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<b>Article:</b>	<b>Media and Democratization: Analysing Effects of Panama Leaks Case's Coverage on Pakistani E-Media Consumers</b>
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## ABSTRACT

The formation of public opinion and political behaviour, performed by the exposure to mass media plays an integral role in the development and functioning of a democratic political system and Peaceful Democratic Transition. In Pakistan, the peaceful transfer of rule from one government to the next has been achieved only once in the overall course of history in 2013. Getting a shift, in 2017, the incumbent Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was disqualified on a decision of Supreme Court of Pakistan on Panama Leaks Case. Drawing upon the theory of cultivation, the study asserts that exposure to Panama Leaks Case's coverage on electronic media has affected political behaviour (political awareness, party affiliation, voting behaviour), created dissatisfaction and lack of trust on government institutions and formed negative perceptions about peaceful democratic transition amongst Pakistani youngsters exposed to television coverage.

**Keywords:** Peaceful Democratic Transition, Panama Leaks Case, Political Behaviour, Exposure to E Media

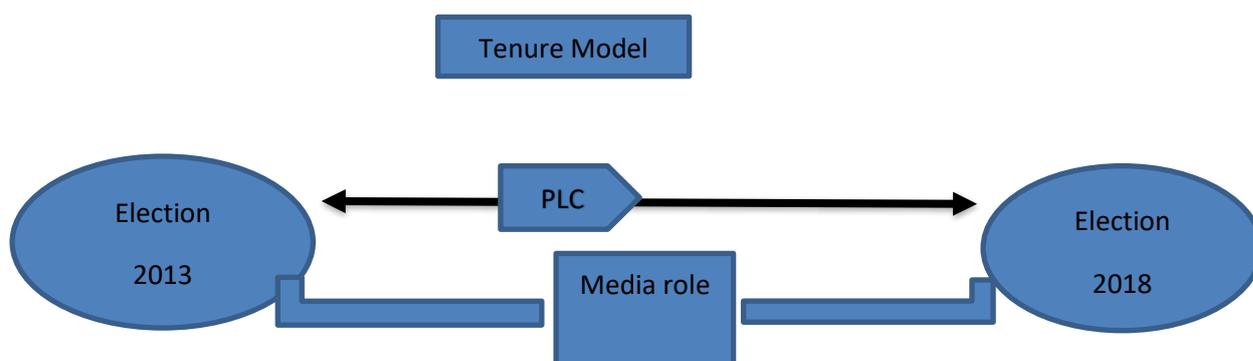
## Introduction:

As a form of government, democracy is equipped with active participation of people and media work as the backbone to form the public opinion through its contents (McNair, 2017). Moreover, this exposure to media coverage also affects public opinion and formation of political behaviour of masses (Neubaum & Kramer, 2017). However, a political system has responsibility of ensuring and maintaining of order as well as rationality in the society (Shao & Wang, 2017). This may include affecting the political behaviour of masses overall including their political awareness, party affiliation, patriotic feelings, satisfaction about government, and trust on government institutions, voting behaviour and political efficacy.

The concept of democratization refers as the transition from one democratic regime to another. Moreover, it also presents a functional change in politics which is led by a democratic direction (Rais, 2013). The anecdote of the political struggle in Pakistan entails a detailed account of events resulting in the swinging of power and authority between civilian and military governments (Bajwa, Khan, & Bukhari, 2022). A look on the history reveals despite having democracy, Peaceful Democratic Transition or transferring the rule in Pakistan always found its way difficult in Pakistan. Pakistan's first peaceful democratic transition was accomplished on 16<sup>th</sup> march, 2013 with completion of the 5 years tenure of president Zardari. However, this is the first democratic transition of power, in the history of 66 years of the country, from one democratically elected government to another (VOA, 2013). Politicians and independent observers appreciated this big move towards the struggle of strengthening democracy in Pakistan. The political stability got a shift again in 2017, as on a verdict of Panama Leaks Case by Supreme Court of Pakistan (Bajwa, Khan, & Bukhari, 2022). The incumbent Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was disqualified from his office for life (Dwivedi, et al., 2017).

