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Article:	**Effects of the Usage of Social Media on Political Socialization of Youth**
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Abstract

This research is conducted to explore how much social media involved in engaging Pakistani adolescents towards political socialization. In addition, how they are participating and what impact of their participation is reflecting on their political motivation, political behavior and voting tendency. It was tentative estimate that social media plays significant role in political socialization. To explore this prospect, Uses and Gratification school of thought were closer to this research, which questions about what are the purposes behind use of social media and what urges youth to use them? This theory also suggests that the usage of these social mediums vary from user to user where everyone has right to use these for their satisfaction. This study is grounded on quantitative analysis in which survey method is used with Non-probability sampling technique and respondents have been selected through convenient sampling to obtain a representative sample by using a sound judgment. The study explored the usage of media by gender and purpose. Moreover, the relation between social media and political socialization is also observed in this study. For this purpose, statistical tests are also applied on gathered data. It can be concluded that the usage of digital media in Pakistan politicize the youth and that affects the voting behavior of its users. As Pakistan is not considered suitable for demonstrations due to internal threats that's why individuals could not participate physically. Therefore, most of the users share their views online because it is convenient and safest platform for them to reveal their concerns.

Keywords: Adolescents, Political behavior, Political socialization, Social media

Introduction

Present days have affirmed a huge explosion in social networking sites' usage. Specifically, one of the social networking site, Facebook, is now considered at international level as the third most dense country comprising of millions of users from around the globe. Even though social networking sites are not regarded as political tools but due to their maximum reach at mass level, politicians have rapidly adapted them. Reference stated that, social media is a combo of applications based on internet. These applications have been made up on the fundamentals of concepts and technology of Web 2.0. It also allows the users to form and exchange their thoughts or any content generated by them." They also debated about various categories of social media including blogs and micro blogs, content-based communities, and social networking sites. Now social media has turned out to be an essential part of public discourse and social interaction in the present-day society. The way we live and patterns of interaction have been changed intensely due to new media and its information and communication technologies. This has been witnessed especially in those adolescents' case who are amongst the most frequent users of mobile phones, cyber communities, official file sharing, and other different new forms of collaboration and social interaction .

In this study, efforts have been made to deliver additional information by evaluating the impact of Internet usage on political knowledge and socializing of youth in Pakistan. More precisely, the focus of this study is based on 18 to 25 years old respondents who were probed about their social media usage and political awareness to investigate the association among different purposes of Internet use and their online political and social participation. The reasons behind selection of adolescents as respondents are numerous. First, they are more engaged with internet whole day and considered as the frequent users of internet. In Pakistan, according to

survey of Express Tribune and Express Urdu, internet users' age between 18 – 25 including men and women is 56% which is the highest among all age intervals. Second, the chances of getting influenced by internet usage are much more on this group. Reference argued that the "Internet is intensifying the number of people who were typically inactive or less active in traditional or offline forms of politics. But they are now getting politically active due to internet which reaches group or individuals at mass level within no time".

Democracy provides every suitable citizen the access to take part in the political process. People have to choose what they have faith in to decide with which party to associate with, which individual to vote for, etc. This is where political socialization comes in. Political socialization is "the processes by which people acquire political beliefs and values". The Internet seems to be an essential mean of political engagement for youth, who are usually not interested to take part in politics.

Political expression is also considered a vital constituent of political socialization. Observing particularly at the Internet as a mean of political awareness and communal expression, online media contributes features to traditional media in affecting political conversation and expression, and in response these variables give growth to behavioral consequences. Though online media possess the superiority in permitting individuals to disclose themselves to other people or group having more compatibility. Therefore, the act of expressing views and beliefs publicly is built-in in usage of social media which may distinctively incline youth to more involvement in it than outdated political framework.

Pakistan has changed back and forth between autonomous rule and military dictatorships since its establishment in 1947. Relating to the history of Pakistan where almost half of the life of this country is ruled by military dictators, where media was owned by state and very little

freedom was given to print and electronic media by democratic and authoritarian tenures. After the growth of social media, it considers as a blessing where people not only use this for interacting, shopping or freely expressing their thoughts but also use this for social and political aims.

Previously political matters of Pakistan have been monopolized by traditional style hereditary politics. It is the first time in Pakistan that social media performed a vigorous role in politics specifically in 2013 and 2018 General Elections. It observed and demonstrated the evolution of social media, particularly Twitter, as a medium of election campaign and tool of electoral mobilization.

Reference also stated that these days Pakistani political parties are engaged in consuming the social networking media; majority of the political parties have created their own specific websites, accounts and pages. It has been witnessed that social networking media has turned out to be an essential tool for the political parties and members to draw attention of the people for their sustenance and to keep their network alive. Among all parties, PTI emerged as the major example of achievement of social networking media in constituting impression on the adolescents of Pakistan.

Therefore, the present study examined the generated questions and tested the hypothesis on Pakistani youngsters, taken them as samples. Young people are considered particularly pertinent to this study because habits are shaped at earlier stage of life, and same is in the case of social and political nature.

