



A SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS ROLE FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN BALOCHISTAN: A CASE STUDY OF LASBELA UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to analysis the relationship between social media usage and its impact on university students, specifically the function of media in political socialization, civic consciousness, political participation, media consumption, and the type of applications = most commonly used by students. The researchers used a quantitative descriptive technique. To complete this study project, we used purposive sampling. N-112 sample sizes were collected from the Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences in Uthal, Baluchistan, using a google survey form and a closed-ended questionnaire with a Likert scale. The responders came from a several faculties and educational levels, including undergraduate and master's degrees. The findings revealed that there is a strong link between social media use and political activity. The majority of respondents in this study said they utilized social media to learn about politics, acquire political attitudes and ideas, and learn about the political system. As a result, they spend two to five hours per day on social media platforms. Furthermore, this paper revealed the



relationship between social media use and political system understanding at various levels, including local, provincial, national, and international levels, and confirmed that there was a strong positive relationship between social media use and political system understanding among Lasbela university students. The H1 and H2 hypotheses on the use of social media sites and the association between online political engagement, political socialization, and political dynamics revealed a strong positive relationship at significant levels .006, .001, and .000.

Keywords: Social Media, Political activities, political socialization, University students, Balochistan

Introduction:

Over the course of a decade, digital revolution has had a significant control on the world. Current media and innovation, for example, have transformed association, communication means, and social and political dialogue. Many media and communication scholars, sociologists, political scientists, and international relation's analysts have investigated and high-lighted numerous facets of social media usage. (Ahmad, T., Alvi, A., & Ittefaq, M. (2019). The Social Media is key mean to supply knowledge to the general masses on political issues, attracting, and empowering people. For political debates and engagement, the Internet has become indispensable. Primarily, the Internet was used as a tool or specialized mechanism for political organisations to communicate with their members via with websites. New media and enhanced technology, on the other side, have changed communication designs in two-way communication (Emruli & Baca, 2011). Teenagers are the most engaged Internet and social media followers. Online legislative issues exercises are beneficial and encourage young people to participate in political events (Quintelier & Vissers, 2008). The role of media becomes very vital during election in third world countries such as India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. The internet and social media become progressively significant for disseminating political news and opinions (McAllister, 2015). Likely few European countries demonstrated that US 2016 presidential election was threat for democracy. Social media is likely the key source of data for millions and millions of people; however, it also has incredible opportunities for deception to influence the public's view. The prior cited influences of media on civic engagement are crucial in monitoring political aspects. The Internet empowers people to participate in government issues and reinforces offline political involvement, demonstrating the Internet's dual impact on information and political participation (Nam, 2012).

Social media usage by teenagers is frequent in both impoverished and rich countries. Political groups and individual political leaders utilize social media to disseminate political knowledge to voters and other users (Michaelsen, 2011). The new phase of modernization and social networking sites has an impact on political communication in both developing and developed countries; nevertheless, the expansion of the Internet has had a particularly large impact on



developed countries (Riaz, 2010). SNS has a noteworthy impact on followers' social and political socialization, especially among the younger generation (Khan & Shahbaz, 2015). In the current research showed that, social media has an important political influence on Pakistani people. (Karamat & Farooq, 2016) Students actively utilize social media as a source for getting statistics regarding politics, including sharing reviews and debating political matters with their peers (Arshad & Syed, 2014).

Social Media Usage and University's Students in Baluchistan

The study was carried out at Baluchistan University to look into student use of social media. Most respondents were familiar with social media and used it for diverse objectives. Facebook is well-recognized as media source for university students. The students are well-aware of the popularities of social media (Anwar & Tang, 2019). Baluchistan's students use social media as one of their most significant online tools. When technological advances were launched, they quickly addressed the youngsters; social media and networking platforms have a massive effect on direct communication. Every person's life is profoundly affected by new advancements (Rashid, Baloch, & Niaz, 2019). Social media networking sites are playing an essential part in Baluchistan's development that is beneficial in guiding generations to a great career. Social networking is a platform that is used now to identify the younger generation through offering digital channels for them to enhance their efficiency; it also helps disabled people and works to improve Baluchistan's healthcare services. Through as well, it serves international matters, as financial assistance to people in need, and for public enlightenment reasons. (Rashid, Baloch, & Niaz, 2019).

