

## **Social Media Effectively Socializes Young Users to Participate in Politics**

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### **Abstract**

*The role of social media in political socialization of youth should not be underestimated. Social media is considered to be a rapid and significant social network which influences daily lives of individuals and also leaves impact on national and global politics. Many studies have indicated that the usage of social media is increasing day by day among youth. The purpose of this study is to examine how social media networking socializes young user to participate in the political process. To analyze the association between social media and youths' political participation, the survey study method was chosen by the researcher. In order to collect data, questionnaire was distributed on the purposive sampling techniques to the students of University of Karachi. The findings of the study suggested that more time spend on social media the high level of participation in politics. The evidence suggested that there is a significance relationship between social media usage and political awareness among youth. On the other hand online political participation on social media is not enough for the practical political participation. Evidence also indicates that the unethical material is posting and*

*sharing on social media has negative effects on young user's political attitude, behavior, concepts, beliefs and ideas towards the politics.*

**Key words:** Political Participation, Social Media, Young User, Effective Socialization, Online Participation.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

With the diffusion of social network sites such as Facebook, social media have become one of the most popular internet sites in the world. As of 2011 Alexa, a company that tracks web traffic, ranked this site as one of the most visited sites in the world where it stands second to Google, in the world (Alexa, 2011).

The growing popularity of these sites has created a new debate : Do these services contribute to society by allowing people to become informed , find common causes and participate in public life more often( e.g.,Bennett,2008) or do they foster shallow relationships , distract people from public affairs and deepen their political and civic disengagements(e.g.,Hodgkinson,2008)?

Despite the growing popularity of social network sites and the efforts of civic and political organizations to adopt these sites, there is a limited empirical research on the effects of using these services on citizens' political attitudes and civic behaviors (Ellison, Steinfeld &Lampe, 2007; Pasek & Romer, 2009; Valenzuela, Park&Kee, 2009).

The Purpose of this article is test whether Social media has any impact on Political attitudes and awareness of young adults of Karachi University, for which there are mixed findings of various studies. Social media might be giving an advance avenue for young people; but is not re-shaping the already politically uninterested young users (Keating. A. 2016). Youth are interested in politics and the use of social media networking as a political campaign tool has been considered a positive impact on youths' voting decision making (Mhlomi Y, 2016). It has been seen that

more online involvement in politics is due to the mobilization of social media and other communication networks (Zainon, 2016).

In the elections time different political groups use social media to attack their opponent's political party by spreading false scandals, propaganda and sharing and posting hate messages, remarks, fake video, it consequently effect the young users' political ideas, concepts and attitude towards politics, which leads diversities, extremism, and harmful situation among different political groups (Ashk & Amin, 2016). Social media is one of the important tools that rope youths' political participation and also youths' voter turnout in elections (Fountain, 2016).

The way in which political knowledge has been transmitted, comment, share and discussion about political matters on social media, involved youth showed the significance of communicatory sort of action for the future of political involvement and collective actions (Ariadna Vromen, 2015) .

In today's connected world, social media sites attempt individual to communicate with abundant people at the same time and interchange socio-political issues and provide a floor for political argument. (Jantti, 2015).

#### **BACKGROUND:**

According to Putnam's "time displacement hypothesis," heavy television viewing distracts from social activities and participation in the community, eroding people's trust in fellow citizens. With the diffusion of the Internet in the late 1990s, some researchers extended this rationale to online activities, that is, more time spent online equals less time spent socializing and working for civic or political causes (e.g., Bugeja, 2004; Kraut et al., 1998; Nie, 2001).

According to Katz and Gurevitch's (1974) classic typology, individuals use media for personal identity construction, social relationships and entertainment.

Political participation, both offline and online, refers to behavior seeking to influence government action and policymaking (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995).

It has claimed that young individual political related activity on social media has not as extended as popular social media account proposed. Furthermore the findings indicated that the socioeconomic condition of individual has greatly influence on political orientation of people (Juliet E. Carlisle, 2013).

It signifies that social media imparted the youth with high political infinite to that of customary politics. In contrast the digital domain seemed to hunch the trials of judging conceivable online knowledge and information and it's spreading for conclusive impacts. Since social media access youth practical politics without official directions, it might be reverberations for the all over society's development (Khalid Ahmad, 2013)

Generally it has been seen that the level of participation of youth in the political process is high by more usage of social media than the traditional media like television and newspaper, because the usage of print and electronic media has been declining among youth (Neill, 2009).

The enlargement of advance and activate friendly social networking such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, young adults have best scope to express their political views freely and participate in democratic process on their own way (Owen, 2009).