This study extends the investigation on social networking to deliver a healthier concept regarding what urges youngsters to disclose their political beliefs and opinions on social networking sites (SNSs); and what influences or consequences usage of social networking sites

may reflect on political socialization. We further argue that political socialization is not occurred intentionally only, it can be developed unintentionally through social conversation in groups or with friends.

Objectives of the study

- To investigate the purpose behind frequent use of social media. ⸜SEP⸝

- ☐To determine whether political affiliation plays role in motivating youth to use social media for political purposes. ⸜SEP⸝

- To identify the relation between duration of social media usage and political socialization. ⸜SEP⸝

- To determine the relation between use of social media for political purposes and its impact on political behaviors of adolescents. ⸜SEP⸝

Theoretical framework

Adopted usage and gratification theory to find out how youth utilize and gratify themselves using social media in political context. It provides a platform to understand how the users of social media engage towards political contents and how these contents vary among different high and lower users of social media. Individuals find news from these social networking tools which they consider are more interesting and enjoyable. Some use for engaging in politics while other uses these mediums for entertainment, information, interacting with family and friends, shopping and for sharing their ideas. Literature review supports this evidence that interpersonal communication among individuals is a crucial mediating variable between news seeking and participatory activities [9]. Therefore, it is expected that different types and ways of traditional and latest online information consumption will be associated with two types of civil communication: interactive political conversation and interpersonal political texting. In this way,

the consumption of media devices including print, broadcast, and online media for information seeking and to gather news may boost political debate with friends and family and enhance the possibility of conversation regarding civic and political matters through the Internet.

Methodology and research design

This study is grounded on quantitative analysis in which survey method is used with Non-probability sampling technique and respondents have been selected through convenient sampling to obtain a representative sample by using a sound judgment. The aim of this study is to recognize the appropriate classifications and conceptual structure that would lead to comprehend the usage of social media platforms which provide smooth surface to political socialization. For this purpose, a questionnaire was made to collect data from the social media users to get answers of different questions related to the variables of study. 246 students of BS from 18 to 25 years old have been retrieved from public universities of Islamabad. The main purpose of selecting this sample was that young adults are active users of social media who not only use these medium for connecting or interacting with their friends and family but they also use these forums for political purposes.

Categorization of variables

Dimension	Category	Definition
Use of Social media	Informational use	Consuming information via social media, including news, community information, and campaign information.
	Expressive use	Using social media to express oneself and to articulate one's own opinions, ideas,

and thoughts.

Political Socialization	Political persuasion	Discussing societal or political matters with friends online to take their opinions. Reading about politics in blogs to get diverse opinions. Lurking in online groups to observe ratio of similar and dissimilar views before taking part actively.
	Online political participation	Joining a group on a social networking site to mobilize and to impose their views. Posting links to political stories or articles. Posting own thoughts or comments. Encouraging other people to take action. Reposting content that was originally posted by someone else. "Liking" or promoting material that others have posted.

Findings

The observations dig up through the survey questionnaire shows that use of social media is common these days among youth specifically. Both genders including male and female are

indulged in this new media. Purpose behind its usage and online activities vary person to person.

RQ-1: Is Social Media predominantly used for Entertainment purpose than Political Socialization?

According to the feedback gathered from respondents of this study, total 226 (91.9%) respondents out of 246 use social media for entertainment purpose while 165 (67.1%) respondents out of 246 shared that they use social media for political purpose. From the table I. it can be seen that number of respondents is overlapping with respect to purpose of social media usage. It means most of the respondents use social media for both entertainment and political purpose but maximum number of users for entertainment proved that social media is predominantly used for entertainment purpose.

Table 0.1 Social Media Usage for Entertainment vs Political Purpose.

Social Media Usage	Entertainment Purpose Frequency (%)	Political Purpose Frequency (%)
Yes	226 (91.9)	165 (67.1)
No	20 (8.1)	81 (32.9)
Total	246 (100)	246 (100)

RQ-2: Whether politically motivated youth use social media more for political purpose than unmotivated youth?

From the **table 0.2**. It can be observed that number of respondents who are politically motivated as well as affiliated with party and use social media for political purpose is 137 (55.6%) out of 246 whereas respondents who are not politically motivated but use social media for political purpose is 28 (11.5%). On the contrary, number of respondents who are politically motivated as well as affiliated with party but do not use social media for political purpose is 62

(25.3%) out of 246 whereas respondents who are neither politically motivated nor use social media for political purpose is 19 (7.6%). who are politically motivated as well as affiliated with party and use social media for political purpose is 137 (55.6%) out of 246 whereas respondents who are not politically motivated but use social media for political purpose is 28 (11.5%). On the contrary, number of respondents who are politically motivated as well as affiliated with party but do not use social media for political purpose is 62 (25.3%) out of 246 whereas respondents who are neither politically motivated nor use social media for political purpose is 19 (7.6%).

