

# **Impact of Social Media and Political Participation on Political Efficacy of Youth in Pakistan**

Javed Iqbal, Dr. Shahid Hussain & Nasir Iqbal

## **Abstract**

*The aim of current study was to know the role of social networking sites on political participation and political efficacy of youth in Pakistan. This study reveals social media usage among the youth in Pakistan. The data of 300 respondents were gathered from the students of Federal Capital Territory Islamabad who were studying in different universities. The respondents were selected through convenience sampling technique. These university students were selected because they belong to various parts of country. A survey questionnaire was administered by the students for the collection of required data. The respondents were questioned about the usage of social networking sites, political participation, and political efficacy. The regression analysis revealed that online communication has influence on the political participation and political efficacy of youth. This study also investigated that the online political outreach of political parties has power to affect the political behavior of youth. Through literature review it was hypothesized that digital media has positive impact on youth regarding political efficacy and political participation. This study showed that there were statistically significant positive associations between social media usage and political participation, and social media usage and political efficacy among youth.*

**Key Words:** social media, youth, political participation, political efficacy, social networking sites.

**Introduction:**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has undoubtedly heralded a new chapter in this race of human progress through mind boggling advancement in information technology. The rapid rise of online communication popularly known as social media applications has brought the world community under one roof where information sharing has squeezed the world irrespective of their geographical location. The use of social media and other online modes of inter-personal communication have changed the dynamics of the inter-connectivity and the way people communicate with each other. It is said that the social networking sites have incredible effect on voters since impact of one system part is exceedingly reliant on the individuals from other (Richey, Silber, & Ely, 2008). It likewise upgrades the investment in races Furthermore state that social systems administration media assume crucial job during the presidential crusade as every one of the social media sites give stage to acquire political data to its client. As indicated by social systems administration media assumed an imperative job in the choosing Obama as president in 2008 American races (Dania, Whitney, & Cooperrider, 2011).

Political investment has verifiably been considered as a significant component of majority rule improvement. Some critical examinations demonstrate that the interest of youth in electoral process is in decay in western nations. The genuine scholars are worried on the low political interest of youth. What is explicit about young generation is that they are not animated by customary media, for example, TV, radio, and newspaper. Their propensities are coordinated to new media that is online media and community system. Social systems can without much of a stretch be clarified as "a gathering of Internet-put together applications worked with respect to the ideological and mechanical establishments of Web 2.0 that permit making, and trading client produced content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

In Pakistan Political gatherings have recognized the impact and significance of social media, consequently they are giving unique consideration towards social media, and most of them even procured staff to deal with Social Media apparatuses for successful political crusades. Social systems administration sites are likewise the best vehicle for ideological groups to pull in and connect with their supporters and voters...Through gathering's authentic social media account they shield their gathering approaches and offer exercises of their gathering heads and scrutinize their rivals and adversaries from different gatherings too.

Socially alluring objective is to energize and build the degree of political cooperation, particularly among youngsters. In this way, Social media is playing extremely successful and helpful job in Pakistani society and in the legislative issues of the nation. Social media is testing the customary governmental issues and presenting the new political models on the planet

Political enthusiasm in young people is noteworthy because this is the most reliable indicator of political investment (Levy, et.al, 2016). Researchers clarifies that youth in contemporary society simultaneously speak to an incredible political potential and inactive hazardous piece of the populace whose political interest is less unsurprising than other social gatherings. She additionally brings up that young generation in Europe and Croatia appear beneath normal interest in political foundations and procedures. Moreover, contrasted with the more established individuals, they all the more regularly announce that they won't cast a ballot (Ilišin, 2003). In an exploration from 2013 Ilišin, misao, &politologiju (2013) uncover that 10% of youngsters in Croatia have an incredible enthusiasm for legislative issues and 54% state they have no enthusiasm for it. This demonstrates political enthusiasm among youth should be expanded because such low investment is a danger to the fate of delegate popular government.

Lazarsfeld&Berelson (1948) directed old style considers on voting conduct. Gaudet, (1948) recognized valuable voting designs that legitimately affected individual voters. A portion of the standards set up by Lazarsfeld&Berelson (1944) filled in as establishment for the work done by different creators thereafter which was named two-advance progression of correspondence later on (Lazarsfeld, Berelson&Gaudet 1948). Carmines and Huckfeldt (1996) asserted that there were numerous agreements among different conventions and every custom gave attention to respond to individual difficulties (Munir, 2018).

