Impact of Social Media on Voting Behavior of Youth During Pakistan General Elections-2018

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research study was to find out the impact of social media on voting behavior of youth in general elections (2018) of Pakistan. The study tested the Public Sphere Theory of German philosopher Jurgen Habermas, who stated that the Public Sphere provides discursive forum where public can exchange their views to generate a mutual judgment. Social media is a tool for shaping the attitude and behavior of young generation. This research is based on primary data collected from 300 students of various universities of the Federal Capital Territory Islamabad. Through purposive sampling technique, the university students were selected for administration of questionnaire and collection of data on the variables of the study. Regression analysis of the data showed that social media has impact on the voting behavior of youth. The results also proved that political activities and political content on social media has power to influence the voting behavior of youth. Therefore, the findings of the study suggest that social media has emerged as a powerful media of public sphere in Pakistan. University students spend most of the time on social media for socialization, entrainment, information, and discussion. The results show that youth relies more on social media as compared to traditional media for political information and political discussion.

Introduction

This era has brought a mega revolution in the field of communication and information technology. During past times, the traditional means of communication were used to access information; those means were limited and time constrained. Whereas the present world of information and communication technologies is switching towards more sophisticated systems of hybrid communication tools and disseminating information within seconds around the globe (Kaplan, & Haenlein, 2010). The advancements of information and communication technology have made the world a global village where people across the world have become the member of a global society. This new emerging society is known as, an information society. This development in information technology has opened new vistas of communication in the contemporary time. The most important channels of communication are the usage of internet driven social media like Skype, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat etc. (Shayan and Ghotb, 2000).

The usage of new media in political process impacts the political parties, their candidates and voters alike (Yamamoto, 2014). Due to social media, political organizations and candidates can communicate with voters directly in a persuasive manner (Effing, van Hillegersberg, & Huibers, 2011). Political parties use modern media as a platform to spread their opinion amongst the public. Resultantly, social media can be seen as a credible platform in politics to persuade their voters (Bakker and Vreese, 2011). Social media platforms are the most popular medium of communication all over the world and these are generating both positive and negative changes in the society. Millions of people across the world are linked with each other and discussing various issues, events and incidents. This number is increasing day by day; especially youth's involvement in social media is significant (Siddiqui, & Singh, 2016).

Media, no matter its traditional or modern, had always significantly influenced opinion of individual. The social media has rapidly taken over all other forms of communication in recent

times and has deeply influenced the individual's thoughts and attitudes. Like other facets of life, social media has also influenced the political, ideological, behavioral and beliefs (Halpern & Gibbs, 2013). In the last few years, social media has become the foremost and swift source of information-sharing in Pakistan. In prevailing trend, political parties are massively using social media tools through integrated communication strategies to launch their electoral campaigns. Political parties in Pakistan are now proactively using social media to create political awareness among the public to influence the voter's attitudes and behaviors especially the youth because young people are more actively using the social media as compared to older people (Abida, 2013).

Pakistan is fifth in the list of the most populated countries in the world. The subtleties exhibit that simply 44.6 million out of 198.9 are web customers in Pakistan which suggests that only 22% of our hard and fast masses methodologies web, even out of them only 35 million are dynamic customers of web-based life which infers simply 18% are web-based systems administration customers. If you look further about the number of convenient customers, you will end up familiar with that 109.5 million out of the hard and fast masses uses adaptable and among them 32 million are dynamic web and internet organizing customers from their phones which are just 16% of our kinfolk. Every one of these subtleties shows that we have a ton to do in this division when diverged from the made countries (Digital Pakistan, 2018).

In Pakistan all the available telecommunication companies are offering different internet packages on a very low cost due to which internet usage has drastically increased in Pakistan due to speedy and cheap internet packages. It's observed that people in Pakistan have massive engrossment in micro-blogging. Modern media is drastically changing the lifestyle, routines and thoughts of people all around the world and in Pakistan as well. The utilization of web and other social media applications have increased the usage of smart cell phones bringing new horizons of cellular services and solutions for communication needs. Starting

late, an amazing rise has been found in Pakistan with respect to usage of internet and especially web-based life arranging goals (Khan, Razi, Mirza, Mazhar, & Amjad, 2013).