Table 0.2 Political Socialization with respect to Political motivation

Political Affiliation	Political Socialization		Total
	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Frequency (%)
Yes	137 (55.6)	62 (25.3)	199 (80.9)
No	28 (11.5)	19 (7.6)	47 (19.1)
Total	165 (67.1)	81 (32.9)	246 (100)

On the basis of these findings it can be concluded that respondents who are politically motivated and use social media for political purpose are maximum in numbers (n=137) as compared to those who are not politically motivated and use social media for political purpose (n=28).

RQ-3: Is Political Socialization positively related to duration of the usage of social media?

Looking at the **table 0.3** the two variables can easily be seen named Time spent on social media and Political socialization in two rows and two columns. Table 0.3 Representing correlations between these two variables. The top box on the right and bottom box on the left showing value for Pearson's r, a Sig. (2-tailed) value and a number (N) value. The Sig. (2-Tailed) value in our findings is 0.023. This value is less than .05. So, we can conclude that there

is a statistically significant correlation between these two variables.

Table 0.3 Correlation between Social media usage and Political Socialization

		How much time do you spent on social media	Political Socialization
How much time do you Spent on social media	Pearson Correlation	1	.145*
			.023
	Sig.(2-tailed)⸱SEP⸱N		246
Political Socialization	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)⸱SEP⸱N	.145* .023 246	1

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

The Pearson's r for the correlation between the Time spent on social media and Political socialization variables is 0.145. Here Pearson's r is below 0.2, which means there is a weak relationship between these variables. The positive value of Pearson's r represents positive relationship between variables, which means when time spends on social media (one variable) increases then political socialization (the other variable) will also increase.

RQ-4: Do male students use social media for political purpose more than females?

Table 0.4 shows that total 165 (67.1%) respondents use social media for political purpose in which number of male respondents is 91 (55.1%) whereas female respondents make 74 (44.9%). Hence, it can be stated that male students use social media for political purpose more as compared to the female students.

Table 0.4 Social Media usage for Political Purpose by Gender.

Social Media Use	Male	Female	Total
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Yes	91 (55.1)	74 (44.9)	165 (67.1)
No	32 (39.5)	49 (60.5)	81 (32.9)
Total	123 (100)	123 (100)	246 (100)

RQ-5: Does social media usage for political purpose change political behaviors of users?

To get the answer of this question, correlation between social media usage for political purpose and political behavior was taken out. Looking at the **table 0.5** the two variables can easily be observed, named as use of social media for political socialization and political behavior in two rows and two columns. The table V. is representing correlation between these two variables. The top box on the right and bottom box on the left showing value for Pearson's r, a Sig. (2-tailed) value and a number (N) value. The Sig. (2-Tailed) value in our findings is 0.000. This value is less than .05. So, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant correlation between these two variables.

Table 0.5 Correlation between use of social media for political socialization and political behavior.

		I use social media for political socialization	Political Behavior
I use social media for political socialization	Pearson Correlation	1	.293**
	Sig.(2 tailed) N	246	.000

		246	
	Pearson Correlation	.293**	1
Political Behavior			
	Sig.(2-tailed) N	.000	
		246	246

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

The Pearson's r for the correlation between the use of social media for political socialization and political behavior is 0.293. Here Pearson's r is above 0.2, which means there is a moderate relationship between these variables. The positive value of Pearson's r represents positive relationship between variables which means when use of social media for political socialization (one variable) increases then the increase will also be found in political behavior (the other variable).

Discussion

This research has provided an informative content and considerable study based on theoretical model to all interested research scholars. The aim of this study is to investigate about the impact of social networking sites on political socialization of youth. Political socialization can be defined as a concept of thinking, learning and participation of people in politics. Most of the users are on same page regarding role of social media that it can bring the positive changes in the society and its appropriate use can be beneficial to inform, to educate and to inspire the users for social and political activities and to raise voice for their rights.

Social networking media has been penetrated in society speedily. These days' individuals especially youngsters use social media throughout the day and stay connected with friends, family and social updates. Almost 50% people use social media for more than five hours in each day. It is because the social media facilitates with the opportunity to communicate with people despite of territorial boundaries and help in exploring new dimensions. During lurking, people

find a huge amount of information and posts of family members and friends regarding political affairs that keep them engage in different debates on variety of topics, which not only develop their interest towards politics but also engage them in online political participation.

Social media facilitates with such online content that force the individuals to think regarding civic and political affairs. Social media not only provide political awareness but it also maximizes political exposure, which ultimately results to dig the logics and change in opinion or voting behavior.

The harmony of the individuals' opinions can also be estimated by analyzing performance of social media in political terms that majority of the people think to a great extent that use of social media maximizes their political exposure. It might be due to presence of number of platforms where they can get information about politics.

Although, the question regarding social media effects on increasing political behavior is concerned the greater number of respondents think that the social media encourage them to take part in politics. There were also a large number of respondents who think that due to social media their voting behavior is much changed and on the basis of logics they are much convinced towards another party and decided to vote and take part in offline politics as well.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the usage of digital media politicize the youth and that affects the voting behavior of its users. Social media plays a significant and positive role in civic and political issues because it brings innovation in the traditional trends of the civic and political participation. The research study also reveals that the social networking media provides an eccentric space of awareness, knowledge and entertainment for young individuals.

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