The mass media is known as foundational democratic institution for the improvement of quality of the function of electoral system, political parties, parliament, judiciary and protection of the democratic performance (Reinventing the Rules, 2013). However, in Pakistan, the democratic institutions are not well established therefore media must play its role with caution. Whereas, media is also controlled in analyzing and interpreting the information (Rizvi, 2012).

The study aims at investigating impact of media exposure on the general political behavior and political opinion of Pakistani youth exposed to Television about peaceful democratic transition.



*The case of Pakistan 2013-2018*

Democracy reflects the political participation of masses. Democratization or peaceful democratic transition plays an integral role in the development and maintenance of sustainable political atmosphere of a country. The study tends to investigate impact of media contents regarding democratization on the political behaviour of Pakistani youth.

### **Objectives**

To explore the effect of Panama Leaks Case coverage of E Media on the political behaviour of Pakistani youth

### **1.4. Research Questions**

1. How Did the Pakistani E Pakistani television channels coverage given to Panama Leaks Case (PLC) effected the political behaviour of Pakistani Youth?

- I. What effects the PLC media coverage made on the political awareness, party affiliation, patriotic feelings of Pakistani youngsters?
- II. Whether or not the PLC Pakistan media coverage created dissatisfaction about government system, lack of trust on government institutions in youth?
- III. How did the PLC media coverage affect the voting behaviour and political efficacy of Pakistani Youth?

### **Hypotheses**

H1: More is the exposure to PLC E-Media coverage, more is the level of political awareness, party affiliation, patriotic feelings of Pakistani Youth.

H2: More is the exposure to PLC E-Media Coverage, more is dissatisfaction about government system and lack of trust on government institutions amongst youth.

H3: More is the exposure towards PLC E-Media, more is effect on the voting behaviour and political efficacy of Pakistani youth.

### **Literature Review**

Democracy and democratic transition in terms of government exchange to the new selected people has been an eminent domain of discussion amongst scholars. Hollander, (2017), democracies faced enormous challenge of governance.

On shedding light over a new dimension, Raveloson (2008) asserted that despite difference from dictatorship, monarchy and aristocracy, democracy involves the ideology of created by people. Moreover, democracy could be stated as the rules and regulations that are settled by the people themselves according to their requirements. In democracy, people consider their interest then form the regulations and standards so that to fulfil those interests. By supported this idea.

By strengthening the above idea of democracy and democratic transition, Voltmer & Rowsley (2009), argued direct relationship between democracy and media as they interlinked with each other because media has supremacy to directly affect the democratization. However, democracy always supported even in the mediated atmosphere and does not acquire specific qualities in its own context. Therefore, media supports general level politics, meanwhile, acted as more accountable body for playing its role as watchdog to criticize complex matters fearlessly and openly with detail notes about the political affairs. In this regard, balanced gate keeping is mandatory for political reporting as trait of media with consistent pressure of news coverage for disclosing complexed critical affairs.

Contrarily, media as institution performs its functions under state control and not considered as independent firm and strict rules and regulations applied by PEMRA on media which are followed responsibly otherwise penalty or fine is faced in case of negligence and disobedience. An opposing impression is also shown in some countries where media is liberal in all means with privately owned mediated authority. However, this approach lies in the drawbacks that is closer to the hegemony practice. Here, under democratic system of government, incident of Panama Leaks Case is visible to observe its impacts on youth and it can be described by the literature on the local as well as on international level.

According to Mandi, Shahzad, & Abdullah (2012), coverage of media is mandatory in politics as it play the role of lifeblood and shapes the ideology to reveal the truth behind any issue. In this instance, media could be termed as the factor that brings the fact into account by providing wider picture of that. Additionally, impact of media exertion can be evaluated by the life of people living in Pakistan. Meanwhile, on wider context, media has contributed to develop the rights consciousness, tolerance for opinion, and concept of well-being of people. Moreover, public accountability is also established through the media consciousness that promotes concept of accountability to empowers the people to raise question the ruling classes' performance.

