FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION VS. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA: ANALYZING USER'S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The right to freedom of expression is highly expressed on social media now a days, whereas the responsible use of social media is crucial to emphasize. The present study aims to explore user's perspective regarding the right to freedom of expression on social media and ensuring social responsibility on a certain controversial issue. This study also investigates the user's awareness about censorship policies. Uses and Gratification theory and theory of Reasoned Planned Action provide theoretical framework to this study. Survey of active social media users revealed that there is a strong relation between social media usage and users irresponsible behavior while sharing content on social media on any controversial issue. There is also association between usage of users of digital media and their reaction to any controversial issue that curb right of opinion.

Key words: Social media, Freedom of expression, Social Responsibility, Users Perspective

INTRODUCTION

Digital form of media that allow their users to freely communicate and interact with each other and also exchange their ideas through social networking sites which includes: Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Facetime, Snapchat to stay connected with their friends, family and various communities. Users can express their opinions by submitting their comments to various forums. Social media is a platform keeps you updates about that are happening all over the world both in positive and negative ways. Social media platform provided users to express their views but on the other side addiction leads to dissatisfaction, hyperactivity and depression. (Dewing,2012; Maqsood, 2013; Alarcona, 2018 & Bhasin, 2019).

In the first amendment, Freedom of expression is the way to convey your opinion, thoughts without restriction or limitations. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), explained that right Of opinion is the basic right Of everyone to share their thoughts without interfering and to accept and communicate information and thoughts in the course of any media (Graciyal & Viswam, 2018). A social networking service that allows members to engage with one another. In research, social media is a broad word that refers to a variety of internet platforms such as microblogs, photo sharing, social gaming, and video sharing. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, Viber, YouTube, and WhatsApp, as well as Face Time. These social media apps allow its users to express themselves freely. Social networking is a medium for staying connected ((Aichner, Grunfelder, Maurer & Jegeni, 2021; Manning, 2014; Maqsood , 2013).

According to Stat Counter global statistics, there are 89.07% of Facebook users. Twitter has a 7.7% market share. In Pakistan, there are 1.34% Instagram users and 1.19% YouTube users. According to current statistics, 4.62 billion people, or nearly 58.4% of the global population, use social media. While social media in Pakistan has 82.90 million service users in 2022, and online media users are 71.70 million, there are 43.55 million Facebook users, 71.70 million YouTube users, 13.75 million and 3.40 million Twitter users. Users of social media platforms can communicate with one another. For instance, social media is used by online firms to interact with companies in the job search and expert

networking with marketing. Online media informs users about concerns occurring in the country or across the country. For example, the residents of Chunian had yet to recover from Zainab's rape and murder case. Social media has advantages and disadvantages, such as misinformation. Posts that are obscene. Concerns about productivity, mental health issues, and security and retention (Kemp, 2022; Aichner et al., 2021; Propakistani, 2019; Wigmore, 2021).

As explained by UDHR under Article 19 "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and this right freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek. Receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" Every person holds different thoughts in freedom of speech can be Poor, rich, young or old. On social media people feels they have perfect platform to express their thoughts etiquette and protocols can sometimes seem restraining in real world. (Viswam & Graciyal. 2018). For instance: Social media has been under strict regulations restrictions Since Arab uprisings known Arab Spring. When the Strict government control and censorship policies at print and electronic media appeared then Arab masses had showed their Strength through digital media. Arab activists in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya. Syria. Iraq and other countries Organize protest and spread their motives and messages through social media all over the world. So the state started to enforce regulations to control it (Bhatti, 2019). On 12 October 2021, Pakistan approved its latest online media rules. Removal and Blocking of Unlawful Online Content (RBUOCR'21) but this rule at once under the fire of criticism of journalist. Local representatives, online media business holders expressed their concerns that it effects right of opinion (Daudpota, 2020). As explained by Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy in an article, When right of opinion conflicts with values, restrictions are imposed on the right of speech and may be focus on social criticism or legal sanction (Van, 2015).

