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<b>Article:</b>	<b>Analysis of Cognition Trends of Political Advertisement Through Mass Media</b>
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**Abstract:**

Political campaigns are usually a combination of interpersonal and “Mass” communication with the expectation of positive outcomes by the political representatives. This study is an attempt to give an idea regarding respondent’s ability and trends of processing the political contents of Mass media. Elaboration Likelihood Model is taken as a framework for evaluating the content processing trends. A questionnaire comprising of two parts and consisting the cue list of central and peripheral notations commonly used by political representatives. A sample of 1032 young people was selected by using a combination of stratified and multistage cluster sampling techniques. Results of the study revealed that majority of the youth did not bother to process the political content by effortful cognition, rather they followed attractive slogans and political personalities. Moreover it was found that people used the same approach for decision making in favor of a political party as they use to hate the opponent parties.

**Key Words: Political Content, Mass Media, Elaboration Likelihood Model**

**Introduction:**

Persuasion is the time tested technique to motivate the people as per requirements of the communicator. This motivational technique is frequently used in Public relations, advertising, Teaching, and other interpersonal communication aspects. As far as political communication is concerned, Politicians exercise this method, especially during the election days.

There is a predominant feeling among politicians and political candidates that advertised political content would be effective in convincing voters for their better participation in the political process. Campaigns pay huge sums to raise and expose political ads to get voters to express their support for their contender (Faranz and Rid out, 2007).

There are many diverse ways that political contestants use to inspire voters. These methods comprise reinforcement, aggression advertising, confrontational stuff and blaming the rivals to have priming effect (Pfau and Burgoon, 1988). Almost all types of advertising use a different structure to convince voters: empowerment is considered a positive trait of the contestant, though other methods generally condemn the opponent's stance, especially the main representative.

The technical impact of said ads is likely to emphasis on the opinions and opinions of competitors and political parties involved in the campaign. Loyalty appears to be a solid and longstanding benchmark that is not simple to alter, and investigators have established that campaigns primarily strengthen prevailing party ties when it comes to election conditions (Dalton and Wattanberg, 1993).

In this debate and strategic campaign setting, voters face the communication launched by opposing political candidates and candidates to assess their party-political value. Some of such messages may attempt to persuade supporters that their preferred party does not meet the satisfactory political desires. Messages, which attack party recognition, seem to create a rational difference between the denials allied with said situation and optimal party

credentials, leading to a cumbersome incitement that public wish to diminish (Friede and Arounson, 1995).

In fact much discussion prevailed, about the benefits of advertising to play its key role in encouraging voters. Some researchers point to an advertising model with a nominal effect (Finkel, 1993). Others have claimed that advertising is effective in winning over the common people (Iyengar and Simon, 2000; Velentino, Hutchings, & William, 2004).

Although who are no longer persuaded that advertisements are displayed to force voting in party policy have commented that political movements strengthen the public's fundamental radical ambitions (Lazarsfeld et al, 1948). Given the core objectives of the beliefs contained in political advertising, exposure to political advertising is expected to influence candidates' wishes.

Considering, how people respond to persuasive messages, its important enough that at least discussion atmosphere is created by these media messages. When we discuss the “political campaign”, political thinking and ideology are among the most vital aspects of voting choices. Therefore, such partisan tendencies are probable to play an important part in understanding the messages designed for better outcomes. (Luzia, 2016)

Investigative studies on the effects of publicity and supporters suggest that differentiation plays a crucial role in the efficiency of advertising: Numerous researches have shown that “Democrats” and “Republicans” often respond differently to advertising disclosure (Pafau, Holbrt, Szabo, & Kaminsk, 2002). It is clear that motivated identification plays an important role in the response to the campaign environment.

To reduce the thoughts of dissonance and discomfort that follow, individuals can adopt different methods. Perhaps most simply, people can try to counter-act these messages that create dissonance, which can prevent other ways to reduce dissonance. (Nevid, J. S, 2013)

In addition to rejecting inconsistent communication, people can change some of these inconsistent manners or behaviors to reduce difference of opinion. These gestures manifested themselves in a number of circumstances, such as safe sexual habits (Galston, W.A, 1991) and reprocessing deeds and attitudes (Fred and Aronsone, 1995).

