ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS A CASE STUDY OF NAROWAL

Dr Muhammad Kamran Khan[*1], Lubna Naz[2], [3]Ansar Ali

[*1]Associate Lecturer Department of Mass Communication & Media University of Narowal, Narowal;
[2]M.Phil Department of Mass Communication & Media University of Narowal, Narowal;
[3] M.Phil Scholar, Department of Mass Communication and Media University of Narowal, Narowal

[*1]kamran.khan@uon.edu.pk; [2]lubnaikramikram7@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *

ABSTRACT

The current study looked into how youngster's use of social media has influenced their political awareness. In August 2022, a survey of college students was carried out. The results of this survey showed that a significant portion of the respondents engaged in political activity on social media. Current research work collected survey research from 150 students of various universities located in Narowal by using simple random sampling techniques among the population of Narowal. The extent to which respondents participated in political campaigns and were persuaded to cast ballots in upcoming elections was highly correlated with their engagement in debate of national concerns. Only a small percentage of respondents engaged in conventional political activity. This result highlighted the need to increase youth involvement in institutional politics in order to foster civic minds. In the study, three hypotheses were developed, the first to determine the connection between the variables. The second and third hypotheses are used to determine the prediction and the difference, respectively. I created the SPSS software, which is used to evaluate data, in accordance with hypotheses and the requirements of the research technique. Calculating the mean, standard deviation, and frequencies of variables is done using descriptive statistics. This study will have effects on social media, political awareness, research, and the formulation of public policy. This will enable us to offer recommendations for various political movements among young people. The results of this study may also be used to support future qualitative research employing a sizable sample.

Key words: Social Media, Political Awareness, youth

INTRODUCTION

When we discuss the media, we also discuss the advancement of society and technology, as well as persistent and constant change. Through the media, we learn about the world around us and keep up with current events. Social media is a wonderful and really useful innovation. It has become one of the most crucial platforms for young people to discuss and express their opinions on daily lives as well as matters of importance on a national and international scale. In the realm of the internet, social media networks like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and others are not only innovative, but their influence on the general public opinion is also growing quickly.

Youth in Pakistan are embracing social media as a platform to learn about politics and increase political awareness in order to spread their political ideals. Recently, the average person, students, leaders, and even political parties have begun to use social media to promote their views and opinions on matters at home and abroad and to get the support of the general public. According to Owen, the introduction of the internet and other digital communication technologies has increased young people's use of social media. For the young, social media is like a hot cake since it allows them to interact with their loved ones and serves as a forum for discussing politics.

Facebook Usage

Facebook encourages exposure to political mobilisation and increases access to political information; as a result, the platform may be used to entice previously unmotivated individuals to participate in offline political activities. Facebook's accessibility and interactive features can therefore successfully serve as what is now known as "gateway participation." However, studies show that Facebook is more convincing than conventional media (Ahmad, D. 2020). Similar to this, Facebook offers novel and similar options for information exposure, but it also offers universal accessibility, superior quality, and faster loading times, in addition to serving as an interactive forum for political discussions online. Thus, by utilizing these capabilities, Facebook demonstrates its significant contribution to the spread of political knowledge (Bakker &Vreese 2011).

Furthermore, young people nowadays will get their political news through social media like Facebook rather than from more conventional sources like radio, television, and newspapers. The provided information is more dynamic, approachable, succinct, and simple to understand. Young people routinely share political topics, their ideas about politics, news and educational articles, interactions with political figures, and videos about political events online (Lahabou& Wok, 2011). Therefore, it is acceptable to argue that Facebook is an effective medium for educating young people about politics and subsequently increasing their offline political engagement. According to Coleman et.al (2008), political knowledge is a collection of factual and accurate information on politics or political actors that is reserved in a permanent memory Political knowledge has been cited as one of the crucial political factors that can serve as a reliable predictor of how well a democracy will ultimately function over time (Ksiazek & Lessard 2014). Therefore, in order for voters to make wise selections or choices, it is essential that they have a proper understanding of politics (Eijaz, A, 2013). Citizens in a well-organized and democratic nation must possess practical knowledge, transferable skills, and a morally upright mentality (Farson, H. (2013).