Researchers utilized the financial methodology and examined the 'political lack of concern' by contending that electorates did not believe the interest in races to be levelheaded. He guaranteed that it was essentially the balanced financial factor that decided the impact of media battles on politically dynamic residents who did not have solid divided airs (Blais, 2000). Four earth shattering investigations were connected with the presidential races of 1940, 1948, 1952, and 1956 and started the foundation of insightful 'overview put together research with respect to voting behavior' (Rossi, Duncan, Schnore, & Peter, 1959). As indicated

by Rossi (1959), these investigations gave the different ideas and models that can be utilized in modern voting researches (Rossi, Duncan, Schnore, & Peter, 1959).

Lazarsfeld and his partners at Columbia University directed the initial two investigations on voting behavior (Rossi, Duncan, Schnore, & Peter, 1959). Their point was to discover a connection between the first mentalities, desires, individual contacts and gathering affiliations with the "last voting choice" (Rossi, Duncan, Schnore, & Peter, 1959). Dalton and Wattenberg (1993) assumed that voters distinguished their decision seeing a specific gathering as they saw the gathering's goals to be good with their own. They declared that the basic leadership procedure turned out to be very straightforward as they upheld those competitors whose foundation coordinated to their own (Dalton & Wattenberg, 1993).

### **Research questions**

The purpose of current study is to examine that how social media impact on political efficacy and political participation of youth in Pakistan. Followings are research questions of this study.

1. How many hours in a day do the youth spend on social media?
2. To what extent does social media has influenced youth's political participation?
3. To what extent do social media have impact on youth's political efficacy?
4. To what extent does political participation have impact on youth's political efficacy?

### **Literature review:**

Social media is a system of online communication between individuals and groups. People share information through messages, pictures and videos. Social media is new form of communication technology that connect the individuals through various social media platforms i.e., Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn etc. Mostly users are aware about the different functioning of new media. Social media applications are also recognized as web 2.0 tools, which are developing swiftly every year with unique functions. Social media there are number of social media platforms for communication that allow users to create

accounts for various purposes. People all around the world are much connected with each other through social media and they share number of ideas according to their feelings. It is also progressively widespread that social media is rising as a key source of connectivity for the public. (Kim et al., 2014).

There are numerous data arrays that can be communicated and disseminated via this new media. Healthcare and beauty are one of the fields that usually share their products on different social media outlets (Forbes 2016; Neiger et al., 2012). Tourism is another sector that is commonly discussed on social media (Xiang and Gretzel2010; Munar& Jacobsen 2014). Social media is extensively used for family and self-projection (keeffe and Clarke-Pearson 2011; Eickhoff and Moreno 2013). The economic and management issues are also discussed and shared using social media (Dellarocas, 2013; Dennis & Yuan,2014). Now a days politics andelection are the hot topics of social media users. (Muniandy, 2013; Shirky, 2011). Social media is a major platform of discussion and information sharing for public all over the world.

Social media contains different types of content because users generate content according to their own interest. This User-created content on is available for the public on social networking sites synonymous with internet. Thus, social media handlers receive massive information on different issues and share different type of material themselves (de Zuniga et al., 2014). There are several popular social media applications preferred by users in the world. However, selection of social networking sites depends upon the usage in different nations and demographics. (Statisca.com).

Hardy and Scheufele (2005) exposed that online communication, or CMC, political conversation between groups and individuals produces same results via offline, or face-to-face, dialogue. Studies have found significant relationship between online and offline conversation on political issues and offline political involvement. This conclusion suggested that online political conversation can crop same results to offline discussion. So online political discussion also has same impact on groups and individuals.

What's more, (Yang & DeHart, 2016) led an assessment of online social connections and political participation, to research the manner in which online stages add to expanding cooperation with legislative issues. Also, online collaboration improves the association among networks that are disconnected. The writer found that Facebook and Twitter commonly

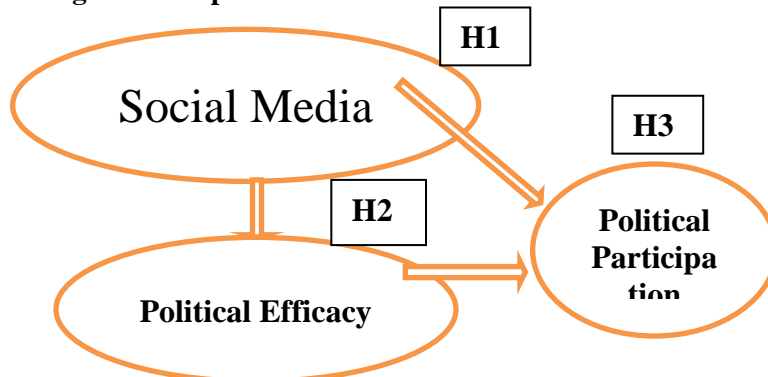
established a positive predictor of online political participation. In a similar area, (Vaccari & Valeriani, 2018) investigated the connection between political commitment and participation in online channels and they uncovered that the new media empower political participants to be included and express their perspectives in a straight to the point and open way. Perspectives towards computerized use of media and genuine political participation contrast starting with one individual then onto the next.