Whenever we try to track the settings in a campaign, researches would not be complete without examining the impact of the contender's character and the party's publicity. Thus, parties and candidates seem to be convinced of the success of advertising through their awareness-raising activities. Researchers are not so sure of their effects. Some scientific studies of campaigns have questioned their ability to encourage individuals to change their desires (Finkel, 1993).

Being exposed to political candidacies by a particular candidate appears to increase the probability of voting for that challenger, as well as minimize the likelihood of choosing a competitor (Franz and Ridout, 2007). In addition, these effects are significant in reality and the honor of changing opinions that can easily change the outcome of elections. (Hubar and Arceneux, 2007).

Though, researchers have acknowledged the chances that advertising may not be as useful everywhere. This study shows that advertising is the most effective, in terms of knowledge and beliefs, among moderate or less conscious people (Valentino et al., 2004). In addition to the awareness that the campaign created, political organizations have also been the focus of much research. Based on party members born into political advertising campaigns, it makes sense for party members to react differently to non-party members. More about ad redundancy is based on agreement or disagreement on the viewer's circumstances. However, this view seems to underestimate the effects of advertising, which seems to be spreading and developing beliefs amongst individuals, resilient party members, and weak supporters (Faranz and Ridot, 2007).

The question is, by what means do you convince through political ads? New studies has begun to propose that emotive retorts play an important role in this process. The contender's wishes and voting intentions can be communicated, at least to some degree, through emotive responses to contenders and publicity (Chhang, 2001).

An additional technique in which advertising can be effectively encouraged is to increase the probability or affiliation of the contestant (Hubar and Arcenaux, 2007). Moreover, advertising can provoke uncommon emotional reactions that alter the reactions of the people. In one example, which indicates eagerness, the parties' existing assurances have been activated, while apprehension has tried to facilitate exchange (Bradard, 2005).

One of the major objectives of the political campaigns is also to encourage people to participate in political process. But In general, it is a problem for every society in the world that people do not give much wattage to the political process.

### **Political Dispiritedness:**

Political steadiness has all the time been a problem in Pakistan. Because there is always a rift between the political parties and the Politicians always blame the military establishment to create hurdles in smooth operation of democratic government. On the other hand, military is of the opinion that the bad governance of the political parties always force them to intervene and safe guard the country

All the stakeholders agree upon this fact that young people of Pakistan should pay attention towards the political matters and play their role in national development. In addition, due to the high level of literacy and the availability of diversified communication platforms, young people are considered to be more and more socialized. Situation is similar in rest of the world as well. Almost every researcher of this field emphasis that political role of the youth is not up to the mark (Muslim. 2012).

A number of researchers in the field of political studies are of the view that political apathy is commonly a major problem even in the developed countries as well. Policy makers show a lot of concern regarding this ill attitude of young people towards political process (Gallstone, 2003).

During United States presidential election attitude of voters varied a lot as per their age groups. Participation in the political process had been declining regularly since 1970s. This lack of participation can be imagined by the fact that it dropped from 65 % to 50 % in the year 2000. It is important to mention that the age group of 18 to 26 proved to be the least active with a participation rate up to 35 % in 2004 (Levin & Lopez, 2002).

Carping & Kiltar (1996) and Gallston (2001) found the similar trends in terms of political awareness and participation of youth. Results of their study divert attention towards the validity and stability of the political happenings in educated societies. This phenomenon of dispiritedness of youth is not confined to developed countries only but almost every major country also suffers from this ill happening. Less developed countries especially belonging to South Asia and Africa, political participation is more terrible in its state. Firstly the interest of young people in politics is not up to the mark and secondly the attitude of youth is not positive towards gaining political knowledge regarding their society. In country like Pakistan literacy rate is on growth although but even then maturity level is not guaranteed. The relationship between level of education and political socialization is found to be on weaker side (Muslim, 2012).

There is common understanding among the researchers of this field that academic qualification is not enough for the people to be better socialized. There is strong need for the training of ethics, loyalty and responsiveness along with the formal education. It is fact that students who are more active in social activities acquire better leadership qualities (Shush & Lavery, 1983).

