Usage of social media platform affects political attitude.	Agree	77(56.6%)	38(50%)	63(36.6%)	178(46.4%)	x^2 =16.064 p =0.003
		Disagree	26(19.1%)	15(19.7%)	33(19.2%)	74(19.3%)	
		Unsure	33(24.3%)	23(30.3%)	76(44.2%)	132(34.4%)	
		Total	136(100%)	76(100%)	172(100%)	384(100%)	
02	Social media role in creating and disseminating political awareness among citizens.	Agree	74(54.4%)	39(51.3%)	39(22.7%)	152(39.6%)	x^2 =43.696 p =0.000
		Disagree	12(8.8%)	15(19.7%)	50(29.1%)	77(20.1%)	
		Unsure	50(36.8%)	22(28.9%)	83(48.3%)	155(40.4%)	
		Total	136(100%)	76(100%)	172(100%)	384(100%)	
03	Exposed to unwarranted information and manipulative campaign of parties on digital platform.	Agree	73(53.7%)	39(51.3%)	63(36.6%)	175(45.6%)	x^2 =17.209 p =0.002
		Disagree	29(21.3%)	18(23.7%)	32(18.6%)	79(20.6%)	
		Unsure	34(25%)	19(25%)	77(44.8%)	130(33.9%)	
		Total	136(100%)	76(100%)	172(100%)	384(100%)	
04	Social media	Agree	67(49.3%)	28(36.8%)	42(24.4%)	137(35.7%)	x^2 =22.105

[42]John B. Alterman, "The Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted", *The Washington Quarterly* 34, no.4 (2011): 103-116, DOI: 10.1080/0163660X.2011.610714

	platform harnesses political knowledge and facilitates participation in civic-political activities.	Disagree	21(15.4%)	15(19.7%)	50(29.1%)	86(22.4%)	p =0.000
		Unsure	48(35.3%)	33(43.4%)	80(46.5%)	161(41.9%)	
		Total	136(100%)	76(100%)	172(100%)	384(100%)	
05	Digital media platform exposes you to politically mobilizing news and content.	Agree	76(55.9%)	33(43.4%)	80(46.5%)	189(49.2%)	x^2 =4.605 p =0.330
		Disagree	20(14.7%)	12(15.8%)	25(14.5%)	57(14.8%)	
		Unsure	40(29.4%)	31(40.8%)	67(39%)	138(35.9%)	
		Total	136(100%)	76(100%)	172(100%)	384(100%)	
06	Digital media exert influence on public opinion and also individual's political mobilization.	Agree	67(49.3%)	11(14.5%)	35(20.3%)	113(29.4%)	x^2 =47.699 p =0.000
		Disagree	14(10.3%)	5(6.6%)	29(16.9%)	48(12.5%)	
		Unsure	55(40.4%)	60(78.9%)	108(62.8%)	223(58.1%)	
		Total	136(100%)	76(100%)	172(100%)	384(100%)	
07	Younger cohort gradually abstaining from institutionalized forms of activism, and instead drawn towards social media for political activism.	Agree	85(62.5%)	46(60.5%)	63(36.6%)	194(50.5%)	x^2 =29.140 p =0.000
		Disagree	5(3.7%)	6(7.9%)	28(16.3%)	39(10.2%)	
		Unsure	46(33.8%)	24(31.6%)	81(47.1%)	151(39.3%)	
		Total	136(100%)	76(100%)	172(100%)	384(100%)	

08	Social media role in producing politically networked younger cohorts.	Agree	102(75%)	51(67.1%)	72(41.9%)	225(58.6%)	x^2 =38.934 p =0.000
		Disagree	4(2.9%)	7(9.2%)	21(12.2%)	32(8.3%)	
		Unsure	30(22.1%)	18(23.7%)	79(45.9%)	127(33.1%)	
		Total	136(100%)	76(100%)	172(100%)	384(100%)	
09	User's opinion on political matter at digital media somehow influences your opinion.	Agree	50(36.8%)	14(18.4%)	36(20.9%)	100(26%)	x^2 =12.861 p =0.012
		Disagree	37(27.2%)	25(32.9%)	56(32.6%)	118(30.7%)	
		Unsure	49(36%)	37(48.7%)	80(46.5%)	166(43.2%)	
		Total	136(100%)	76(100%)	172(100%)	384(100%)	
10	Political parties' campaign on digital platforms at election eve affects your political orientation.	Agree	76(55.9%)	46(60.5%)	53(30.8%)	175(45.6%)	x^2 =34.532 p =0.000
		Disagree	25(18.4%)	11(14.5%)	28(16.3%)	64(16.7%)	
		Unsre	35(25.7%)	19(25%)	91(52.9%)	145(37.8%)	
		Total	136(100%)	76(100%)	172(100%)	384(100%)	
11	Link between patterns of political participation on social networking sites and political identity construction.	Agree	51(37.5%)	7(9.2%)	21(12.2%)	79(20.6%)	x^2 =40.791 p =0.000
		Disagree	27(19.9%)	28(36.8%)	68(39.5%)	123(32%)	
		Unsure	58(42.6%)	41(53.9%)	83(48.3%)	182(47.4%)	
		Total	136(100%)	76(100%)	172(100%)	384(100%)	