Social media is grabbing attention of youth especially because the social media provides education, information, public sphere, diversion and entertainment (Pakistan Social Media Stats, 2018). Keeping in view the research study has focused on the impact of social media on youth particularly on their voting behavior because before and during 2018 general elections of Pakistan, the mainstream political parties were very active on new media to influence the voting decision of youth. These all parties also used unethical and manipulative tactics on social media to descent the opponents.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as under:

•To evaluate the media preference of youth between social media and traditional media.
•To determine the daily time consumption of youth on social media.
•To analyze the impact of social media on the voting behavior of youth.

Literature Review

Social media has different applications for communication that permit users to generate accounts for different activities. People connect on social media and share new ideas, and various content with individuals all around the world. It is also gradually widespread and is evolving as a key source of socialization and information for the community (Kawano, Kim, & Mitsuyama, 2014). Similarly, Banaji & Buckingham (2010) claimed that young people usually cannot rely on political information of traditional media because they used social media for different political activities. So, the people obtain various political information about political parties, election contenders and political leaders form the new web-based technology.
Hardy & Scheufele (2005) exposed that online political conversation between groups and

individuals produce same results as offline or face-to-face, dialogue. Study has also 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 as compared to offline discussion. Owen (2008) mentioned that the arrival of new media has totally changed the attitudes of young voters. Young voter is free to get any information on social media about different parties he can comment and share the information with others as well.

Ancu and Cozma (2012) conducted surveys and claimed that the social media networks like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, appeared as a political tool to woo the voters through political campaigns in congressional U.S elections 2006. Now these online applications are big tool for political, social and economic campaigns. Owen, Leach, Wampold & Rodolfa (2011) explored that the social media give civic education to the public and provide different forum to discuss different issues including politics and political participation. Presidential Election campaign of Obama in 2008 was the pioneer successful social media endeavor, which heavily affected the political efficacy of the young voters.

Effing R. et al (2011) investigated that during the national election in Netherland politicians and political parties with higher social media campaigns got more votes as compared to other political parties who focused on traditional media. Social media can make big difference in next upcoming elections in all over the globe. Due to internet, a new form of political campaign is introduced in the public to change the voting behavior of the youth. In case of young people, social media is playing an important role in bringing self efficacy and political participation.

The role of social media depends on the patterns of usage (Kugelman, 2012). In Pakistan online media is penetrating rapidly among public and they are using this new technology for social, educational and entertainment purposes. People use it in five ways; breaking news ignored by traditional media; mobilizing public for social, political and other campaigns; organizing and highlighting humanitarian aspects of different

issues; activist for social causes; and connecting politicians and public. People in Pakistan usually use traditional media for their social and psychological needs. Online media is mostly used for socialization and entertainment. In Pakistan political parties are operating social media cells for different political tasks. Most of the political parties and politicians have website, social media accounts and pages through which they relate to their supporters. Social media has become a significant tool for politicians to persuade the public (Amjad, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

The study sought the help of two theories i.e. uses and gratification theory and public sphere theory, which are explained in following paragraphs.

Uses and Gratification Theory

Uses and Gratification theory **was developed by Elihu Katz, Michael Gurevitch and Jay Blumber in 1970s. According to them, a**udience uses the media to gratify the certain needs (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974). Similarly, Anaeto, Onabajo, & Osifeso (2008), concluded that uses and gratification theory was not concerned with what media did with people, but described what public did with media. They further described that Uses and Gratification theory has humanoid slant because it supposed that public is predisposed by the mass media. Researchers also debated about the theory that public had few needs therefore they want to fulfil it that's why they select a firm message form mass media.

Adeyanju & Haruna (2012) explained that Uses and Gratification theory designated that the individuals have a power to select and use content from media according to their needs of time. Similarly, politicians also have a choice to use media to disseminate their message via social media during the political crusades and political doings. The theory is applicable on this research because young people are expressively jumbled with new online media, and they are meeting their media uses and gratifications. This theory identifies followings main gratifications of social media users:

- Social contact
- Information seeking (political information)
- Entertainment
- Communicatory helpfulness (Political campaigns, Health campaigns)
- Convenience utility (Changing voting behavior)
- Expression of opinion (Comments)

Public Sphere Theory

Public sphere is an area in social life where individuals can come together to freely discuss and identify societal problems, and through that discussion influence political action. Habermas defines the public sphere as a "society engaged in critical public debate". Public sphere is a concept created in 18th century and further developed by Habermas, who stated that the public sphere provides discursive place where people can exchange their opinions to create a common judgment. Social media platforms are popular sites, attracting millions of users who connect digitally. This has prompted some to argue that social media has promoted the return of public sphere. Social media is a forum where everyone has freedom of expression. Political parties and public have equal opportunity to discuss the different political issues and get results.