Rationale of the study:

As a result of social media's transformative effects, political parties are now considering its influence. Since information flow is crucial for shaping policy as well as defining adolescent interest in and awareness of politics, it is asserted that the media significantly transforms issues related to national policy.

1.10 Objectives of the Study

➢ To analyze the influence of social media on youth socio-political life.
➢ To evaluate direction of youth thinking on the political leadership.
➢ To assess the beneficial and preferred form of social media for youth.
➢ To evaluate the attitude of youth towards social media and measure the spending time on social media.

Hypotheses

➢ There is a significant relationship between Social Media use and Political Awareness in Youth.
➢ There is no difference in Social Media use and Political Awareness in Youth on the bases of Gender.

Literature Review

Utilizing social media websites like Facebook and Twitter has a huge impact on how politics is reported, claims Strandberg (2011). Users of social media who are interested in politics are more likely to be able to purposefully seek the relevant political material on those platforms. One of the predictors and forecasts of political involvement, particularly for public participation in the political process and voter turnout, in the context of general elections is the use of social media for political acts and activities. It is claimed that there is a direct and positive relationship between "political involvement among college students" and "intensity of Facebook usage for political aims." Facebook fosters connections between young people and college students. College students' involvement in politics Young people and college students can obtain political information, improve their political effectiveness, and amass political knowledge through Facebook.

The web's and social media's influence on Pakistan's political development is "gradual, relevant, and intensifying" (Ejaz, 2013). This statistics showed that 8,055,680 users in Pakistan are using Facebook, according to Facebook insights from 2013. In Pakistan, this number was used primarily by male

customers (70 percent), compared to only 30 percent of female customers, and data also shows that young people between the ages of 18 and 24 make up the largest age group. Political parties and leaders in Pakistan used social media to communicate with one another and recruit supporters. They focused on young people in particular because the age group is rapidly growing through online networking platforms. PTI, PPP, PML-N, and other ideological groups are active in Pakistan (Kugelman. M. 2012). In his study "Educational Institutions and Political Awareness in Pakistan: A Case Study of Punjab," Muzaffar (2016) discovered that Pakistani educational institutions, their atmosphere, and their curricula are not inculcating the knowledge in the secondary school diploma students. The study's findings indicated that there was a 7.17% level of political awareness. This study is very thorough, but it only looked at political awareness as it was measured in educational institutions. Its goal is to find out how social media affects students in BS and M. Phil programs in terms of raising their level of political awareness.

In recent years, Facebook has frequently been used to mobilize individuals for political activism and global protests (Carlisle & Patton, 2013). Specifically, Facebook seems to have expectations for increasing political involvement and bolstering democracy, especially in western democracies where experts are concerned about the loss of youth in political activities (Putnam, 2000). But this means that Facebook might alter as well, inspiring people who may have been disengaged from offline political activities to now take part in political activities like voting. The information provided is typically easier to understand, more user-friendly, and interactive. Youth commonly share political news and information, as well as their personal ideas and opinions, on social media.

Methodology

These study intentions to explore the Effects of Political Activitism on University students by the Social Media .This study follow Particular methodology which provide base as well as help to dig out the facts related to this study.

Research Design:

Kumar (2011) explained that research design as a main function which use to answer the research questions and in terms of any enquiry research design play an important role. Quantitative research method used for data collection. In this study both independent and dependent variables were operationalized, however new media work as Independent and Political activities, Real Participation and decision making work as dependent variables. However Quantitative method has been utilized along with its data collection techniques for approaching better results.

Population:

With respect to survey research, student of university of Narowal, UVAS (university of animal and vaternery sciences and Al-shifa institute of health Sciences are considered as the population of the study because they carry necessarily important characteristics with reference to different variables i.e. gender, age and education have been discussed so far. Researcher selected these universities because this study focus on youth participation in political engagement and efficacy and past studies it was seems that majority of these University students are highly active in Political issues on social Media.