In another research study, Javeria (2017) argued about considerate role of media to highlight existing issues of society with possible solutions to them. Whereas, state media and judicial units are pillars who empower nation through their functional approaches. Further, all around happenings in the world are reported by media which communicates the matter to public. Thus, the people who don't have direct connection with government officials can rely over media to enhance their knowledge about political, socio-economic matters (Happer & Philo, 2013). Additionally, ICIJ (2016) explored that journalists have been working up to 25 languages that trace the secrets behind any dealings. After receiving adequate information, they share the information with people and get data from the corporate filings, property records, along with the financial information that they disclose in front of the public (ICIJ, 2016). Another research study of Ashraf & Islam (2014), found Panama Leaks in Pakistan have provided the consistent flow of information regarding the political official in front of the society. Moreover, media also plays its role in the movement of restoration of judiciary and get the public support to do so.

## **2.2. Political awareness**

Under the domain of public awareness, Public opinionated scholars are always concerned about the significance of political awareness of the common public. As Claassen & Highton (2009) argued, the level of political awareness and engagement produced between people and the political condition of the country is one necessary question that is always present on minds of people concerned with political awareness. Another Scholar Kazmi (2016) added, first time in the history of Pakistan, politics has become a hot topic between people of Pakistan not only the old and retired one, but youth of Pakistan has also become concerned about the political condition of the country. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf has been one who has boosted political awareness between the people of Pakistan. As before emergence of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf no television news channel or current affair program would discuss about the political parties and their influences or work for the country but now the political condition and the likeness or hatred towards political parties is expressed freely in the country. According to

research study of Bhatti, Ali, & Hassan (2016), the impact of media in Pakistan has resulted in increasing awareness about the political situations as well as operations of political parties but even though media is helping in increasing noteworthy political awareness in the rural areas of Pakistan.

Under the light of scholars, political party affiliation is discussed as follows. Affiliation with any political party is surely to go in factor of that political party in any upcoming election especially if anyone is closely linked to any political party or any person of his family belongs to the party, whole family is surely going to cast their votes in favour of that political party. Additionally, the concept originates from the thinking that if one votes for the party they have any of their family member linked with or they belong to, chances are higher that the family voting for them will get benefit out of it if the concerned party wins (Dizikes, 2013). Contrarily, Kruse (2001) argued, if people do not have affiliation with any political party they collect information about the political parties through news channels, talk shows or current affair programs. Whereas, people who opt for voting are more likely to get any or even little knowledge about political parties before going out for voting. Further, research work of Saleem, Hanan, & Tariq (2013), exposed many of the times when one has little to no knowledge about the political parties at all and they have no source to get information through media than one is surely going to rely on the elites (lobby) who will more likely convince people to vote for the political party which is going to do the best for the elites. As, elites are the best in moulding the behaviours and thinking of people towards a certain political party who can be beneficial for them.

According to TWP (2014), the reason behind the existence of Pakistan is the ideology it was formed upon, as ideology of Pakistan itself focused on the patriotism of the individuals who demanded a separate land to live their lives freely according to Islamic religion and customs. However, the concept of being patriotic towards one's country is also linked with the concept of nationalism and studies also suggest that patriotism and nationalism both concepts may be interlinked but seem to have different contextual meanings. Moreover, the concept of Patriotism is directly connected with the thinking of one's liking towards his country, one is patriotic if he is thought to be in love with his country and possessed passion and a feeling of compassion towards his country (Kugelman, 2012). However, level of patriotism in Pakistani people has not declined even yet because people or specially youth may seem to be get irritated by the condition of the country, but they are not irritated about being a Pakistani. Additionally, people are still patriotic towards their country as even its just about a match or any game show people want to see the contests from their country winning as they see it as the name of their country being brighten at the international level (Mariam, 2011).

On discussing government's performance and public satisfaction, Haider (2017) explored, the public of Pakistan seems to be pretty much satisfied with the government of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The survey done by the news Channel Geo seems to have get results by getting a polling done in the areas and they have got that the 48% of the people from the Punjab are satisfied by the working of their government. According to Salim, Peng, Almakary, & Karmoshi (2017), if people are satisfied on their appointment of government job, this made easier for the government to function in such circumstances because when people get satisfied by the government, the government can easily put in for new projects because they believe they have the support of their public for their contribution.