Wilson (1996) added that students having background with the field of social sciences acquire an additional ability of participating in co-curricular activities and they lead the remaining discipline by 70 % in this regard. Contribution of social sciences discipline in the socialization of youth is on weaker side in less developed countries. Educational institutions focus more on the academic contents and ignore the practical aspects of political socialization.

### **Measuring Political Persuasion**

During current era, accessibility to the innovation, especially the political content has become enormously increased. Due to easy access to mass media and online resources people can update themselves in a better way as compare to the previous generations. It is assumed that due to availability of chances of open discussion with the peer groups, teachers and parents, chances of better political analysis are enhanced. So, new generation is assumed to be more informed, active and logical, as for as processing of information is concerned. Despite all this it is common practice in developing societies that people use their right to vote, elect their representatives and within no time they start to be embarrassed of their own judgment. This is why, it is vital to evaluate the reasons inducing the thought process of voters while processing the political contents.

There are numerous methods to evaluate the process of persuasion. Usually researchers by using survey method calculate the voting trends in the election days and correlate them with the political advertisement. But Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion suggests that persuasion should be evaluated through peripheral and central cues, which give a clear picture of thought process.

### **Elaboration likelihood model:**

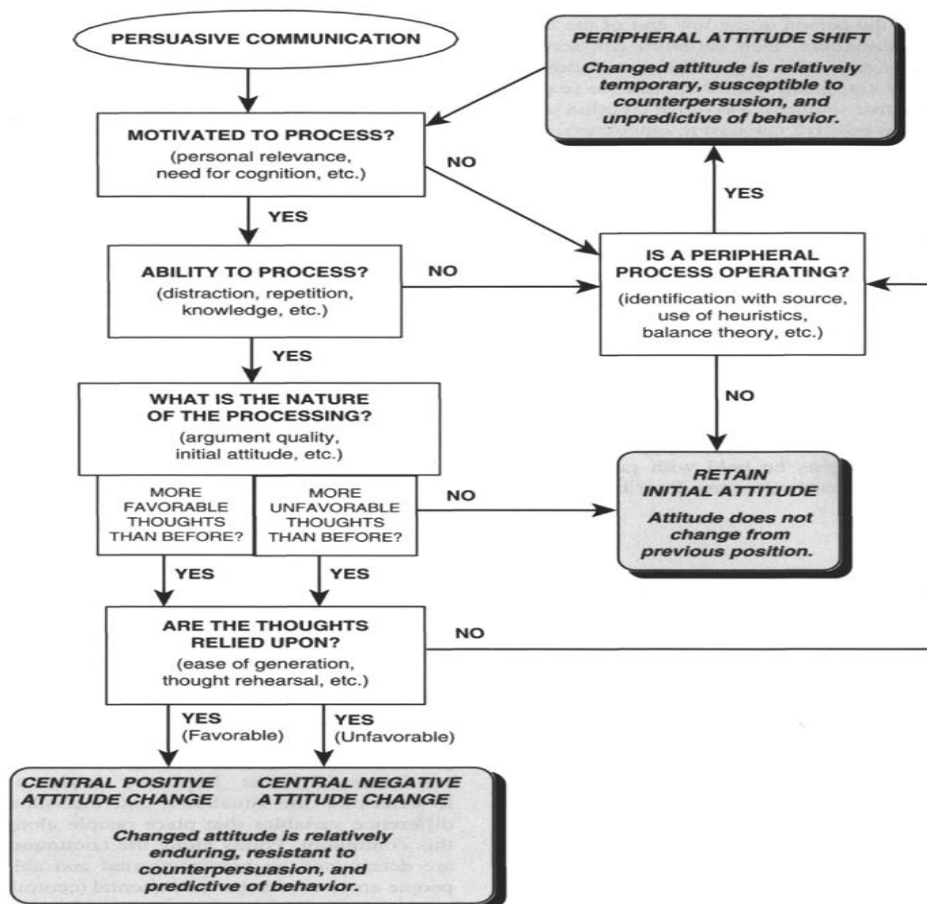
The “Elaboration likelihood model” (ELM) is a bi-dimensional process. This hypothetical model explains how attitudes change or shaped. This model was



presented by Richard E. Petty and John Caciopo in the late 1970s. This philosophical concept proposes an "elaboration range" that determines the extent to which opinions are elaborated and evaluated (Seiter, Robert H. Gass, 2010).