Sample Size:

A sample consists of 150 respondents, Students University of Narowal ,uni university of animal and veterinary sciences and Al-Shifa institute of health Sciences is taken from the population to pursue survey research.

Sampling Frame:

The selected sample of respondents for survey research has been divided into three universities. Each University contains 50 respondents demonstrating Different genders, age groups and levels of education respectively.

- ❖ 50 students from University of Narowal(n = 25 male) and (n = 25 female)
- ❖ 50 students from University of animal and vaternery sciences (n = 25male) and (n = 25 female)
- ❖ 50 students from Al-shifa institute of health Sciences (n = male) and (n = 25 female)

Sampling Technique: The researcher has used probability sampling and selected simple-random sampling technique in this study to drawn the sample from selected population. Whiteley, P. (2005) cited that probability sampling uses the mathematical calculation and simple Random technique use the element , subject and unit to the population.

Consequently the youth of BS classes are selected by simple-random sampling.

Data Collection and analysis: The researcher purposefully employed a survey questionnaire to acquire data from the study's selected sample of respondents. In this study, a questionnaire containing analytical closed-ended questions and a Likert (summated rating scale) with many possibilities, such as 1-Strongly agree 2-agree 3-Neutral, was created. 4 Disagree Five respondents who strongly disagreed each selected one of them.

Results:

This chapter presents the result of the study. Three hypotheses were constructed to find out the relationship between variables political awareness and social media in youth. Descriptive statistics summarized using frequencies and percentages while study variables presented using measures of central tendencies such as the mean, standard deviation.

Table 4.1

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Demographics

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Do you use Social media? Yes No	150 -	100% -	100 -	100 -
Do you have internet access? Yes No	150 -	100% -	100 -	100 -
Which Political Party do you support? PTI PMLN PPP Other	121 14 5 10	80.7% 9.3% 3.3% 6.7%	80.7 9.3 3.3 6.7	80.7 90.0 93.3 100.0

Table 1 shows that there were 50% male students and 50% females students were selected as sample/respondents. 42.7% students were lie between age range 18 – 21 years and 57.3% students were lie between age 22 – 25 years. As data were collected from 150 University students belongs to different departments of three Universities, University of Narowal, Al-Shifa University and University of Veterinary and Science. So sample was divided into three parts. From each University 50 students were selected as shown in the table. All students who were selected as sample used social media and have internet access. 80.7% students supported to PTI, 9.3% students were supported PMLN, 3.3% students support to PPP and 6.7% students support other parties.

Social Media use in Youth

Table-2

Statements	Responses	f	%
SM-1			
Do you think students are using social media more than any other media?	Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree	0 5 14 61 70	0 3.3% 9.3% 40.7% 46.7%
SM-2			
University students spend 5 to 7 hours a day on social media?	Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree	0 14 30 53 53	0 9.3% 20% 35% 35%

Table shows that majority of the respondents were agreed (40%) while 3% disagreed to use the social media rather than other media. While there was mix response among agree and disagree in using 5 to 7 hours a day.

Respondents response regarding considering "Used social media only for political awareness"
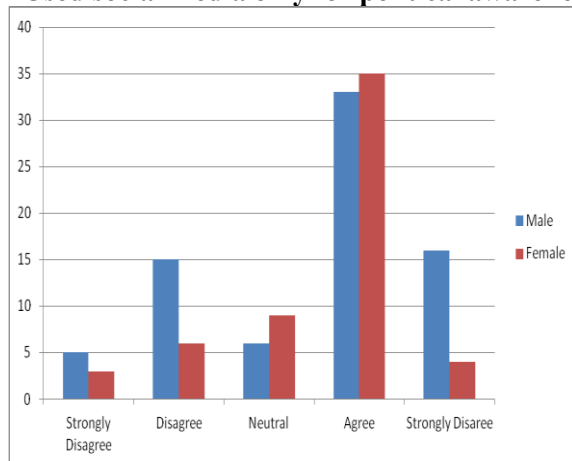

Figure -1 Shows on an inquiry related to cross tabulation about considering "Used social media only for political awareness". According to male respondents 6.6% males were strongly disagree, 20% male students were disagree. 8% male respondents were neutral, 44% male response as agree and 21.3% responses as strongly agree. On the other hand 4% females marked on strongly disagree, 8% females respondents were disagree, 12% females were neutral, 46.6% were agree and 29.3% female respondents were strongly agree that use social media only for political awareness".