Research Questions

Followings were the main research questions formulated for this study, which have been answered after data collection from the youth and analysis through appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics.

Research Question 1: Which media (traditional or Social) is preferred by the youth?

Research Question 2: How much time do the youth spend daily on social media?

Research Question 3: Which social media platform is most popular among the youth?

Research Question 4: For what purposes the youth in Pakistan is using social media?

Research Question 5: Whether and to what extent political activities on social media impact the voting behavior of youth?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to study the relationships among the variables of the study.

Hypothesis 1: It is more likely that youth in Pakistan use social media more for socialization, entertainment and political information.

Hypothesis 2: More the consumption of social media for political activities by the youth, more is the impact on their voting behavior.

Methodology

Survey research method has been used in the study for collection of the data. Therefore, a questionnaire was formulated to gather the data from the university students of federal capital Islamabad, the questions were about demography, media preference, media usage and media effects on voting behavior of youth. Closed-ended questions were asked form the students to get the responses on the variables of the study. The age range of sample was 19 to 30 years students who were studying in various universities of Islamabad. The gathered data was analyzed by applying suitable descriptive and inferential statistics. The SPSS version 20 was applied to analyze the data and produce the results. Due to time and financial constraints, a sample of 300 was selected through purposive sampling technique for the data collection.

Data Analysis

The data collected through a survey was analyzed by applying appropriate statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Scientists to explore the responses on main variables of the research to answer the Research Questions of the study and substantiate the Hypotheses.

Results

The demographic data were analyzed as presented in Table 1. The total number of respondents were 300 having different demographic characteristics. These demographic variables contained gender, age, education and residence. The gender distribution of 300 respondents were equally divided, 150 respondents were male, and the same number of respondents were female.

Regarding the age of the respondents according to Table 1, 40.7 percent respondents were within the age range of 19-21 years and within the age range of 22-24 years were 38.7percent. The respondents within the age range of 25-27 and 28-30 years were 10.3 percent congruently.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	150	50.0
	Female	150	50.0
Age	19-21 years	122	40.7
	22-24 years	116	38.7
	25-27years	31	10.3
	28-30years	31	10.3
Education	Bachelor	130	43.3
	Master	123	41.0
	MS/Ph.D.	47	15.7
Residence	House	181	60.3
	Hostel	96	32.0
	Solo apartment	13	4.3
	Shared apartment	10	3.3

In respects to Education Level of sample, the table indicates that most of the respondents were enrolled in Bachelor and Masters level 253 (84.3 percent) while only 47 (15.7 percent) respondents were studying at the M.Phil./Ph.D. levels. It was revealed that 60.3 percent respondents were living in their own houses; 32 percent respondents were residing in hostels. Thus, the remaining 7.6 percent students were living in solo and shared apartments.

Media Preference

Media preferences of the respondents were explored through the data as shown in Table 2. The respondents were using both traditional as well as social media to gratify their needs social and psychological needs. The Table indicates that out of 300 respondents the majority 230 (76.7%) gave high preference to social media and 70 (23.3%) respondents showed low preference for social media with Mean 4.00 and SD .803. This table also clarifies that only 67 (22.3%) participants gave high preference to traditional media and 233 (77.7%) respondents gave low preference to traditional media (with mean 2.91 and SD .982).

Table 2: Media Preference of Respondents

Variables	Low	High	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social Media	70 (23.3)	230 (76.7)	4.00	.803
Traditional Media	233 (77.7)	67 (22.3)	2.91	.982

The table 2 indicates that traditional media has been given low preference because respondents were more interested to new media. It may be due to the reason that they can utilize the social media anytime and anywhere according to their needs while traditional media is not available all the times.

Research Question 1: Which media (traditional or Social) is preferred by the youth?

Answering R.Q. 1: As presented in Table 2 that the respondents gave high preference to social media. Traditional media has been given low preference by youth because university students are more interested in new media. They can use the social media on their cell phones, tablets and laptops anytime and anywhere to gratify their needs, while, traditional media has no easy access like social media.