There is a general perception that freedom of expression is restricting by fundamental rights that control free speech. These boundaries are currently being discussed most contentiously by criminal groups and behaviors, hate speech, fake news, and defamation. Even the First Amendment protects the right of speech in US, a social networking site may face legal action if it is discovered to be hosting messages and content that may be used to support or advocate for terrorist actions or terrorist organizations (Tsesis, 2017a). Anyhow, enhancing censorship of journalists or even specific individuals may be done using the very idea of terrorism as a concept. Legal proceedings against social media platforms and Internet service providers can only be taken in extremely rare circumstances when statements plainly encourage terrorist attacks, criminal organization recruiting, and indoctrination, following the instance of the United States (Tsesis, 2017b).

Digital media is a term "that enable users to create and share content or to participate in online platforms" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013). Social networking sites have such a large impact with their services that the status of these sites has a significant impact on the users' perception of them. Social media has a significant impact on public perception and behaviour. The user's perspective on social media has become the most common medium for individuals to engage with one another. For example, a group discussion in chat room about experiences of being expelled from school in the UK can host by a researcher. Users on social media believe it can be beneficial for marketing and improving communication with others, but agree that there are extra barriers to utilising social media at school/work, including legal and privacy issues (Pilli, 2017; Beninger, Fry, Jago & Lepps, 2014; Xu, 2016).

Constitution with Freedom of speech under the Article 19 is an ethical form to freely communicate and share opinion . Elected governments in the world face challenges regarding right of opinion and the major challenge is how to guarantee stability and ensuring law and order, peace, privacy in terms of beliefs and values. Freedom of speech not only encourages the policy makers to fully understand the variety of opinions but also empowers the acceptance of various views in a self-governing society. Like other elected governments, Pakistan guarantee the freedom of speech under certain restrictions in term of belief and national defense (Ali,2021; Liaquat & Qaisrani, 2016; Sun, 2014). Right of opinion is the legal right of every citizen in Pakistan. In Pakistan elected government continues to the space for freedom of expression in Pakistan continues to minimize and ever more, digital spaces are the new space for

freedom of expression and creating margin lines for every media platform. Right of opinion is assured to all people with definite limitations that contain "glory of Islam", "law and order" and "national security" under the Article 19 explained in 1973 Constitution of Pakistan (Ifex, 2021; Hamdani, 2014).

Social networking sites which included Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Other platforms, which have objectified as "agnostic" provider, unbiased carriers, the existing dilemma is SNS not considered themselves responsible for the content available on their networks. Social responsibility is the idea that individuals and Organizations take an initiative for actions that will benefit society. It is very important to make a social responsibility a priority (Howell, 2018). This study is done to analyze user's awareness about censorship policies and user's perspective on freedom of expression on social media. In this study social responsibility is also a factor to understand ethical measures while sharing content on SNS.

Objectives
- To know the user's perspective on the role of social media in promoting right of opinion.
- To know how and what extent social media users ensure social responsibility while sharing content on a controversial issue.

Research Questions
- What is the user's perspective on the role of social media for promoting freedom of expression?
- How often users ensure social responsibility while sharing content on social media?
- What are the emerging trends of freedom of expression on social media?

Review of Literature
Usage of Social Media
There are almost 37 Million active users and 18% from the total population share their opinions, views, knowledge through social networking sites including Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Twitter and many others. SNS have changed the attitude towards political matters, societal level and other ways to participate in social media discussions (de Boer et al., 2011; Ida et al., 2020). Digital media offers opportunity to express your thoughts that are less

restrictive. Rapid developments of advance technologies are enabled users to create content on political discussions, debates and discussion forums to express their thoughts, ideas, and Opinions and allow political leaders to participate in political discussions by using SNSs. Indeed politicians have needed to stay active on social media to stay updated about political situations and to detect new trends (Stieglitz et al., 2012; Wattal et al. 2010).

Usage of social media on journalistic view provide proofs to see how journalists use various sites to argue, to disseminate news, to communicate with audiences, awareness campaign for users for medical, political information, Although most journalists still rely on news companies to sell their work, they can distribute their work independently via blogs or social media platforms. Journalist on digital media can discuss every news and freely share their opinions and also play a role for their colleagues to give them awareness about social networking site (Brems, 2014; Hermida. 2010 & 2012; Artwick, 2013). Use of digital media enable users to not only post but also share their ideas freely and to online discuss with other users. Social media platforms have evolved into key tools for communication and the continuation of people's routines, reducing the need for in-person interaction and obtaining awareness of, or updates on, the current situation and also helpful to assess and understand the physical aspects of the social system. Usage of social media, benefits of social media nowadays in this pandemic where many academies use social media for teaching and for career development. Despite the fact that academics rarely utilise social media, it has several advantages for research, teaching, and career advancement, including better connections with stakeholders, more networking opportunities, and enhanced learning outcomes and satisfaction (Chugh et al., 2020; Watson, 2002; Bailey, Bonifield, & Arias, 2018).