12	Support Government initiative to provisionally shutdown digital media ahead of 2018 election.	Agree	24(17.6%)	12(15.8%)	59(34.3%)	95(24.7%)	x^2 =20.882
		Disagree	54(39.7%)	27(35.5%)	37(21.5%)	118(30.7%)	p =0.000
		Unsure	58(42.6%)	37(48.7%)	76(44.2%)	171(44.5%)	
		Total	136(100%)	76(100%)	172(100%)	384(100%)	

Source: Structured interview schedule

Correlation analysis

To confirm the association between independent variable: Social media, control variable:literacy, and dependent variable i.e.political participation, Pearson's correlation test was used (See Table 05). The result of the test indicated that aforementioned variables (independent-Control) were positively and significantly correlated with dependent variable (political participation).

Table05 Correlation analysis: ascertaining correlation between control-independent variables with dependent variable.

Control-Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Correlation
Literacy(control variable)	Political participation	0.78
Social media (independent)		0.346[***]

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Structured interview schedule.

Analysis from Multivariate perspective(Control variable: Literacy)

Multivariate testing was done on research data to determine influence of literacy on the association between social media (independent) and political participation (dependent). The results in Table 5 indicated that from literate or educated respondents perspective, highly significant (P =0.000) association do exist between independent and dependent variable. Besides that, fromilliterate respondents perspective,non-significant($p = 0.325$) association do exist between aforementioned variables. Furthermore, association between independent and

dependent variable in literate respondents was observed spurious and found non-spurious in illiterate respondents. It could be inferenced from multivariate findings that educatedrespondentspolitical participation is significantly affected by social media.The aforementioned multivariate finding is identical with the research thesis of Megan Fountain, after analyzing findings she stated that it is not that the less education a person has, more frequently he or she utilizes newer media for political content, but rather the relationship is opposite: educated citizen's tends to utilize social media platforms for obtaining political information,[43]After mentioning that educated citizen's tends to use social media more for political content as Megan research has shown, Sidney verba and his associates in their "Voice and Equality" stated thatthe factor which influences and predict engagement in political processes is political information,[44] therefore as newer media is used by educated individuals for information pertaining to politics, it also affects their political participation.

Table 06, Multivariate analysis of data: Determining literacy (Control Variable)influnce on independent and dependent variable association.

Background Variable	Social media	Political Participation			Total	Statistics
		Agree	**Disagree**	**Unsure**		
Literate	Agree	71(55.9%)	32(45.7%)	37(24.3%)	140(40.1%)	x^2 =44.516 $p = 0.000$
	Disagree	37(29.2%)	18(25.7%)	39(25.7%)	94(26.9%)	
	Unsure	19(15%)	20(28.6%)	76(50%)	115(33%)	
	Total	127(100%)	70(100%)	152(100%)	349(100%)	

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[43] Megan Fountain , *Social Media and its Effects in Politics: The Factors that Influence Social Media use for Political News and Social Media use Influencing Political Participation*, The Ohio State University, December 2017, accessed 14, July, 2020, https://kb.osu.edu/bitstream/handle/1811/81616/Thesis_Megan_Fountain.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[44] Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics* (Harvard University Press, 1995).

Illiterate	Agree	5(55.6%)	3(50%)	6(30%)	14(40%)	x^2 =4.653
						$p = 0.325$
	Disagree	2(22.2%)	2(33.3%)	3(15%)	7(20%)	
	Unsure	2(22.2%)	1(16.7%)	1155(%)	14(40%)	
	Total	9(100%)	6(100%)	20(100%)	35(100%)	

Source: Structured interview schedule

Conclusion

Present research is being analyzed at four levels i.e. (1) personal information of respondents, (2) Uni-Variate analysis, (3) Bi-Variate analysis (4) Multivariate analysis. On questions pertaining to personal info, maximum number of individuals were aged between 18-30 years. Besides that, most of them were educated. Respondents were positive toward vote casting at2018 election, but on the question of participating in political-election campaigns, they showed no interest. At uni-variate analysis, percentages and frequency distribution techniques have been selected. Findings revealed that on positive side social media besides being active in disseminating political awareness also developindividual's political understanding, thus facilitates their participation in civic and political activities. In addition to that, it also affects formulation of public opinion andindividual's political mobilization, thereby attracts younger cohorts toward digital platforms for political activism. Research findings also identified negative aspects of social media i.e. it exposes users to unintentional political information and manipulative campaign of parties. Research results identified that respondents were oblivion about whether political parties' campaign on digital platforms at electioneve affect their political orientation, this shows that ordinary people have yet to understand social media influence on their political choices. Another identical finding also indicated that the study population was uncertain about whether digital media platforms exposes them to politically mobilizing content. At bi-variate level,chi-square analysis technique was employed to identify significant and non-significant data. With the exception of research questions i.e. do digital media platforms exposes individual to politically mobilizing news, and user's opinion onpolitical matter at digital media somehow influences individual opinion, other questions showed significant association withdependent variable. At

multivariate level, from educated individual's perspectivehighly significant ($P =0.000$) andspurious association was observed between independent and dependent variable.