Time Spent Daily on Social Media

The Table 3 indicates the daily time consumption by the youth on different social media platforms in hours. The Table explains that most of the respondents (27.3 percent) were using social media for Above 2 hours and up to 3 hours.

Table 3: Time Spent Daily on Social Media by Youth

Time Spent Per Day	Frequency	Percentage
Above 4 hours	75	25.0
Above 3 hours and up to 4 hours	55	18.3
Above 2 hours and up to 3 hours	82	27.3
Above 1 hour and up to 2 hours	51	17.0
Up to 1 hour	37	12.3
Total	**300**	**100**

Similarly, 55 (18.3 percent) respondents were using social media for Above three hours and up to four hours and 75 (25 percent) Respondents were utilizing social media for above four hours daily. However, 51 (17.0 percent) respondents were using social media for Above an hour and up to two hours daily and only 37 (12.3 percent) of respondents were using social media for up to 1 hour in day. It is an amazing facet that 263 responds were utilizing 2 hours to above 4 hours daily on social media. This shows that most of the youth in Pakistan is the heavy users of social media.

Research Question 2: How much time do the youth spend daily on social media?

Answering R.Q. 2: The Table 3 expresses that the youth in Pakistan is heavy users of social media and mostly the youth was utilizing social media from two hours to four hours daily. This shows that most of the university students use social media daily to gratify their needs.

Preference of Social Media Platforms by the Youth

The Table 4 shows the usage preference of social media platforms among the respondents. The evidences were collected on Likert scale: "Never" = 1, "Rarely" = 2, "Up to Some Extent" = 3, "Greatly" = 4, "Very Greatly" = 5. During the analysis, the values of the variables were re-coded, 'Very Greatly' and 'Greatly' were re-coded as 'High' and other values (1-3) were re-coded as 'Low' as presented in Table with Mean and standard Deviation.

Table 4: Preference of Social Media Platforms by the Respondents

Variables	Low	High	Mean	Std. Deviation
Facebook	157 (55.3)	143 (44.7)	3.29	1.261
Twitter	244 (81.3)	66 (22)	2.18	1.306
WhatsApp	47 (15.7)	253 (84.3)	4.34	.946
Instagram	199 (66.3)	101 (33.3)	2.72	1.468
YouTube	98 (32.6)	202 (67.3)	3.71	1.111
Any other	280 (93.3)	20 (6.6)	1.49	1.007

Table 4 shows that the Social Media platforms preferences have been explored to find the interest of respondents in different social media platforms. The results indicate that the respondents were using various social media platforms. The mean value ranges from 1.49 to 4.34 and standard deviation ranges from 0.946 to 1.46. The mean value 4.34 of the WhatsApp was high which showed respondents high preference. Out of 300 respondents 202 (67.3%) gave high preference to YouTube with Mean 3.71 SD 1.26. 143(44.7) respondents gave high preference to Facebook. 101 (33.3) of respondents were using Instagram. Furthermore, Twitter was not popular social media platform among the students of federal capital Islamabad with 66 (22 percent) respondents out of 300 samples. So, WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook are the most popular social media platforms among the youth of Islamabad.

Research Question 3: Which social media platform is most popular among the youth?

Answering R. Q. 3: According to the Table 4, social media platform that was most commonly used by youth was found as WhatsApp, which was found as the most popular among the university students with 253 (84.3 percent) users out of the total 300 respondents. YouTube was found as the second most popular, while Facebook was found as the third most popular social media platform among the university students with 44.7 percent users. Furthermore, 6.6 percent were using any other social media platforms.

Multiple Regression Analysis of Exposure to Social Media

The Table 5 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis, where presumed predict variables, "Using social media for socialization", "Using social media for entertainment", "Using social media for political information", "Using social media for education", "Using social media for diversion from worries, were regressed against the dependent variable 'Exposure to Social Media'.

The intended value $F = 7.309$ and Sig. (.000) of the ANOVA, as presented in the Multiple Regression the results direct that the regression model is fit and statistically significant. Furthermore, 36% of variability ($R^2 = .130$) in "exposure to Social Media" was complete described by the predict variables.