Respondents response regarding considering "Social Media is the biggest platform to spread any political idea."
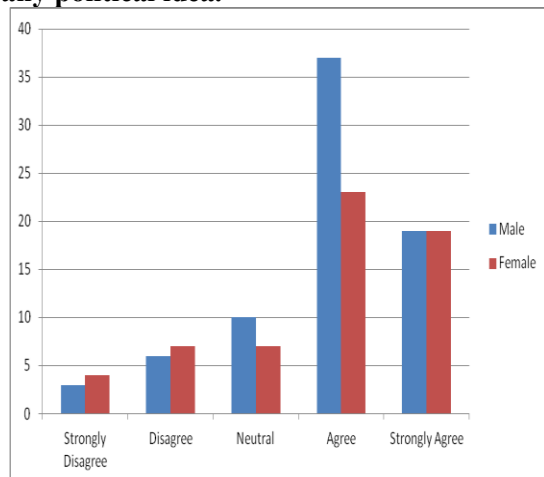

Figure:2 On an inquiry related to cross tabulation about considering "Social Media is the biggest platform to spread any political idea". According to male respondents 4% males were strongly disagree, 8% male students were disagree. 13.3% male

respondents were neutral, 49.3% male response as agree and 25.3% responses as strongly agree. On the other hand 5.3% females marked on strongly disagree, 9.3% females respondents were disagree, 9.3% females were neutral, 30.6% were agree and 45.3% female respondents were strongly agree.

.5: Respondents response regarding considering "Facebook is a most authentic app for gaining information about Politics".
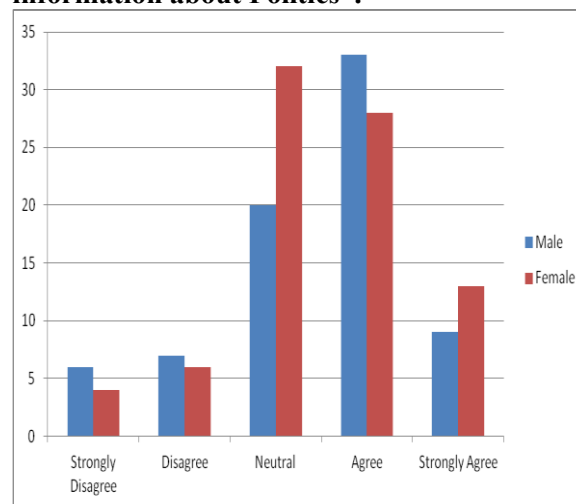

Figure-3 On an inquiry related to cross tabulation about considering "Facebook is a most authentic app for gaining information about Politics". According to male respondents 8% males were strongly disagree, 9.3% male students were disagree. 26.6% male respondents were neutral, 44% male response as agree and 12% responses as strongly agree. On the other hand 5.3% females marked on strongly disagree, 8% females respondents were disagree, 32% females were neutral, 37.3% were agree and 17.3% female respondents were strongly agree.