Many surveys have been done to measure the level of trust of public in Pakistani government. According to the survey done in March 2015, Pakistani public has trust issues with the government of Pakistan. Further, Dalton (2005) found it is noteworthy that public starts to lose its trust in the government if they feel that the government is not good enough to work for the whole country, the public often wants to change the government if they feel that the current political party in rule is going to be harmful for the country. Additionally, level of public trust in government can be changed due to past historical events, certain decisions of the government on some sensitive issues or due to ignorance of government towards the majority of public standing against the government in any particular stance, all these situations need to be considered by the government as they need to understand that the public only approves of those government who keep in mind the public opinion or who opt to follow the rule “majority is authority” instead of just ordering their likens on the public.

According to CFMP (2016), the government of Pakistan has been quite active in this scenario as the government has introduced the Citizen Feedback Monitoring Program (CFMP) in Pakistan which is working under the Pakistani government and is ought to get public opinion about the decisions being taken by the government. Such step will help in gaining the trust of the public as winning the trust of public is sure a necessity to prove the efficiency of the government. Further Palda (1997) added, the political efficiency of the government is the easy determinant of the public's trust and faith in their government. The political efficiency of any political party is the result of the governmental reforms before and after getting in the government. If the government has made reforms and took decisions that did nothing good for the public than the government is considered inefficient and if the government has taken some steps that are considered by the public and area appreciated by the public than the government is considered efficient. According to Gallup (2015), the current government of Pakistan is effective by the public as the public survey done by Gallup Pakistan says the 63% of the public in Pakistan is satisfied by the governmental efforts and that 63% of Pakistan like the Nawaz Sharif government which means that the government of Pakistan is political efficient in Pakistan.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The core objective of this study lies in investigating impact of media on political behavior of Pakistani Youth after being exposed to Panama Leaks case (PLC) E-Media coverage under the theoretical perspective of cultivation. As Panama Leaks case (PLC) E-Media coverage is showing the activities of the politicians and money laundering. So, the realities shown in the e-media world resonate with the reality of the real world of the Pakistani Youth. Now a day, Pakistani youth is more likely to take interest in the politics and participating on commenting upon the political affairs. The resonance refers to the effectiveness of the media for the construction of the reality and people.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

In this study, Survey method is used for analysis and explore the effect of E-Media coverage of Panama Leaks Case on Youth. In this regard, a pilot study is conducted to find the reliability of the instrument. For instance, small subset of target population consisting on 40 participants is taken for pilot study.

**Research Tool**

In this research study, one questionnaire is designed on five-point Likert scale for conducting survey.

**Population**

Population of the study was consisted on all the youth of the Lahore City belonging to the age group of 20 to 30.

**Inclusion Criterion**

As the inclusion criteria, respondents were exposed to the E-Media (Television) coverage of Panama leaks case.

**Purposive Sampling**

Through purposive sampling, a sample of 300 respondents is drawn from population.

**Discussion**

This research study has two dimensions to know about the effects of E-Media Coverage of Panama Leaks Case (PLC) on the Pakistani Youth. First dimension states the formation of Political behaviour of Pakistani Youth through the effect of Panama Leaks case (PLC) E-Media coverage. While the other dimension is about the formation of Public Opinion of Pakistani Youth in the light PLC E-Media coverage towards Peaceful Democratic Transition of Pakistan.

**R1.** How Did the Pakistani Media coverage give to Panama Leaks Case (PLC) effected the political behaviour of Pakistani Youth?

- I. What effects the PLC media coverage made on the political awareness, party affiliation, patriotic feelings of Pakistani youngsters?
- II. Whether or not the PLC Pakistan media coverage created dissatisfaction about government system, lack of trust on government institutions in youth?
- III. How did the PLC media coverage affect the voting behaviour and political efficacy of Pakistani Youth?