The impact of social networking sites use on the area of political involvement, by contrast seem to denote that technology is one of applicable element. Online political involvement may provoke more offline involvement and, inversely offline political involvement may provoke more online participation. The arrangement that appear is a comeback of political participation through social media usage. Social pattern and technology

interaction enlarge pattern of political engagement in youth (Calenda & Meijer, 2007).

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

1. Do social media play any role for the young users to participate in the political activities?
2. Do the social Networking sites mobilize young people in practically participate in political process?
3. Have social media limits young users only in online political participations?
4. Is social media usage is the strong source of political awareness for young users?
5. Do the unethical post in social media sites against political parties and their leadership shape negative effect in young user's attitude?
6. Does the exchange of abusive comments, fake videos and hate messages against political parties and politicians leads to negative attitude in youths?
7. Does the false rumors and propaganda against political parties and politicians constitute negative opinions in youth towards politics?

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The main objective of the study is to analyze how social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, twitter) effectively socialize the young users to participate in political activities. This study aims to analyze the potential role of social media for young users to participate in political activities also the effects of online political activities of young user on their offline political participation, and how social media give awareness towards politics.

1. To analysis the negative effects of unethical political posts against political parties and their leaders of social media in young users.

2. To examine the abusive language use in social media and its effects on young user's attitude.
3. To analysis the viral of rumors and propagandas in social media networking and its creation of negative perceptions in young users towards politics.

**HYPOTHESES:**

1. The more time spend on social media the more political participation of youth.
2. There is a correlation between online political involvement and live political participation.
3. There is a significance relationship between social media and Youths' political awareness.
4. The Unethical posts on social media against political parties and their leaders leaves negative effects on young user's political attitude.

**LITERATURE REVIEW:**

Grant (2016) claims that while the more usage of social media amongst youth, where posting and sharing political information that persuade young user in political participation. However the protest participation in any political and social issue has showed a low statistical significance. On the other hand, despite the significant role of social media in political awareness among youth, it seems that the practical participation of youth in live political process is low.

More time consumed on social media can effect adversely on youths' leadership participation. Likewise balky lesson from guru can creel the leadership involvement among the young individuals. Once more abortive political and legal framework can balk youths' freedom of views speaking about governance and high rule (Ekpe, 2016). In addition more time spent on social networking impact negatively on youths' leadership skills, similarly negative material sharing on social media and might be some hard and restricted instructions and policies limit youths' freedom of speak and

thoughts. But again it has been seen youth expresses their opinion freely on social media despite the presence of legal framework restrictions.

Mahmud & Amin (2016) found that the usage of social media is so worldwide, that it mostly expands transmission network across the globe, not only communication aptitude but it contributes to intensify socio-economic and socio-political understanding as well as political participation activities in young users. In addition the widespread use of social media all over the world particularly among youth, enhance communication expertise and also enlarge social and political development with intensify participation in political affairs.

The vital role of social media as an important tool for youth to involve them in social, economic and political decision-making, by sharing latest socio-economic and political news and information through social media with friends and family (Shiratuddin, 2016). Social media potentially socialize youth by sharing and communication of current significant societal issues with friends, which motivate youth to take part in the decision making process.

It is to examine that free expression on social media with simplicity to express views, remarks, to be a friend or a follower of political candidate as well as simply to share links and like the post, motivate young user to participate in election process. Young people are usually regarded as a group that doesn't take interest in political matters, because they imagine their opinion will not get importance by those who rule. Nevertheless the advancement of technology has overcome this speculation by severe obstacles to freedom of speech (Astuti, 2016). The easy access to social media especially by youth, simply have an opportunity to freely pass their voices to high authorities. Exchange online views and communicate with friends and political bodies, has influence the voting behavior and socialize them to participate in politics.

The Unexpected rise of youths' involvement in political activities through the usage of social media has enhanced their political knowledge and interaction personally with political candidates (Abdu, Mohamad & Muda, 2016). The participation of youth in political process is rapid and abnormal, due to the use of Facebook, WhatsApp and other social sites youth gets latest political information and can directly communicate with political individuals.

Many youth have got engaged in online social and politics matters, it may be a flake that factually they get participate merely in a live manifest. By contrast that can't change the truth that social media stand a capable device for youths' political involvement (Mngusuul, 2015). Generally assumed that social media users are participating in politics merely online, but the fact is that social media is a potential tool for young people to engage in online politics as well as live political participation.

The spread of politically extremist messages on social media and other complicated issues can probably lead to adverse custom and practices. The radicalization in youth hence can't be break through the information and acknowledgement on social media (Swist, Collin & McCormack, 2015). Sharing and posting of politically hated and scandalized messages on social media, might be boost radicalization in youth instead of cultivate knowledgeable narratives.