Regardless, social media likewise has its disadvantages as featured in numerous investigations in literature (Knoll, Matthes, & Heiss, 2018)(Valenzuela, Halpern, Katz, & Miranda, 2019). Online media use has been explored in exercises of political among university-level students by Yang and (Diemer & Rapa, 2016) after which they found that Twitter and Facebook are fundamentally identified with political participation. In a similar (Theocharis, 2016) zeroed in their endeavors on connection between social systems administration and political commitment and presumed that Facebook content has a positive reaction to participation of political. Hence, Internet utilization and e-exercises upgrades the online clients' information on legislative issues and drives their participation in governmental issues.

The influence of social media on behavior of voting was the center of (Heblich, 2016) study and the creators discovered social media to have key job in joining individuals inside political coalitions. As per (Bart, 2015), social media use among activists is coordinated towards an aggregate reason, while (Ahmad, Alvi, & Ittefaq, 2019) Concentrated on the connection between political action and political mindfulness among Pakistani residents and presume that online political movement has a nearby relationship with political mindfulness and disconnected political contribution. Based on the above assessed literature, this investigation proposes the accompanying model and theories to be tested.

### Research Model

fig: 01 conceptual framework



**H1:** It is more likely that social media has impact on youth's political participation.

**H2:** It is more likely that social media has impact on youth's political efficacy.

**H3:** It is more likely that political participation has a positive impact on political efficacy.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Political Communication Theory**

Political communication is a subfield of communication and political science that is concerned with how information spreads and influences politics and policy makers, the news media, and citizens. Political communication through social media is the prominent source of political participation and political efficacy of youth.

### **Persuasion Theory**

Persuasion Theory is a mass communication theory that deals with messages aimed at changing the attitudes of receivers. In this perspective, persuasive messages are thus able to activate an attitude change that can modify behaviors of consumers, voters, and individuals in general. Various tools are used by the political parties through social network platforms to persuade the youth and influence their political attitude and behavior.

### **Methodology:**

In this study a survey research technique has been adopted for assortment of the data. The population of the current study was young university students of Rawalpindi and federal capital Islamabad who are social media users and having political interest, the sample size of the current study was 300 which was selected through convenience sampling. The questioner was based on closed-ended questions to gather the data of about demography, social media usage, media effects on political participation and efficacy of youth. Questionnaire was distributed among the university students for study purpose. The samples of 300 respondents were selected within the age range of 19 to 30 years from the different universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to examine the data. Linear regression, correlations and descriptive statistics applied for description the data and hypotheses testing.

**Results and Discussion:**

**Table - 1 Demographics of the respondents**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	150	50.0
	Female	150	50.0
<b>Age</b>	19-21 years	122	40.7
	22-24 years	116	38.7
	25-27years	31	10.3
	28-30years	31	10.3
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor	130	43.3
	Master	123	41.0
	MS/Ph.D.	47	15.7
<b>University</b>	Public	233	77.7
	Private	67	22.3

Table 1 shows geographic aspects of the respondents. These respondents have various demographic characteristics which were 300 in numbers. Gender, age, education, and institute were the demographic variables of respondents. The total 300 respondents were based on both male and female respondents equally. Table 1 also showed that 40.7% respondents were within the age range of 19-21 years and 38.7% were around the age of 22-24 years. The respondents around the age of 25-27 and 28-30 years were 10.3 percent similarly. The Table-1 indicates that 253(84.3%) respondents were enrolled in Bachelor and Masters programmes, while the respondents enrolled in M.Phil./Ph.D. programmes were 47 (15.7 percent) only. It was also revealed that 233 (77.7%) respondents were studying in public universities while 67 (22.3%) respondents were the students at private universities.

**Social media usage of respondents in a day**

**Table-2 Social Media Usage on Daily Basis**

<b>Time Spent Per Day</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Above 4 hours	75	25.0
4 hours	55	18.3
3 hours	82	27.3
2 hours	51	17.0
1 hour	37	12.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

This frequency Table shows the respondent time span they spent daily on social media for various activities. Total 300 respondents out of which 1hour time spent 37 (12.3%) and 2 hours 51 (17%), 3 hours 82 (27.3%), 4hours 55 (18.3%) and above 4hours 75 (25%). It clearly depicts that most of the respondents use social media 3hours and above 4 hours daily. Out of 300 respondents 263(87.7%) are the heavy users of social media they use social media 2 hours to above 4 hours daily for different gratifications.