Research Objectives and Hypothesis

Research Objectives

- 1:** To find out how social media provide the platform for political participation, where the youth learn how to become a responsible citizen?
- 2:** To investigate how digital media help to understand various political dynamics in provincial, national and international level to give a better understanding in broader level for political socialization.

Research Hypothesis

- H1. Social media usage has significant relationship in online political participation, political socialization, and political dynamics among University students.
- H2. Social media usage does not have significant relationship in online political participation, political socialization, and political dynamics among University students.



Significance of Study

This study is to find that social media has a significant tool to spread political awareness regarding the political system, assist in the process of political socialisation among the youth. Further, it helps to become a good citizen through knowing various political dynamics provincial to international levels. In addition, if a person engaged in a political party or political institution with this socialisation able him/her to perform better in these organizations. The primary factor for undertaking this research is because, while the topic is being addressed and examined in a few parts of universities, no significant studies have been done on the topic at Lasbela University.

Literature Review

The live Political Participation through Social Media

The word politics is not unique and modern for the globe. Political participation infers individuals to get engaged in various political phenomena of the state as well as the whole world. In the political sphere, it is observed as an activity to engage in several political actions which are connected to the recent political culture and administration system. Affiliation with political parties, following political leaders, knowledge regarding political movements and campaigns, marches and processions are all the subject matters of political participation. With the rest of the world, social media applications interconnect the netizens. On the political content on Facebook, Twitter, they can express their feelings and share their views and read political blog posts on social media applications. The advancement of information exchange not only shapes day-to-day conversations but similarly transform people's political conversation. Nowadays social media is being used to discuss International politics, political leaders and political ongoing activities among people from all over the world. Netizens use several social media networking sites to get news (Lee & Ma, 2012), (Bakshy, Messing, & Adamic, 2015). On the contrary, it is fine to contend that social media has its disservice also. For example, (Theocharis & Lowe, 2016) analysis asserted that “Our study contributes to the debate providing evidence showing that the use of Facebook, by far the most popular social media platform with more than 1 billion users, has a clear negative effect on participation... Facebook use not only fails to influence engagement in a number of classic and widely used political and civic participation repertoires, but also affects them negatively” (p. 1479).

(Mahmud & Amin, 2017), concentrated on university students' use of social networking sites for political participation. The study conclusion shows the connection between on-line and off-line activism; nonetheless, in political conversations, email contributes a smallish function as compared to Facebook. When compared to Facebook. Moreover, they discovered that online social communication facilitates offline participation; they discovered that online social communication improves parallel ties among irrelevant attaching connections. Pointing in the



direction of this research specialization, (Papagiannidis & Manika, 2016) investigated participation in politics and activism through various online and offline tracks and discovered that new media and various online networking sites provide access to political participants to get involved in politics and express their views openly. Individual perspectives differ, as do their use of digital media and political participation in real life.

Political Socialization: Social Media

Political socialization is the process by which people think about, learn about, and engage in politics. Most users believe that social networking sites can bring about changes for the better and that proper use of them can be a useful way to educate, empower, and encourage consumers for moral activities and to voice their opinions for their social and political equality (Khan and Shahbaz 2015).

Social networking sites have a critical role in the political socialization of Pakistani citizens. People in Pakistan use social networking sites to get political news and also to reproduce political opinions. Many political activists and parties have their personal and official social media pages to entice and motivate supporters (Khan and Shahbaz 2015). (Amjad, 2012) Mentions that today are political groups in Pakistan use social networking sites; most of them operate their personal internet sites and social media channels. Social networking sites have become a main instrument for political groups and campaigners to recruit supporters and stay in touch with their networks. PTI is the most visible model of social networking media's success in reaching Pakistan's younger generation.