The social media is absolutely connected to political undertaking on youth, and advance many arrangements contain with flatter out of social placements in political involvement with the passage of time along technological and generational replacement (Xenos, Vromen & loader, 2014). With development of technology there is easy approach to access social networks to get all kind of knowledge, information and current political scenario, which have positive correlation between social media and young users political participation.

Bae (2014) claim that, the news and information shared on social media networking site have a significant impact on youths' participation in political activities, and many studies declared that the online interaction has significantly awareness youth towards good democratic young citizen.

Usage of social media for social connection doesn't effect in peoples' political participation, but it influence indirectly by mean of youth expose themselves in political system (Zúñiga, Molyneux, & Zheng, 2014). Generally the ratio of direct political involvement of youth has seen low, then have their online political involvement.

Offense opponents, dispersion fake rumors, hatred comments and messages, integer dispense pictures, and videos, hacking peoples' accounts to scandalize Politian, virus attacks on opposite information, online scams, resulting bad impression on political system and it leads youths' to keep away from political activities and creates violated situation among different political forces (Nnanyelugo & Nwafor, 2013). Even the vital role of social Medias' positive impact on youth to makes their contribution in political process. On the other hand the unethical, false, and hateful material sharing and posting on social media have destructive effect on youths' political attitude, opinion and behavior.

We exemplified that social media networking sites have acknowledged by youth as a potential source of political information, this kind of information certainly did slight to acquaint them or compute to democratic conversations. Furthermore, in contempt of the affiance social media sites grip for enhancing political desire and involvement among young users (Jody C. Baumgarthner, 2010)

**Methodology:**

Survey research method was applied in this study. The survey research technique is certainly the best applicable method in social science, researchers who are keen in collecting genuine data for exploring, describing and explaining a large population to examine

directly (Babbi, 2014). The unit of analysis is both male and female university students who use social media frequently. For data collection purposes the Questionnaire tool is used. The required measurement scale was used to answer the question. This type of technique was adopted because in observing youth participation in politics through social media networking, it would be crucial to get their opinion about how social media effectively socialize them to participate in political process. The data analysis is done by using SPSS. Purposive sampling method was used, with sample size n=110. For observation of sample, Cross-sectional method is used. The universe of the study is students of University of Karachi.

### **Findings and Discussion:**

The frequency distribution and Chi-square test tables presented below accommodates some understanding into the social media and it's effectively socializing young user to participate in politics. The survey research was designed to test some working hypothesis, in order to understand the association between social media usage and political socialization of youth.

**Table 1: Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Male	63	57.3	57.3	57.3
Female	47	42.7	42.7	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows that the frequency distribution of gender of the respondents. Which consist of 57.3% respondents is male and 42.7% respondents are female. The table also shows the valid percent and cumulative percent to more support frequency distribution of collected data.

**Table 2: Age group**

Age group	frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
15-20	28	25.5	25.5	25.5
21-26	75	68.2	68.2	93.6
27-32	6	5.5	5.5	99.1
Above 32	1	.9	.9	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

The above table 2 shows the frequency distributions of an age group of the respondents, which consist of 25.5% respondents of 15 to 20 years of age group, 21 to 26 years ,68.2%, 27 to 32 years and 5.5% and 0.9% are above 32 years of age. The table analysis indicates that the majority of respondents belong to 21-26 age groups.

**Table 3: Qualification**

Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
Bachelors	77	70.0	70.0	70.0
M.A/M.Sc	25	22.7	22.7	92.7
M.S /M.Phil.	6	5.7	5.7	98.2
Other(please specify)	2	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows qualification of respondents, 70% respondents are Bachelor of science, 22% respondents are doing Masters in Arts/ Masters in science (M.A/MSc) 5.7% respondents are doing Ms./MPhil and 1.8% respondents are enrolled in other degree programs ( Diplomas and other different short courses). The table analysis shows that the majority respondents are doing Bachelor of Science. The table also shows the valid percentage and cumulative percentage to further support the analysis of frequency distribution of collected data.

**Table 4: Faculty**

Faculty	Frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Faculty of social science	56	50.9	50.9	50.9
Faculty of management science	4	3.6	3.6	54.5
Faculty of science	44	40.0	40.0	94.5
Faculty of pharmacy	4	3.6	3.6	98.2
Other	2	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

The data presented in table 4 shows the faculty of the respondents. 50.9% respondents are from faculty of social sciences, 3.6% respondents are from faculty of management sciences 40% respondents are faculty of science 3.6% respondents are of faculty of pharmacy and 1.8% respondent are from other faculties (research institutes and research centers). The above table analysis shows that the majority participants are from faculty of social science.