Table 5: Multiple Regression of 'Exposure to Social Media'

R: .361
R square: .130
Standard Error: .757
F value= 7.309   *P*= .000

	df	Sum of squares	Mean Squares		
Regression	**6**	**25.126**	**4.188**		
Residual	**293**	**167.870**	**.573**		
Variables	**B**	**SE B**	**Beta**	**T**	**Sig.**
Using social media for Socialization	.103	.039	.153	2.615	.009
Using social media for Entertainment	.198	.048	.234	4.149	.000
Using social media for Political information	.087	.043	.122	2.027	.044
Using social media for Education	.068	.044	.092	1.561	.120
Using social media for Diversion from worries	.007	.039	.011	.176	.860

Dependent Variable: 'Exposure to social media'

Unstandardized Coefficients Equation: Exposure to social media = 2.469 + (.103 x Using social media for socialization) + (.198 x Using social media for entertainment) + (.087 x Using social media for political information) + (.68 x Using social media for education) + (.007 x Using social media for diversion from worries).

According to the Table 5 there was significant positive association between the dependent variable "exposure to social media" and predict variables "Using social media for entertainment" (b=.153, p=.000), 'Using social media for socialization' (b=.153 and p=.009), 'Using social media for political information (b=.122 and p=.044), while, the association between the dependent variable 'use of social media' and predict variables 'Using social media for education' (b=.92 and p=.120), and 'Using social media for diversion from real life" (b=.11 and p=.860) was not significant.

The comparison of the Beta values showed that the association between "exposure to social media (Dependent variable) "Using social media for entertainment (predictor variable) (beta=.234) was stronger than other predict variables. The result infers that the youth was mostly using the Social Media for Entertainment, socialization, and, political information, as compared to education, and diversion from worries.

So, **Hypothesis 1 'It is more likely that youth in Pakistan use social media more for socialization, entertainment and political information'** was supported. Thus, the youth in Islamabad was using the social media mostly for socialization, entertainment and political information, purposes. However, the youth was not using the social media for education and diversion from worries.

Research Question 4: For what purposes the youth in Pakistan is using social media?

Answering R. Q. 4: The Table 5 shows the results of the Multiple Regression, which indicates that the young university students were using social media for the socialization and entertainment and political information as compared to education, self-projection and diversion from real life.

Impact of Social Media on Voting Behavior of Youth

The Table 6 shows the result of the multiple regression, where the supposed predict variables, 'political discussion of social media impact voting behavior', 'political content of social media impacted my voting behavior', 'online polls results on social media impacted my voting behavior', 'News contents on social media impacted my voting behavior', 'Social media helped me to vote a specific candidate', and 'Changed political party due to social media campaigns were regressed with the dependent variable 'use of social media'.

The *F*-value =18.810 and Sig. =.000 of ANOVA as revealed in a Multiple Regression analysis in the Table above. It shows that regression is appropriate and statistically significant. Furthermore, the coefficient value indicates that social media count for 61% changes in the voting behavior of youth and its variability (R^2=.369) in 'use of social media' was generally described by the predict variables.

Table 6 shows a strong association between dependent variable 'use of social media' and the predict variables 'Social media helped me to vote a specific candidate' (b=.230 and p=.000), 'Political content of social media impacted my voting behavior' (b=.226 and p=.001), and 'Political discussion of social media impacted my voting behavior' (b=.200 and p=.003). While there was a weak relationship between dependent variable 'use of social media' and a predict variables 'changed political party due to social media information' (b=.137 and p=.014).

Furthermore, the association among the standard variable 'use of social media' and the predict variables 'online polls result of social media impacted my voting behavior' (b=.14 and p=.810), and 'News content on social media impacted my voting behavior' (b=.053 and p=.362) was insignificant.

The calculation of the Beta values showed that the association among 'use to social media' (dependent variable) and predict variables 'Social media helped me to vote a specific candidate' (beta = .230), 'Political content of social media impacted my voting behavior' (beta= .226), 'Political discussion of social media impacted my voting behavior' (b=.200), and 'Changed political party due to social media campaigns' (.137) was found stronger than other predict variables.