Respondents response regarding considering "Students have more
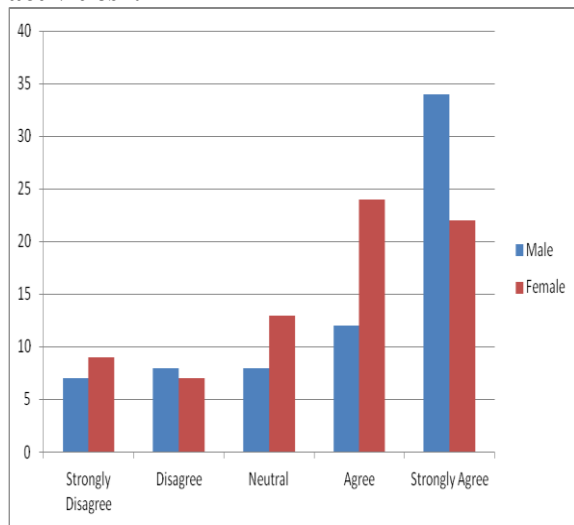**Interest in Politics as compared to other activities".**

Figure-4 On an inquiry related to cross tabulation about considering." Students have more interest in Politics as compared to other activities". According to male respondents 17.3% males were strongly disagree, 10.6% male students were disagree, 10.6% male respondents were neutral, 16% male response as agree and 45.3% responses as strongly agree. On the other hand 12% females marked on strongly disagree, 9.3% females respondents were disagree, 17.3% females were neutral, 32% were agree and 29.3% female respondents were strongly agree.

Respondents response regarding considering "Political parties
mobilize their voters through social media".
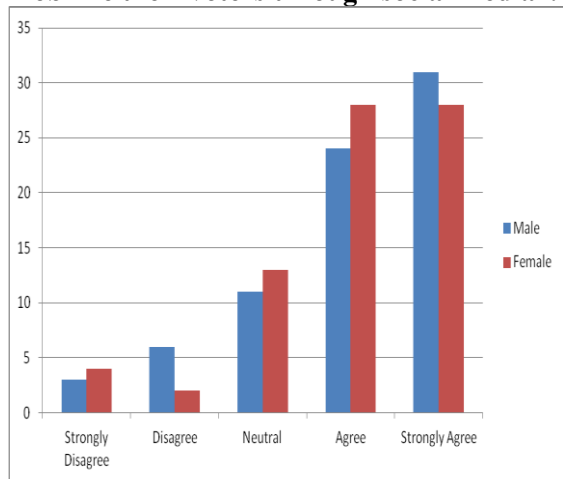
On an inquiry related to cross tabulation about considering "Political parties mobilize their voters through social media". According to male respondents 4% males were strongly disagree, 8% male students were disagree, 14.6% male respondents were neutral, 32% male response as agree and 41.3% responses as strongly agree. On the other hand 5.3% females marked on strongly disagree, 2.6% females respondents were disagree, 17.3% females were neutral, 37.3% were agree and 37.3% female respondents were strongly agree.

Discussion

This chapter discusses the study's findings in relation to whether or not the putative hypotheses have been confirmed. The study's findings are analyzed in relation to earlier research and hypotheses examined in the field. The results' ramifications are discussed, along with suggestions for additional research. In light of the findings and their consequences, the limits and conclusions are also stated. The study's goal is to determine the connection between young people's use of social media and political consciousness.

The study is primarily concerned with determining how youth political awareness is related to their use of social media. The two key variables used in this study are political awareness and social media. The major focus of the study was to determine the effect of political awareness on youth. Different demographics were also studied that were related to these variables and youth, like their gender, age, political interest, social media usage and internet access etc. These all demographics help us to identify the interest and awareness of youth toward politics. Different hypothesis, objectives and research questions were constructed to summarize the research in a good manner. Different tests were applied witch prove the hypothesis. Results also reveal that independent variable predicted dependent variable.

The descriptive of sample shows that males and females were equal in quantity. There were 50% male students and 50% females students were selected as sample. 42.7% students were lie between age range 18 – 21 years and 57.3% students were lie between age 22 – 25 years. As data were collected from 150 University students belongs to different departments of three Universities, so from each University 50 students were selected as shown in the table. All students who were selected as sample used social media and have internet access. 80.7%

students were support to PTI, 9.3% students were support PMLN, 3.3% students support to PPP and 6.7%

students support other parties.