**Table 5: Social media site use mostly**

Social media	Frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Twitter	3	2.7	2.7	2.7
Facebook	25	22.7	22.7	25.5
What Sapp	53	48.2	48.8	73.6
All of these	24	21.8	21.8	95.5
Other	5	4.5	4.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

The data presented in table 5 shows that the social media sites use mostly by respondents. 2.7% respondents use Twitter 22.7% respondents use Facebook 48.8% respondents use WhatsApp 21.8% respondents use all of these social media sites, 4.5%

respondents use other social media site like Skype, You tube, Instagram etc. The table analysis shows that majority of respondents use mostly WhatsApp and Facebook.

**Table 6: Time spend on social media**

Time spend	Frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1 to 2 hours	11	10.0	10.0	10.0
2 to 3 hours	27	24.5	24.5	34.5
3 to 4 hours	72	65.5	65.0	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 shows the frequency distribution of time spends on social media. 10% respondents spend 1 to 2 hours daily on social media. 24.5% respondents spend 2 to 3 hours, 65.5% respondents spend 3 to 4 hours daily on social media. The data analysis shows that majority of respondents spend 3 to 4 hours daily on social media.

**Table 7: Social media site providing more political information**

The table 7 shows that social media sites providing more political

Social media	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
What Sapp	3	2.7	2.7	2.7
Twitter	49	44.5	44.5	47.3
Facebook	42	38.2	38.2	85.5
All of these	15	13.6	13.6	99.1
Other	1	.9	.9	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

information.

2.7% respondents said that WhatsApp provides political information 44.5% respondents says Twitter provides political information, where as 38.2% respondents said Facebook provides political information 13.6% respondents said all of these social media sites provide political information and 0.9% respondents said other social media sites provides political information. The table data analysis shows that twitter and Facebook provides more political information.

### Testing of Hypothesis

**H1:** The more time spend on social media the more political participation of youth.

**Table 8:**

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	144.421 <sup>a</sup>	68	.000

Likelihood Ratio	48.722	68	.963
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.530	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	110		

a. 102 cells (97.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .10.

Table 8 Chi-square test indicates that the P value 0.000 is less than 0.05 it would be conclude that there is a significance association between the dependent variable (political participation) and the independent variable (time spend on social media). Similarly the youth's time spend on social media is correlated to the political participation.

**H 2:** There is a correlation between online political involvement and live political participation

**Table 9:**

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	159.601 <sup>a</sup>	136	.081
Likelihood Ratio	128.544	136	.663
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.300	1	.129
N of Valid Cases	110		

a. 172 cells (98.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .04.

Table 8 Chi-Square test indicates that the P value 0.081 is greater than 0.05 it would be analysis that there is no relationship between the dependent variable (political participation) and the independent variable (participation in politics online on social media). In other words online political participation of youth on social media has no

effect on their live political participation, and the both variables are not depended on each other.

**H 3:** There is a significance relationship between social media and political awareness among youth

**Table 10:**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6120.583 <sup>a</sup>	5644	.000
Likelihood Ratio	792.715	5644	1.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.110	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	110		

a. 5796 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Table 9 Chi-Square indicates that the P value .000 is less than 0.05 it would be conclude that there is a significance relationship between the dependent variable (political awareness) and the independent variable (social media). In other words social media is providing awareness to young user and both variables are related.

**H 4:** The Unethical posts on social media against political parties and their leaders leave negative effects on young user's political attitude.

**Table 11:**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	112.203 <sup>a</sup>	72	.002
Likelihood Ratio	112.421	72	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.058	1	.005
N of Valid Cases	110		

a. 93 cells (97.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .15.

Table 10 indicates that the P value 0.002 is less than 0.05, which shows a significance relationship between the unethical material (posts) on social media and negative effects on young user. It indicates that the both variables are depending on each other.

**Conclusion:**

The study is designed to analyze how social media effectively socialize its young user to participate in politics. The study conceded that majority of young respondents visits social media sites frequently and acquire political knowledge and information. The study declared that more time spends on social media and youths’ participation in politics both variables have positive relationship. In addition the study revealed that social media gives political awareness to youth. On the other hand the study also confess that online political participation like, comment on political post, liking and sharing political post is not enough for practical political involvement. Further the study notify that unethical material on social media have a strong negative effects on young users’ attitude, beliefs, concepts and behavior towards politics and political behavior.

**Recommendations:**

The usage of social media is enlarging day by day particularly in youth because of its easily accessible and fast communication network in the world. In addition it is seems that social media have had greater impact on everyday life and have also greater impact on national and international politics. The usage and literature posts and sharing on social media should not only informative but it should also be ethical and within good manners. It has been observed that there is larger unethical material such as abusive language, hate talk, false rumors, propaganda, fake videos against politicians and political parties on social media, which results in negative behavior of youth towards politics like distrust on political system, indifference from politics or it may create political diversities and harmful situations.

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