Firstly, by analysing the effect of PLC E-Media coverage on political behaviour of Pakistani youth, it is interesting to know that PLC E-Media has increased ability to analyse Political Affairs, it is found that majority of Pakistani youth i.e. 130 (43.3%) is more towards agreement response while less 9 (3%) respondents towards strongly disagree and 84 (28%) respondents remained neutral. As this finding is supported by research study (Bhatti, Ali, & Hassan, 2016) that claimed that media has enhanced the political awareness among Pakistani youth by questioning on the working of the political parties. Adding up, on response towards the party affiliation, it is seen that 128 (42.7%) respondents answered as agree whereas, 8 (2.7%) respondents remained strongly disagree while 87 (29%) respondents remained neutral. As this is supported by the research study of Jan, Riaz Raza, Siddiq, & Saleem (2013), that media is responsible for developing party affiliation among Pakistani youth through detailed coverage of actions and sayings of leaders of political parties. Further, on responding towards willingness to stay in country, this study suggested that most of Pakistani Youth is more towards willing to stay in their own country but still some people would like to migrate. This patriotism among youth is argued by Mariam( 2011), as level of patriotism is not declined even youth is irritated with present condition of Pakistan but still they love to be Pakistani national. Consequently, by summing up the responses of political awareness, party affiliation, and patriotic feelings, it is found that more of taken Pakistani Youth, exposed to PLC E-Media

coverage strengthened their political behaviour by becoming more sympathetic and vigilant towards their political views.

Moreover, impact on trust on government system and formation of its institution is important for presenting the views of Pakistani Youth. This research study has shown the Pakistani Youth is dissatisfied on the working of government. Meanwhile, it showed that Government institutions are not formed on merit and their working is not appropriate. As the finding in response to dissatisfaction on working of government system shown that 117 (39.0%) respondents agreed, 9(3.0 %) respondents strongly disagreed while 62 (20.7 %) respondents remained neutral. As this notion is supported by Kim (2014) that now more people are aware with the doings of the government and seek the information about their working capabilities and actions in the country. On analysing lack of trust on the government institutions, it is found that 120 (40.0%) respondents are more towards the idea that government institutions are not formed on merit and they lack trust on their formation.

Moreover, for determining political behaviour of Pakistani Youth, voting behaviour and political efficacy is inquired. It is interesting to know in response to asking about voting behaviour, 103 (34.3%) respondents agreed and 11(3.7 %) respondents strongly disagreed on casting their vote while respondents disagree, 79 (26.3 %) respondents remained neutral. Moreover, this research study shown that PLC e-Media Coverage has strengthened the ideological associations and consistency towards their support of Pakistani Youth to their political party. This finding is supported by the research work of Hassan (2014) as media is now not only depicting the true picture of Pakistan but also letting them know about consequences of their vote in choosing the political party with information about their appropriate performance.

### 6.1. Hypotheses testing

This present study is looking for evaluating given hypotheses in the light of responses given by Pakistani consumers of E-Media coverage on Panama Leaks Case.

#### Hypothesis 1:

H1: More is the exposure to PLC E-Media coverage, more is the level of political awareness, party affiliation, patriotic feelings of Pakistani Youth.

#### Correlations

		Exposure to E-media		Political Awareness
Spearman's rho	Exposure to E-Media	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.236**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	300	300
political awareness		Correlation Coefficient	.236**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	300	300

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

**Correlations**

		Exposure to E-Media	Party Affiliation
Exposure to E-Media	Pearson Correlation	1	.247**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Party Affiliation	Pearson Correlation	.247**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

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

**Correlations**

		Exposure to E-Media	Patriotic Feeling
Spearman's rho Exposure to E-Media	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.129*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.025
	N	300	300
Patriotic Feeling	Correlation Coefficient	.129*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	.
	N	300	300

\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Spearman coefficient test was applied to find the correlation amongst variables. In the given hypothesis, exposure to E-Media coverage was studied to investigate its relationship with three variables i.e. political awareness, party affiliation, patriotic feeling. Consequently, it is seen that in case of exposure to E-Media coverage and political awareness, the P value was > 0.01 as highly significant in its nature. Further, the relationship among exposure to E-Media coverage and party affiliation shown p value 0.00 that specifies significance. Whereas, P value of Spearman Correlation between Exposure to E-Media coverage and patriotic feelings is 0.025 that is also shown as highly significant result. So, it can be concluded that taken hypothesis is accepted by discarding the null hypothesis. Accordingly, it is proven that Exposure to E-Media coverage of Panama Leaks Case has positive correlation with urging political awareness, and party affiliation among youth. This is an indication of systematic outlook of the variables that exposure to E-Media coverage of Panama Leaks Case has developed patriotic feelings among youth.