Freedom of Expression and the Regulation on Social media platforms
Social networking sites are made to allow users to communicate and exchange material online. The dissemination of ideas is made possible by the right to free speech for everyone. In that everyone, not just the political or cultural elite, has the opportunity to engage in public discussion, it definitely constitutes a crucial aspect of democratic culture. In addition, social networks have implemented a variety of internal laws and regulations, including terms of

service, privacy policies and community standards. People have the right to freedom of expression, which includes the freedom to look for, accept, and share information and ideas of all kinds. This right is stated in both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which were both adopted in 1948 and 1966, respectively. .Freedom of expression is essential to the growth, dignity, and fulfilment of every person's wishes as well as to effective governance and, consequently, to socioeconomic development both at the individual and national levels (Wilson,2019; Popovic,2021).

The level of freedom of expression in a nation can be usefully determined by the support it receives from its citizens. Media freedom includes both an institutional guarantee of an independent media system as well as the safety of people's freedom of expression through the media. The right to freedom of expression is complicated. The right to free speech and expression does not give citizens the freedom to speak or write without limitation. . Once such objectionable content is uploaded, it goes viral and is therefore very difficult to control. Therefore, it is equally important for the government to control social media. In today's human rights environment, the internet has emerged as one of the key factors influencing freedom of expression. The Internet may successfully strengthen the link between citizens and state actors since information is constantly available through it, giving citizens the chance to learn more about state issues. (Breunig, 1994, pp. 50ff; Vyas, 2008; Naab, 2012; Tiwari & Ghosh, 2014; Momen,2020). According to Zuleta & Jorgensen (2020), Social media is seen as a democratic advance since it makes it easy to exercise one's right to free speech, expands paths for public engagement, and also spreads hate speech, violence, and other unlawful materials.

Freedom of expression on social media in Pakistan

Freedom of expression is a human right but hate speech towards a person based on ethnic, disability and to control government makes limitations. Express your emotions freely is guaranteed across the globe. Unclear and undefined restrictions and limitations pose as a danger for right of opinion and basic human rights (Riaz et al.2020). A famous limitation is defamation in Pakistani jurisdiction is considered as crime and civil wrong under section of 499 Pakistan Penal Code. Social media has now become a part of daily life. The impact of digital media influenced by creating norms upsetting right of opinion and the factors that influence the freedom of expression and affects the norms created by platforms. Freedom of expression norms threatened international human right norms by self-regulatory norm-setting for online speech. The power of online platforms over speech became clear, the internet initially removed the points to control that government used to control the public sphere.Freedom of speech undoubtedly explains that state are answerable to public to promote right of opinion and also respects it. (Lumb, 2018; Arun, 2019).

Freedom of expression in 21st century is a leading feature. Freedom of expression in a democratic society not only enables decision-makers to fully comprehend the strength of the range of beliefs, but also promotes acceptance of such differing viewpoints (Sun 2014). It makes sure there is a balance between protecting the right to free speech and maintaining the nation's law, order, and security.But still there are limitations because people didn't know the difference between free speech and offensive speech (Liaquat,2016).