The proposed model suggests two dissimilar sort of processing modes. Route one is called the “central route” and the latter one is called the “peripheral route”. The central path causes the receivers to use their own thought procedure, and therefore it is likely that there will be more time in processing situations. The basic procedure involves a robust assessment of persuasive messages (e.g. language or advertising, etc.) to determine the properties of the argument.

Fig 1.1 Elaboration Likelihood Model



(Petty & Cacioppo, 1979)

In such situations, the individual's response to the message determines the outcome of this compelling part of the communication. When a person uses a centralized method of processing information and finds it reliable, well-produced and inspiring, it is usually considered positive news, even if it contradicts the recipient's previous views on the matter. So if positive emotions are the result of processing, the message will be acknowledged, whereas in other case the information will more likely be rejected. (Petty and Cacioppo, 1979) If messages are intended for central processing, the target receivers should have the ability and drive to do so. If the recipient wants to understand the message by using central rout, this should be appropriate for him.

Whereas, peripheral set of thoughts do not involve the processing of information via extensive intellectual processing. And no attempt is made to test the virtues of real arguments.

These methods commonly emphasis on the environmental characteristics of the information, such as the trustworthiness of the source, the worth of the arguments, the appealing out look of the source, or the striking tagline of the information (Petty and Cacioppo, 1979).

**Objectives of the study:**

Phenomenon of persuasion is usually evaluated as a complete set of persuasive activities but “Elaboration likelihood model” gave an idea for assessment of thought process with micro approach. Keeping in view the nature of model applied, following are the key objectives of the study.

- To find out the choice of route selected by the respondents for the processing of political information

- To construct a linkage between selection of route and gender of the respondents

**Research Questions:**

1. What is the distribution pattern of central and peripheral cues, opted by young population, while handling political content of mass Media?
2. To what extent thoughtful cognition was exercised for the processing of political content of mass media?

**Research Method:**

This study required extensive feedback from researchers on their current political thinking, ways of obtaining political information and decisions on such issues, etc.

An integrated questionnaire was tailored as a tool for data collection. The questionnaire consists of two sets of inquiries. The first part inquired about the consumption of political contents of media, demographic information and the political involvement of young citizens. The second part comprised of list of clues that that helped the respondents to choose the reason, why he liked his favorite political party and dislike the other parties.

**Sampling Technique:**

Multi-stage cluster sampling is usually preferred for large populations. However, if the population varies in its properties, the researcher must think of reducing population diversity using various other methods. As suggested by “Marry John Smith” in his book “Research Methods”, a scientific investigator can improve the representation of a multi-level cluster sampling by using a stratified sampling method at every phase of the sampling. (Smith, 1995)

Sampling by creating strata, ensures that samples are taken from a homogeneous subset of the population. Because the population in the proposed study is large and covers

different types of research material, so a blend of multistage cluster and stratified sampling was used to minimize sampling errors.

The election results showed that the electoral development of voters in large cities differs from that in smaller urban areas and villages. In addition, differences in learning opportunities, policies, socialization and other facilities can cause decision-making to differ between urban and rural areas.

Taking into account the above aspects and studying the population in diverse areas, the investigators divided the residents Province of Punjab into four strata:

1. “Metropolitan” (urban areas) ----- Containing population > 10, 00,000)
2. “Major cities” -----(Containing population between 2, 00,001 – 5, 00,000)
3. “Small cities”----- (Containing population between 1, 00,000 – 2, 00,000)
4. “Villages” ----- Group of at least 50 houses in a cluster

Population of target respondents was calculated (respondents aged 18 to 36) by having the percentage contribution of that age group to the total population of Punjab.