To summarise, social media do contribute to advancing political understanding among Pakistan's youth; it is true that people acquired political understanding via consuming social media; however, there is unfavorable proof that citizens are only slightly informed and are not capable of reaching the best possible rank as was presumed. Despite this, the fact is that social media pushes the young generation to socialize. They are not quite as informed as predicted (Muzaffar 2019).

Usage of Social Media and awareness of Political Dynamics

Presently, it is very essential to acquire awareness about all the occurrences of the globe. In addition Is therefore regarded like a procedure that gives political activities by many individuals that are active in politics and a component of a certain political framework. Political awareness has further sorts of cognitive knowledge. Nonetheless, Social media is a forum that is operated by wide users and boosts the chance to observe web 2.0 for political views (Ceron, Curini, Iacus, & Porro, 2013). Social media networking sites are important to debate politics among voters in underdeveloped and developed countries as well. However, political content on social media is largely uploaded by the users instead of by the media journalists (Bode and Dalrymple 2016)



There are multiple social media applications whereas people largely operated Facebook and Twitter because these two networking sites deliver a combination of information and permit their audience to debate all the world's happenings. 72 % of the internet users are actively using social networks such as there are 800 million users of Facebook which is 12% of the world population and 140 million Twitter active users (Ceron, Curini, Iacus, & Porro, 2013). Various political nominees are involved with electorates via Facebook. Also, administration institutions use Twitter as a communication tool to circulate political awareness among their followers (Bekafigo & McBride, 2013)). Facebook allows users to get awareness about political campaigns, political meetings, and political content for sharing with their groups and family. The use of social media for political awareness is growing every day, specifically among the youth of Pakistan. Facebook's audience in Pakistan was 19.8% of its whole population in 2020 (Napoleon Cat). There are 43.55 million Facebook users and 3.40 million Twitter users in Pakistan in early 2022. According to current statistics, 4.62 billion people and almost 58.4% world population are using social media. Pakistan has 82.90 million internet using members and 71.70 million social media users in January 2022. (Kemp, 2022). The youth of Pakistan is much energetic on social media they are also taking part in different live political debates to seek political consciousness. Nonetheless, today in the era of social media youth is better interactive, social, and politically aware participants on Facebook and Twitter. Social media reinforced the public globe. (Batool, Yasin, and Batool 2020).

Research Methodology

To achieve more satisfactory outcomes, the quantitative survey method was used in conjunction with its data-collection processes. To collect data from the chosen sample of study respondents, we distributed our questionnaire among students at Lasbela University using Google Form software. The questionnaire in this study is formed of analytical, closed-ended questions as well as a 4-point Likert-type scale with multiple options, namely, 1 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = strongly agree, 4 = strongly disagree. Respondents chose single option to respond each question. Both the independent and dependent variables in this study were selected from prior research, operationally defined, and altered. The independent variable was social media usage, and the dependent variables were online political participation, political socialization, and political dynamics. The study's concepts demonstrate that online media supports the dependent variable's online political participation, political socialization, and political dynamics. In Lasbela, Baluchistan, we investigated the correlation of variables among young university students. We distributed the link to our survey through our contacts, WhatsApp, Facebook, and emails. Our survey was distributed to all departments at Lasbela University. In this study, a probability sampling and a simple random sampling method was used.(Wimmer, R. D., Dominick 2011) remarked that first sampling employs mathematical calculations and second sampling employs the component, subject, and the unit of population. Thus, BS and students with MPhil degrees are chosen at random. In technology and communication studies, the survey method has been wildly used.



Measurement and Analysis

To verify the 4 points Likert-Scale measure was utilized. To analyze the information, we used MS Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to find correlations among social media, online political participation, political socialization and political dynamics.