Hypotheses of the Study
- ✓ Usage of Social media shows irresponsible behavior while sharing content on controversial issues.
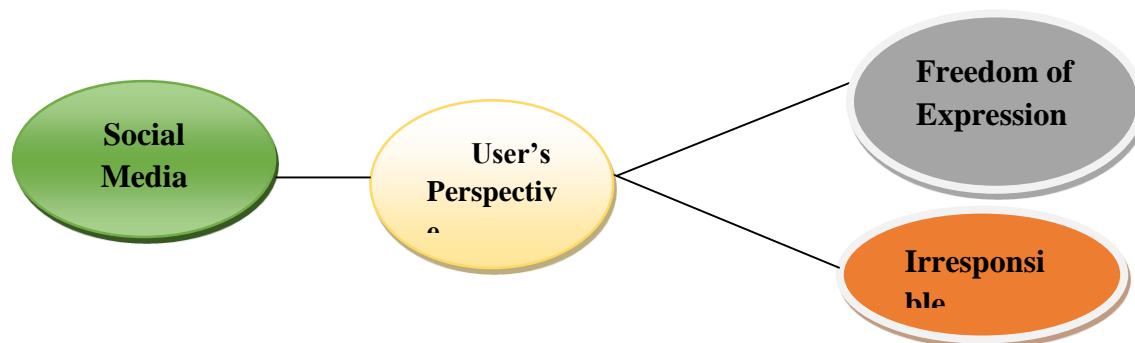
Fig: 1. Hypotheses of the Study

Theoretical Framework

The study has applied two theories to provide a systematic way to this study. The study is theoretically supported by Uses and gratification Theory and Theory of Reasoned Planned Action. Uses and gratification is a framework which is used in media researches to identify the desires of people and this approach audience centered and its central focus on active audiences, goal-oriented usage of media, they revived their approach for certain media and reestablished its effectiveness for new media (Blumber and McQuail 1969; Kat et al.1974). Global communication is possible for users of social media (Williams et al.,2012). The theory of uses and gratification is frequently applied to the study of politics and the communication of political content (Blumler and McQuail, 1969; McLeod and Becker, 1974). Individuals use Social media to fulfill their needs that may be entertainment purpose, political campaign, and social interaction. People use social media and other social networking platforms to satisfy their needs for satisfaction online. Additionally, there are certain effects of social media are on society. Users' psychological and sociological traits can influence or limit the effects of media, as well as their motive for using social media and the gratifications they derive from it (Rubin, 2002; Orchard, Fullwood, 2010; Harwood, 1997).

The Theory of reasoned action was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975 and 1980 (TRA). According to the Theory of Reasoned Action, a person's action is governed by his or her purpose to carry out the behaviour, and that intention is dependent upon the person's attitude toward the behaviour as well as their subjective norm. Intention is the most accurate predictor of actual behavior (Householder & Hale, 2002). Individuals use Social media to fulfill their needs that may be entertainment purpose, political campaign, and social interaction and to show their behavior with their actions. New technology and theory of reasoned action through users intentionally post on digital media may be through free speech. The matter of freedom of expression has been a growing question for social media scholars. This study explore the user's perspective on freedom of expression that user's intentionally or with which style post, comment or share the content.

Methodology of the Study

This Research Study has carried out using a quantitative technique and a survey method. The Population of the study was Youth of Lahore, Pakistan because it is the highest populated city of Punjab and it is ranked among 42nd biggest city of the world (World Population Review, 2022). Youth were considered as the most active user of social media. They are highly influenced by the social networking sites because social media platform provided to users to express their thoughts. Youth is actively using new media and spread information among their fellows and express their thoughts.

Random sampling method was used to collect the data. The five General Public and Private sector of universities (Lahore College for women university, Lahore) (Punjab University, Lahore) (Government College University, Lahore) Private Sector Universities (Superior University, Lahore) (Minhaj University, Lahore) was randomly selected. Rational behind to select these 5 universities from

Lahore was the representation of all classes of the society.

Public universities have lower, middle and upper class students; on the other hand, private sector universities have middle and upper class students. Both sectors have maximum level of high users of social media. At second, youth were selected by Convenience sampling technique. Study included 500 samples from Male and Female. This study data was collected among the age of 18- 42. Research data was gathered through self-administered questionnaire among the youth of Lahore.

Findings of the Study
Total of 500 respondents participated in the study. Young adults from Public and Private Universities were targeted as a sample for the collection of the data through online Google forms. Almost 23.8% of the population is male respondents, and 76.2% is female respondents from the total 100% population. This study data was collected among the age of 18-42.Overall questionnaire was developed on 5-point Likert (summated rating scale) with the options 1-(Strongly Disagree) "SD", 2- (Disagree) "D",3-(Neutral) "N",4-(Agree) "A", 5-(Strongly Agree) "SA".