**Hypothesis 2:**

H2: More is the exposure to PLC E-Media Coverage, more is dissatisfaction about government system and lack of trust on government institutions amongst youth.

**Correlations**

			Exposure to E-Media Coverage	E-Dissatisfaction About Govt. System
Spearman's rho	Exposure to E-Media Coverage	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.290**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	300	300
	Dissatisfaction About Govt. System	Correlation Coefficient	.290**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	300	300

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

**Correlations**

		Exposure to E-media	Formation of Present Government's Institutions was not Appropriate
Exposure to E-media	Pearson Correlation	1	.030
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.004
		N	300
Lack of Trust on Government's Institutions	Pearson Correlation	.030	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.004
		N	300

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

To explore the correlation among variables i.e. exposure to E-media with dissatisfaction about government system and lack of trust on government institutions, the Spearman correlation coefficient test was applied. It is found that P value of this test among exposure to E-Media with dissatisfaction about govt. system was 0.00 which is highly significant. Moreover, the P value of Pearson test for finding relationship among exposure to E-Media with lack of trust on government institutions was 0.04 which is also a significant result. Consequently, there is significant as well as positive relationship present among more exposure to E-Media with more dissatisfaction about government system and lack of trust on government institutions.

**Hypothesis 3:**

H3: More is the exposure towards PLC E-Media, more is effect on the voting behaviour and political efficacy of Pakistani youth.

**Correlations**

	Exposure to E-Media	E-Voting behaviour
Exposure to E-Media	Pearson Correlation 1	.147*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	300
voting behaviour	Pearson Correlation .147*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	300

\*. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

**Correlations**

	PLC E-Media coverage	Political efficacy
PLC E-media coverage	Pearson Correlation 1	.172**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	300
Political Efficacy	Pearson Correlation .172**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	300

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

Pearson's correlation was applied to investigate the relation between exposure to PLC E-Media coverage with voting behavior and political efficacy. The results shown that positive correlation present between PLC E-Media coverage with voting behavior as the P value is 0.001 which is significant. Moreover, the test also exposed that P value of Pearson correlation is 0.03 also signifies that there is positive correlation present among exposure to E-Media and political efficacy. Consequently, the hypothesis is accepted i.e. more is the exposure towards PLC E-Media, more is effect on the voting behaviour and political efficacy of Pakistani youth.

**Conclusion**

Media is playing its important role in entertaining, educating, informing and providing information on all genres of lives. However, media is more focusing on the political affairs as political leaders are accountable for their actions and sayings. The coverage transmitted by media is also leads to the formation of public opinion towards support or rejection of any political party.

The main purpose of this study lied in investigating the effects of Panama Leaks Coverage on Pakistani Youth.

The results of this research study indicated that there is significant correlation present among exposure to E-Media coverage and political awareness, party affiliation, patriotic feeling. Further, the P value was  $> 0.01$  between E-Media coverage and political awareness, 0.000 between E-Media coverage and party affiliation and 0.025 between exposure to E-Media

coverage and patriotic feeling. So, the hypothesis is proven that more is exposure to the E-Media coverage, the more will be political awareness, party affiliation, patriotic feeling. Moreover, it is seen that significant P value 0.00 and 0.04 also proved more is the exposure to PLC E-Media Coverage; more is dissatisfaction about government system and lack of trust on government institutions amongst youth.

The results of research study indicated that more exposure to the PLC E-Media coverage has increased the more level of political awareness, party affiliation, and patriotic feelings of Pakistani Youth. Moreover, it is also confirmed by the data analysis that more exposure to the PLC E-Media coverage is responsible for creating more dissatisfaction about government system as well as lack of trust on government institutions amongst youth. Adding up, more exposure to the PLC E-Media coverage has prominent effects on the voting behaviour and political efficacy of Pakistani youth.

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