Table 1: Calculation of sampling for Strata

Strata	Population	proportion of Youth (18y-30y)	Percentage of young population	size of Sample	
Punjab Province	73600010	14720010	20.00%	259	
Rural Territories	Stratum 1	51700000	9823010	19.30%	257
Metropolitan Areas	Stratum 2	14100000	3102010	21.10%	259
Major Cities	Stratum 3	4400000	968010	22.00%	257
Smaller Cities / Towns	Stratum 4	3500000	770010	22.10%	259
Total sample for all the four strata =				257+259+257+259 =1032	

### Operational Definitions of key concepts:

Following terms were used to clarify the route selection of the respondents for the political cognition so it is important to define them as per the understanding of researchers.

- Reciprocal arguments of To decide the favor or hatred with expectations of personal benefit or loss
- Expert Source To decide as per influence of opinion leader
- Social Pressure Pressure of society as a hindrance in fair decision
- Un Approved Assertion To follow the glittering words, used by politicians, without having their confirmation
- Prior Belief To grow up with the existing thoughts without reviewing those
- Personality following on To like or dislike the personality rather to focus his/her views
- Cultural / Religious Belief Giving maximum wattage to cultural or religious beliefs and showing reluctance in adopting the change

### Results and Discussion:

Data was calculated through questionnaire, tailored for followers of three different political parties. It is Important to mention that in pilot study, people were asked about their favorite political parties. Choice of people was ranked in order and leading three parties were decided taken as target population for this research and the rest were ignored. After completion of survey, data was available as per party affiliation of the respondents but results, here, are presented on cumulative basis. However party affiliation is mentioned, where it was needed.

Table: 2 Main cause for liking the Favorite Party

Type of Cues	List of Cues	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage
	Reciprocal arguments	141	13.7	13.7
Peripheral Cues	Expert Source	129	12.4	26.1
	Social Pressure	241	23.3	49.4
	Un Approved Assertion	152	14.8	64.2
	Prior Belief	65	6.2	70.4
Central Cues	Personality following	195	19.0	89.4
	Cultural / Religious Belief	46	4.5	93.9
No Selection	Cue No Further Proceedings for Cue Selection	61	6.1	100.0
	Total	1032	100.0	

Table 2 clarifies the outline for significant question that was posed to judge the main reason for the feelings of admiring a specific political party. In the table First 4 Clues were taken as the “peripheral cues” and the other 3 were “central cues” because these implicate a thought process.

Above table divulges that more than 70% of the research subjects followed a political party due to some “peripheral cue”. If we analyze further, “social pressure” or social affiliation leads with 23.3% replies. 30% remaining cues selection mainly fall under the aspect of “Personality following”. Only 4.5% of the respondents admired their favorite political party on account of cultural or religious perceptions.

Table 3: Causes for Criticizing the Opponent political Party 1

Type of Cues	List of Cues	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
	Reciprocal arguments	92	8.9	8.9
Peripheral Cues	Expert Source	130	12.7	21.6
	Social Pressure	239	23.1	44.7
	Un Approved Assertion	182	17.7	62.4
	Prior Belief	154	14.9	77.3
Central Cues	Personality following	123	11.9	89.2
	Cultural / Religious Belief	48	4.6	93.8
No Selection	Cue No Further Proceedings for Cue Selection	64	6.2	100.0
	Total	1032	100.0	

To find out the unambiguous view of “disliking” cue selection, the different options of peripheral and central cues were exposed to the young population.

Table 3 explains that most decisive cues were “social pressure” and “Un approved assertion”. As per operational definition, both of these cues are peripheral in nature because these do not involve any thoughtful cognition. Rather, voters use these cues often without using their will. Moving further, it is noted that among central cues, “personality following” is the most repeatedly chosen option with value of 11.9%.

Over all almost 60% of the research subjects went for peripheral cues for abhorring their opponent political party.