Table 1. Regression Analysis between Controversial and Promoting IE.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	.605	.366	.365	5.39792

Table 2. Regression Analysis between Controversial and Awareness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	.482	.233	.231	3.79346

Table 3. Regression Analysis between Controversial and Social

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	.474	.234	.223	4.84530

Table: 1 shows the R value that is .605a which shows the strong and positive relation between the variables. R2 value indicates the ratio difference to explain Promoting IE in the outcome variables which can be explain by the model and value is .366. Furthermore, the Adjusted R2 value is .365. Table: 2 show the R value that is .482□ Which shows the strong and positive relation between the variables. R2 value indicates the ratio difference to explain Awareness in the outcome variables which can be explain by the model and value is .233. Furthermore, the Adjusted R2 value is .231. Table: 3 show the R value that is .474 which shows the strong and positive relation between the variables. R2 value indicates the ratio difference to explain Awareness in the outcome variables which can be explain by the model and value is .234. Furthermore, the Adjusted R2 value is .223. The Hypothesis proves with the help of regression analysis "Social media show irresponsible behavior while sharing content on controversial issues " which means social media shows irresponsible behavior on any serious or sensitive issue before sharing or commenting. It clearly means that H1 is approved.

Fig 2. Results

Table 4. Paired t-test between Awareness, controversial, Social, Promoting

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	t	df	Sig
P1 Controversial Issue-Awareness	-12.32400	7.30820	.32783	-37.7	499	.000
P2 Controversial-Social	-10.06200	.831845	.37201	-27.047	499	.000

The analysis between Controversial, Awareness, Social, Promoting was determined using a paired t-test analysis. Table 4. shows the values of Controversial- Awareness, Controversial -Social with a p-value of The value of t is -37.7 while Mean is - 12.32400 of Controversial- Awareness The value of t is -27.047 while mean value is - 10.06200 of Controversial-Social. According to the statistical results, the p-value is which shows a significant relation between controversial, aware, social, and promoting. The hypothesis proves with the help Of paired-t test analysis "Social media show irresponsible behavior while sharing content on controversial issues ' ' which means that there is an strong relation between social media usage and users irresponsible behavior while sharing content on social media on any serious or sensitive issue. It clearly means that H1 is approved.

Table 5. Sample's Descriptive Analysis

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Controversial Issue	3.4683	.77943	500
Awareness	3.5379	.81198	500
Promoting FOE	3.5461	.80747	500
Social Responsibility	3.5823	.88706	500
Valid N			500

Table 5. depicts that mean value of (Controversial issue) 3.4683, AAQ (Awareness) is 3.5379, IRR (FOE) is 3.5461, while SR (Social Responsibility) is 3.5823. Moreover, the standard deviation of Controversial issue is .77943, AAQ (Awareness) is .81198, and IRR (FOE) is .80747, while SR (Social Responsibility) is .88706.

Discussion & Analysis

Study data was collected by asking some questions from respondents related to The user's perspective regarding Freedom of Expression on Social media and Social Responsibility. Total of 500 respondents participated in the study. Young adults from Public and Private Universities were targeted as a sample for the collection of the data. Almost 23.8% of the population is male respondents, and 76.2% is female respondents from the total 100% population. This study data was collected among the age of 18- 42. Study showed that 32.8% users with 2 hours, 59.8% users who consume social media more than 4 hours and it showed they are interested and active users of social media. 43.4% users believed that social media is a perfect place where you can share your thoughts easily, as well as 23.8% agreed social media is a place where people connects with each other. 45.8% users falls in the category who agreed that users utilize social media for political debates, 35.4% users agreed that social media policies are responsible for ethical use of social media as well as users. According to the statistics 70% agreed upon ethical use of social media that reduce ratio of violence. A finding of this study reveals that 42% users agreed that online training is also important factor that involves making user responsible while sharing content. Findings of the study revealed that 35.4% users must ensure social responsibility while sharing content on social media.

Conclusion

Social media allow the users to communicate and interact with each other globally, exchange of ideas and participate in online discussions; however the use of social media spaces by claiming the right to freedom of expression needs a significant attention. The question of considering social responsibility while using social media on a certain issue is a crucial concern in the use of social media sphere. The findings of the study provided an insight into the irresponsible use of social media by users which

identifies a need to raise awareness on the sensitivity of the issue. The social media users need to be aware on the responsible use of social media ensuring that their right to freedom of expression must not be harmful to the society on a brooder level.

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