Discussion and Results

Results

Table No.1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid %	Cumulative %
Age	18-20	29	25.9	25.9	25.9
	21-23	63	56.3	56.3	82.1
	24-26	17	15.2	15.2	97.3
	More than 26	3	2.7	2.7	100.0
Gender	Male	93	83.0	83.0	83.0
	Female	19	17.0	17.0	100.0
Education	Undergraduate	107	95.5	95.5	95.5
	MS	5	4.5	4.5	100.0
Residential Status	Rural	72	64.3	64.3	64.3
	Urban	40	35.7	35.7	100.0
Total		112	100.0	100.0	

The comprehensive demographic profile of the respondents is shown in table No. 1 above. The table displays the age, gender, education, and residential status of Lasbela University students. The table reveals that 92 students are between the age of 18 to 20, and 21 to 23, with 26 percent and 56 percent, respectively. 15.2 percent of those aged 24 to 26 years old and only 2.7 percent of those aged more than 26 years old. While 83.0 percent (93) of the respondents are male, females come up 17.0 percent (19). Only 5 (4.5 percent) are MPhil students, while 107 (95.5 percent) are undergraduate students. Further, 64.3 percent (72) of respondents live in rural areas, while 35.7 percent (40) live in urban areas. According to the demographic profile of the respondents, the majority of the students are male as well as undergraduate undergraduates.



Table No.2: Spending time per day on social media by the Respondents

Hours per day	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid %	Cumulative %
1 to 2	22	19.6	19.6	19.6
3 to 4	57	50.9	50.9	70.5
5 to 6	15	13.4	13.4	83.9
more than 6	18	16.1	16.1	100.0
Total	112	100.0	100.0	

The above table No. 2 shows spending time per day on social media by the students of Lasbela University. The table shows that 19.6 % spend 1 to 2 hours, 50.9 % (57) students spend 3 to 4 hours, 13.4 % spend 5 to 6 hours, and 16.1 % students spend more than 6 hours per day on social media. The results disclosed that majority of the respondents spend 3 to 4 hours per day on social media.

Table No.3: Correlation between Social Media usage, Online Political Participation, Political Socialization and Political Dynamics

		Social Media Usage	Online Political Participation	Political Socialization	Political Dynamics
Social Media Usage	Pearson Correlation	1	.256**	.318**	.328**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006	.001	.000
	N	112	112	112	112
Online Political Participation	Pearson Correlation	.256**	1	.314**	.614**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006		.001	.000
	N	112	112	112	112
Political Socialization	Pearson Correlation	.318**	.314**	1	.637**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001		.000
	N	112	112	112	112
Political Dynamics	Pearson Correlation	.328**	.614**	.637**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	112	112	112	112



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

In above table No. 3 depicts that social media usage correlate with online political involvement at .256 and significant at .006, with political socialization at .318 and significant at .001 and furthermore, with political dynamics correlated at .328 and significant at .000. Furthermore, the results of the Table No.3 show that social media usage has a significant relationship in online political participation, political socialization and political dynamics. So the research hypothesis H1 is accepted.

Politics has changed as a result of the use of social media. This serves as a foundational tool for online political participation, political socialization, and political dynamics. Social media has evolved into a low-cost and incredibly effective tool for disseminating political messages to large audiences. According to the current study, people enjoy participating in social media debates and expressing their opinions. (Ahmad, Alvi, and Ittefaq 2019) reported that nearly everyone has a smartphone and uses the internet and social media in any form.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to look into how university students use social media for political aims. The results of this study, the most of respondent's utilized social media to gain political knowledge, develop political attitudes, opinions, and understand political systems. As a result, they spend two to five hours per day on social media sites. Furthermore, this research exposed the use of social media and understanding political systems at various levels, including local, provincial, national, and international political systems, and confirmed that there was a strong positive association between the usage of social media among Lasbela University's students. H1 and H2 hypotheses were tested regarding the utilization of social media sites and the relationship between live political involvement and political socialization.

Recommendations

The researchers made the following recommendations based on their findings:

1. Social media could be a good tool for the political socialization of the young, especially at the universities level.
2. Through the media they can able to better understand the local and national political system, therefore student political platforms must be encouraged.
3. Students should be advised to limit their daily time spent on social media sites.



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