The overall exposure given by the selected sample during the data collection from different universities for first questionnaire that was Use of Social Media revealed that 5(3.3%) were disagree that students are using social media more than any other media, 14(9.3%) youth were neutral, 61(40.7%) were agree and 70(46.7%) were strongly agree that students are using social media more than any other media. In second question university students spend 5 to 7 hours a day on social media 14(9.3%) were disagree, 30(20%) were neutral, 53(35%) were agree and only 53 (35%) were strongly agree. Next in 3rd question that was students used social media only for political awareness 8(5.3%) were strongly disagree, 21(14%) were disagree, 15(10%) were neutral, 68(45.3%) were agree and only 38(25.3%) were strongly agree that "students used social media only for political awareness". In 4th question 7(4.6%) mark as strongly disagree, 13(8.6%) were mark as disagree, 17(11.3%) mark neutral, 60(40%) were mark as agree and only 53(35.3%) were agree that "Social Media is the biggest platform to spread any political idea".

In 5th question 10(6.6%) students were strongly disagree, 13(8.6%) students were disagree, 44(29.3%) students were neutral, 61(40.7%) were agree and only 22(14.7%) were strongly agree that "Facebook is a most authentic app for gaining information about Politics". In the answer of 6th question 7(4.7%) were strongly disagree, 9(6%) were disagree, 51(34%) were neutral, 55(36.7%) were agree and 22(18.7%) were strongly agree that "youth checkout every step of the Political Parties through Social Media". In 7th question 22(14.7%) students were strongly disagree, 15(10%) were disagree, 21(14%) were neutral, 36(24%) students were agree and 56(37.3%) students were strongly agree that "students have more interest in Politics as compared to other activities".

References

Ahmad, D. K., & Sheikh, D. K. S. (2020). Social media and youth participatory politics: A study of university students. South Asian Studies, 28(2).

Bakker, T. P., &Vreese, C. H. (2011). Good news for the future? Young people, Internet use, and political participation. Communication Research, 38(4), 451.

Carlisle, J. E., & Patton, R. C. (2013). Is social media changing how we understand political engagement? An analysis of Facebook and the 2008 presidential election. Political Research Quarterly, 66(4), 883–895.

Coleman Stephen, David E Morrison & Michael Svennevig, (2008). New Media and

Political Efficacy. International Journal of Communication, 2: p. 21, EicherCatt, Deborah.The Myth of Servant-Leadership: A Feminist Perspective. Women and Language 28, No. 1,2005,pp.17.

Eijaz, Abida, (2013). Impact of New Media on Dynamics of Pakistan Politics, Journal of Political Studies, 20(1).

Farson, H. (2013). What matters? Exploring youth political participation in Western democracies. Canada, Simon Fraser University.

Ksiazek, T. B., Peer, L., & Lessard, K. (2014). User engagement with online news: Conceptualizing interactivity and exploring the relationship between online news videos and user comments. New Media & Society, 1–19.

Kugelman, Michael, (2014). Social Media in Pakistan: Catalyst for Communication, not Change. Oslo: Norwegian Peace building Resource Centre.

Kugelman. M. (2012). Social media in Pakistan: Catalyst for communication not change.

Lahabou& and Wok. (2011). Relationship between Facebook usage and youth political participation: A sub-Saharan African context. Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences1 10.

Muzaffar, Muhammad,Educational Institutions and Political Awareness in Pakistan: A Case Study of Punjab, Unpublished Ph. D Dissertation, Department of Politics and IR, International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan, 2016.

Putnam, R. (2000). Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community. New York, US: Simon &Dchuster.

Strandberg, Kim, (2013). A Social Media Revolution or Just a Case of History Repeating Itself? The Use of Social Media in the 2011 Finnish Parliamentary Elections. New Media & Society 15, No. 8, ,pp. 1329-47.

Whiteley, P. (2005). Citizenship education: The political science perspective research report (RR 631). National Foundation for Education Research. Retrieved from https://www.nfer.ac.uk/citizenship-education-longitudinal-study-