Table 6: Multiple Regression of social media use and its impact on voting behavior

R: .607
R square: .369
Standard Error: .926
***F* value= 18.810   *P*= .000**

	df	Sum of squares	Mean Squares		
Regression	**9**	**145.150**	**16.128**		
Residual	**289**	**348.647**	**.857**		
Variables	**B**	**SE B**	**Beta**	**T**	**Sig.**
Political discussion on social media impacted my voting behavior	.183	.061	.200	3.008	.003
Political content of social media impacted my voting behavior	.220	.066	.226	3.352	.001
Online polls result of social media impacted my voting behavior	.014	.056	.014	.240	.810
News contents on social media impacted my voting behavior	.052	.057	.053	.914	.362
Social media helped me to vote a specific candidate	.209	.056	.230	3.743	.000
I have changed political party due to social media campaigns	.122	.050	.137	2.462	.014

Dependent Variable: 'Use of Social Media'

Un-standardized Coefficients Equation: Use of Social Media = 1.440 + (.183 x political discussion of social media impacted my voting behavior) + (.220 x political content of social media impacted my voting behavior) + (.14 x online polls result of social media impacted my voting behavior) + (.209 x Social media helped me to vote a specific candidate) + (.122 x Changed political party due to social media campaigns).

So, **Hypothesis 2 'More the consumption of social media on political activities by the youth, more will be impact on their voting behavior'** was supported. It indicates that the use of social media for political activities has impact on voting behavior of youth due to political content, political campaigns and discussion regarding parties, manifestos and candidates on social media.

Research Question 5: Whether and to what extent political activities on social media impact the voting behavior of youth?

Answering R. Q. 5: Table 6 indicates that the use of social media for political activities has impact on the voting behavior of youth. The activities on social media which has a large impact on voting behavior of youth include 'due to political content', 'political campaigns' and 'discussion regarding political parties and their candidates on different social media outlets'.

Discussion and Conclusion

The main purpose of this research was to investigate how social media usage impacts the political attitude and voting behavior of youth. So, the findings of the study are that youth in Pakistan is evidently the big user of social media. The respondents preferred social media as compared to the traditional media because they can use social media on their cell phones, tablets and laptops anytime and anywhere according to their needs even while commuting. While, traditional media does not provide such an ease and convenience as the social media does and thus youth does not spend enough time to watch television, listen to radio and read newspaper. Thus, the results of this study are in line with the former researches like

the investigation of Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch (1974) that audience gives preference to use the media which best fulfill their needs. The audience has enough information about the media houses and their content, so they know which media suits to their needs as argued by the uses and gratification theory.

This study also explored that the youth in Pakistan has been found frequent users of social media and majority of the youth was utilizing social media between two hours to four hours daily. The study brings to light that the social media platforms are the top preference of the youth. Social media platform that was most commonly used by the youth has been found as WhatsApp with 253 (84.3 percent) users out of the total 300 respondents. YouTube was found the second most popular, while Facebook was found as the third most popular social media platform among the university students with 44.7 percent subscribers. Furthermore, 6.6 percent were using any other social media platforms.

The study infers that there was significant positive association between the "exposure to social media" and "Using social media for entertainment" (b=.153, p=.000), 'Using social media for socialization' (b=.153 and p=.009), 'Using social media for political information (b=.122 and p=.044). So, the results indicate that youth was using social media mostly for socialization, entertainment and political information. Similarly there was a significant relationship between the 'use of social media' and the predictors; i.e. 'Political discussion of social media impacted my voting behavior' (b=.200 and p=.003); 'Political content of social media impacted my voting behavior' (b=.226 and p=.001), and 'Social media helped me to vote a specific candidate' (b=.230 and p=.000), and 'Changed political party due to social media campaigns'(b=.137 and p=.014). Thus, the outcomes indicate that the usage of the social media for political purposes have substantial impact on voting behavior of youth in Pakistan.

Furthermore, this study supported the public sphere theory of Jurgen Habermas, since the study concludes that the social media provides wide forum to the public to discuss different issues and to share opinion with the masses for the creation of common judgment. So, the results of this study suggest that the usage of social media for political activities impacts the voting behavior of young voters.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study targeted the impact of overall social media platforms on the voting behavior of youth. Future researchers can conduct studies on the specific social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) to ascertain their impact on the voting behavior. The current study also suggests that similar type of study can be operationalized on other age groups of voters to analyze the impact of social media on them. This study focused only on the universities of Federal Capital Islamabad, so in future, the study can be done on provincial capitals (Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta) and may be extended to Urban and Rural zones of Pakistan. The present study encompasses only the university students. A massive scale study can be conducted with a large sample of youth from across the country.

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