Table 4: Major Reason to Dislike Opponent Party 2

Type of Cues	List of Cues	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
	Reciprocal arguments	130	12.6	12.6
Peripheral Cues	Expert Source	111	10.7	23.3
	Social Pressure	173	16.7	40.0
	Un Approved Assertion	261	25.3	65.4
	Prior Belief	99	9.6	75.0
Central Cues	Personality following	126	12.2	87.1
	Cultural / Religious Belief	69	6.7	93.8
No Selection	Cue No Further Proceedings for Cue Selection	63	6.2	100.0
	Total	1032	100.0	

Table number 4 is pretty alike to the table number 3, yet it expands the scenario of abhorring cue selection for the rival political party on second priority.

“Unapproved assertion” and social pressure” are once again the most selected peripheral signals. It shows that individuals did not confirmed the evidence, blames or facts, which were posed contrary to the political party, they ostracized or they were not able to tolerate the family’s and peer group’s pressure and did not decide according to their spirit.

While talking about the central cues, “disliking a personality” was foremost cue having wattage of 12.2%. As a whole 65% of the research subjects picked the peripheral cue for hating showing the feelings of disgust.

Table 4 elucidated the scenario for a total of 1032 respondents irrespective of their association with political party and additional demographic properties. Obviously, almost



fourth proportion (23.2%) of the research subjects established that they decide their party choices and belief in accordance with social connections or “social pressure”.

In survey Questionnaire given to the respondents,, aspect of “social affiliation” was posed as “*All the friends and relatives are favoring a party then how I could behave differently*”.

While conducting the survey, investigators evaluated that even if somebody was having dissimilar line of beliefs, divergent to his/her family or friends, for ultimate decision he/she could not hold courage to decide consequently and followed the traditional way of decision.

“Reciprocation” and “unapproved assertions” were other to mostly chosen peripheral cues.

Factor of “reciprocation” was anticipated for lesser frequency due to increasing education rate. Likewise respondents were anticipated for not having trust on media information without confirmation but “unapproved assertion” 14.9% of the youth opted this cue.

In spite of that, for favorable emotions, “central cues” could sum up to 30% only.

For hatred feelings about rival political party(s), peripheral cues were took attention of more number of people.

“Social pressure” and “unapproved assertion” were more repeatedly mentioned, even greater than “prior belief” and “personality disliking”. Notably the latter two are central cues.

We may infer that by witnessing 14.9% “prior belief” people used to dislike any individual or political party by choosing the preceding views and do not bother to review.

Disliking, on account of “cultural and religious beliefs” was not given wattage by large number of respondents as just 4.6% of the total number showed their consent for this cue.

Table 5: Significance of difference among selection of cues for favoring and abhorring a political party

<b>Test Statistics</b>			
	Main cause To like Favorite Party	Main cause To Dislike Opponent Party 1	Main cause To Dislike Opponent Party 2
Chi-Square	255.408 <sup>a</sup>	215.362 <sup>a</sup>	221.923 <sup>a</sup>
Df	7	7	7
Asymp. Sig.	.00	.00	.00

Chi Square “goodness of fit” test was used for all the three sets of cues given to the research subjects so that significance of difference in cue selection might be gauged. Statistics of the test shows that variance in cue assortment to like or abhor a political party is not significant. So we may construe that in majority of the cases, youth admired or hated any aspects with the set of beliefs.

### **Conclusion:**

This research work was an attempt to analyze the factors involved in thought process of the young members of society, in result of political contents, disseminated through mass media. Elaboration Likelihood Model by patty and Cacciopo was use as a framework. This model helps to understand the information processing with the help of central and peripheral indicators. Results of this study revealed that central cues proved to be difficult or unimportant for the youth, possibly because of their demand of thoughtful cognition. Indicators, which were attractive in nature or easy to follow, were used in greater number.

So the assumption of the earlier researchers regarding better processing of political content due to easy access to mass media proved to be wrong. We may infer from these results that more quantity of information resulted in lazy attitude of the young population.

### **Limitations of the Study:**

The researchers had honest intentions to conduct this research work with full devotion and ability, but evidently it was difficult to develop a comprehensive document without shortcomings.

Underneath are some aspects which co be rectified or reformed.

- Area of the study is too vast that the study should be comprised of greater time frame and in the focus group. So that variations in the psychosomatic state of certain respondents could be analyzed.
- The study must not be limited to young people, but should have involved all the age clusters, present in the political procedure.

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