#### **Co-relation among various variables**

The table 3 shows correlations among social media usage, political participation, and political efficacy of the respondents. Pearson's values of (.285) for political participation and (.186) for political efficacy against social media usage proved significantly positive.

**Table- 3 Correlations**

		<b>Social media</b>	<b>political participation</b>	<b>Political Efficacy</b>
<b>Social media</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.285**	.186**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.001

	N	300	300	300
<b>political participation</b>	Pearson Correlation	.285**	1	.333**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	300	300	300
<b>Political Efficacy</b>	Pearson Correlation	.186**	.333**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	
	N	300	300	300

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

The Sig values against political participation (.000) and political efficacy (.001) shows 2-tailed positive correlation against social media usage. Upon observing social media with Pearson’s correlation of (.285), 2-tailed sig value of (.000) and political efficacy with Pearson’s correlation of (.333) and sig value of (.000) proved significantly positive against political participation. Social media with Pearson’s correlation value of (.186), sig value of (.001) proved significantly positive against political efficacy and same pattern was observed against political participation against political efficacy.

**Regression Analysis of Social Media and Political Participation**

<b>Social Media (Independent variable)</b>	<b>Political Participation (Dependent Variable)</b>			
	B	t	Sig	R
	1.360	3.982	.000	0.285

The above table indicates a positive correlation between social media and political participation of youth. The Sig value of (.000) indicates that

social media has a strong positive impact on political participation of youth. The linear regression between independent and dependent variables was found positive and significant with  $t= 3.982$ ,  $\beta= 1.360$ ,  $P=0.000$ , and that 28.5% of the political participation difference was described by social media. So, hypothesis 1 “Social media has impact on youth’s political participation” is supported.

#### **Regression Analysis of Social Media and Political Efficacy**

<b>Social Media (Independent variable)</b>	<b>Political Efficacy (Dependent Variable)</b>			
	B	t	Sig	R
	1.550	4.331	.000	.186

The upper Table shows the regression analysis applied on independent variables and dependent variables to determine the impact of social media on the political efficacy of youth. Social media is independent and political efficacy is dependent variables as shown in the table. The result of hypothesis test is presented in the table which shows that social media and political efficacy have significant relation with  $p=0.000$ , beta value=1.550 and  $t=4.331$  with 18.6% of variance in political efficacy described by social media. So, hypothesis 2 “Social media has impact on youth’s political efficacy” was supported.

#### **Regression Analysis of Political Participation and Political Efficacy**

<b>Political Participation (Independent variable)</b>	<b>Political Efficacy (Dependent Variable)</b>			
	B	t	Sig	R
	1.647	8.921	.000	.333

This table depicts similar pattern of dependency on political efficacy as a result of political participation (independent variable). Sig value of (.000) denotes higher level of correlation between the two variables. The test of hypothesis shows a Beta value of 1.647,  $t: 8.921$  with a variance of 33.3%. These indicators show a significantly positive relationship between political participation and political efficacy. So, hypothesis 3,

political participation via digital communication has a positive impact on political efficacy is supported.

### **Discussion**

The findings of current study showed that youth in Pakistan mostly prefer to spend time on social media instead traditional media. The data indicates that out of 300 respondents 263(87.7%) are the heavy users of social media they use social media 2 hours to above 4 hours daily for different gratifications. This research study also depicts the correlation among the social media, political participation and political efficacy. Social media has a lot of political information because political parties in Pakistan have social media wings. These wings disseminate various political content to woo the voters. Impact on the youth. The linear regression analysis also shows that social media has impact on youth's political participation and political efficacy. The test of (hypothesis 3) shows a Beta value of 1.647, t: 8.921 with a variance of 33.3%. These indicators show a significantly positive relationship between political participation and political efficacy. This study investigates that social media has influence on youth political participation, political efficacy and political behavior.

### **Conclusion**

The results of this study explain a clear phenomenon that social media has emerged as an important tool for shaping the perceptions of individuals. The study explicitly reveals that political efficacy and political participation has been positively affected by social media usage among youth in Pakistan. The findings of this study showed that political outreach on social media has impact on youth due to political activities on social networking sites. The study serves as a milestone for researchers of social sciences in the study areas regarding social media usage at one hand and at the same time, it is a guideline for political parties to evaluate their political strategies and formulate plans to influence social media users in light of the study to their benefit.

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